



### THE ART

to write poems, say,  
is not a personal achievement  
that bewilderment

On the way to work  
two white butterflies  
& clover along the walks

to ask .  
to want that much of it .

—Paul Blackburn

### WRI 208: Creative Writing: Exploring Forms

**Course code:** WRI 208/012

**Meeting days/times:** MTWR 10:15–12:20 p.m.

**Location:** Lytle 204

**Professor:** Dr. Dan Featherston

**Office:** Lytle 104A

**Course Blog:** [kutztownwriting.blogspot.com](http://kutztownwriting.blogspot.com)

**Office hours:** by appointment

**Voicemail:** (610) 683–4336

**Email:** [feathers@kutztown.edu](mailto:feathers@kutztown.edu)

**English Department:** (610) 683-4353

**Course Catalog Description:** This course explores the various forms of creative writing through practical examination of the writing process, writing practice in multiple genres, and experiments in the transformations of familiar forms. While the course is useful particularly to creative writers, it is also designed to develop and sharpen academic or professional writing through creative practice. The course will be modeled as an apprentice workshop. In addition to writing, students will read poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and drama. Prerequisite: ENG 023.

#### Course Objectives

- demonstrate a critical capacity for judging written and oral presentations of creative writing.
- attempt a variety of creative writing genres (e.g., poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction).
- effectively utilize techniques and tools of creative writing.
- participate in the workshop method of listening, critiquing, editing, and revising.
- participate in course weblog.

#### Required Textbooks

Brainard, Joe. *I Remember*. New York: Granary Books, 2001.

Ostrom, Hans, Wendy Bishop, and Katherine Haake. *Metro: Journeys in Writing Creatively*. New York: Longman, 2001.

*Texts available at Kutztown University Campus Bookstore.*

### **Additional Requirements**

- Private or public access to computer and Internet
- Adobe Acrobat Reader 5.0 or higher (go to adobe.com for free software)
- Printouts of Blackboard documents
- Email account
- College dictionary
- White, lined loose-leaf paper
- Notebook
- Pocket folder

## **COURSE INFORMATION AND POLICIES**

*Democracy begins in conversation.*

—John Dewey

**Class Design (Active Learning):** Most collegiate classrooms are based on a passive learning model (i.e., traditional lecture), an active learning model, or some combination of the two. According to the philosophy of active learning, meaningful education requires that students participate in their educational experience beyond simply attending lectures and taking notes. The active learning model encourages a wide variety of student-based activities, including listening, speaking, discussing, reading, writing, participating in small-group work, peer reviews, presentations, and so on. In other words, the active learning model of education is based on collaboration between the students and the professor. Although there will be occasional lectures, this is not a lecture-based course. Instead, the majority of classtime will be devoted to active learning, including workshops.

**Class Conduct Policies:** Disruptive behavior is defined as behavior that is disruptive to the learning process and outside normal behavior parameters. Students creating disturbances that interfere with the conduct of the class or the learning of others, including violations of the Kutztown University Code of Civility, will be referred to the Division Dean and/or the Dean of Students. Any of the following activities will affect your grade, including your participation grade, and may be cause for being dropped from the course:

- Possession of drugs, alcohol or firearms
- Eating, drinking, smoking, or soliciting
- Use of cell phones, iPods, and other electronic devices
- Inappropriate talking, arriving late, leaving early, packing up before the end of class, sleeping, text messaging, listening to music, or doing other class work in class
- Violations of the Kutztown University Code of Civility

Please refer to the Kutztown University Code of Civility for additional requirements relating to student behavior. Follow the Golden Rule: Treat others as you would have others treat you.

**Online Conduct Policies:** The Code of Civility that applies to classroom interaction also applies to digital communication. For basic information about online etiquette, see: [www.netmanners.com](http://www.netmanners.com)

**Workshops:** I will assign four major writing assignments during the course. Each assignment will be explained in a separate assignment sheet. You will make copies of your writing for myself and your classmates, which you will hand out on the due date for that particular writing. We will take home copies of the writings and critique them, then return to class and conduct workshops. At the end of each workshop, your classmates and I will return your critiqued draft to you. For due dates, please see the syllabus below.

**Portfolio:** At the end of the semester, you will rewrite and submit your four writings, along with the original drafts, in a portfolio. I will explain the portfolio in detail in a separate assignment sheet. Although you are only required to revise each writing once, I strongly recommend that you work on revising each writing throughout the semester.

**PDF (Portable Document Format) Files:** I will place several PDF-formatted files on Blackboard and/or our class blog, including assignment sheets and supplementary readings. You will need Adobe Reader 5.0 or higher to access these files. Most computers come with a preinstalled copy of Adobe Reader. If your computer does not have Adobe Reader 5.0 or higher, you will need to download a free copy online at [adobe.com](http://adobe.com)

**Blackboard/Blog:** Blackboard and our class blog are integral components of the course, so make sure to log-in on a regular basis for additional information and instruction. It is not the purpose of Blackboard and our class blog to discuss your grade, request private tutorials for missed lectures, or chat about issues that do not pertain to the course. If you are unable to access Blackboard, the class blog, and/or your email account, it is your responsibility to seek technical help from the Information Technology department or your computer vendor.

**Email:** In accordance with administrative policies, grades may not be discussed over the Internet, and I will not respond to email about grades. If you have a question about your grade, please arrange to see me during office hours (see below). I teach several courses, so make sure to identify yourself and your course number and section in the subject line of your email (e.g. Jeff Buckley ENG 010/090). Email sent without proper identification will not be acknowledged. Please refer to the syllabus and lecture notes prior to emailing me for information. Questions about policies and procedures already covered in the syllabus, handouts, Blackboard, and/or lectures will receive no response. I try to answer email as quickly as possible, but keep in mind that I am not always online. Unless otherwise noted, written assignments sent digitally, including email, email attachments, Blackboard, and our class blog, are not acceptable, and I am not able to critique and/or grade writings sent in digital format. If you would like additional critical feedback regarding your writing, please see me during office hours.

**Class Preparation:** Attendance and active participation are crucial components of the course. You cannot pass the course without regular attendance and active participation. Students should come to class prepared for each meeting. Please refer to the below schedule for specific assignments. Students must have textbooks with them for each class and will not be able to share with other students. Textbook work is an integral part of the course. Those who do not bring their books to class may not be able to participate in class activities. Your participation grade will be based in part on class preparation. Come prepared for each class. I do not carry around with me extra textbooks, staplers, paperclips, and other office supplies, so please do not ask me for them. If you are absent on a day when assignments are returned, please stop by my office during office hours to pick up your materials. Materials that are not picked up within one (1) week will be destroyed.

**Class Attendance:** In order to gain the full experience of the course, it is necessary that you attend class on a regular basis. A portion of your final grade (10%) is based on participation, and you cannot participate if you are absent. If for whatever reason you miss more than two (2) classes, I strongly recommend that you drop the course and retake it at a time that is more convenient for you. Walking into class late is annoying to your classmates and disruptive to the learning process. Do not come to class late. If you miss roll call, then you are marked absent. If you must miss class, please contact me before the missed class by calling or emailing me. Regardless of whether I am contacted, a missed class is still an absence. I do not conduct private lectures for those who miss class, nor will I go over missed information via phone, email, or Blackboard. If you miss class, you are responsible for either contacting other students in the class or visiting me during office hours to find out about any missed information and assignments. Prior to contacting me for missed information, please consult your syllabus.

**Excused Absences:** I reserve the right to excuse absences and/or allow make-up work due to extreme circumstances such as a medical emergency. Only absences that are accompanied by signed and dated documents (e.g., doctor's note; coach's letter) will be considered for an excused absence. Copies of these documents must be submitted to me within one (1) week of the absence.

**Withdrawal Grades:** See [www.kutztown.edu](http://www.kutztown.edu) for information regarding withdrawal deadlines.

**Incomplete Grades:** Due to the nature of this course, incomplete grades will not be given.

**Code of Academic Integrity:** Students are expected to abide by the Academic Honesty Policy, which is available online at [www.kutztown.edu/admin/conduct](http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/conduct) and in the student handbook, *The Key*. Kutztown University considers violations of scholastic ethics, including plagiarism, as serious offenses, which may result in failure of an assignment, the course, or possible expulsion from the university. The university subscribes to anti-plagiarism services for checking student papers against material posted on the Internet, including websites that require payment to download papers. All work done for this class must be your own. For assignments, you may use work from books and other materials if properly cited. Copying from any source without proper reference is considered plagiarism. Do not plagiarize. If you have questions about plagiarism, please feel free to ask me.

**Kutztown University ADA Compliance Statement:** Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. Contact Disability Resources and Services to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Disability Services: Office of Human Diversity, 215 Stratton Administration Building. See also: [www.kutztown.edu/admin/humandiversity/disabilityservices/index.shtml](http://www.kutztown.edu/admin/humandiversity/disabilityservices/index.shtml)

### ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING PROCEDURES

Major Assignment	Percent of Final Grade	Due Date
Participation	10%	Daily
Blog Posts	10%	Weekly
Assignment 1 (Name Anatomy)	10%	7/10
Assignment 2 (In Situ Poem)	10%	7/17
Assignment 3 (I Remember)	10%	7/24
Assignment 4 (Memoir)	10%	7/31
Portfolio	20%	8/7
Peer Critiques	20%	Weekly

Percentile	Grade	
90–100	A	Sophisticated: Overall, the coursework is excellent.
80–89	B	Advanced: Overall, the coursework is above average.
70–79	C	Average: Overall, the coursework is average.
60–69	D	Below Average: Overall, the coursework is below average.
Below 60	F	Unacceptable: Overall, the coursework is unacceptable.

**Grades:** To complete this course with an average grade (C) or higher, you must attend class and complete all assignments on time and in the proper format, prepare for class, and participate in class activities and discussions. You cannot receive a passing grade unless you have submitted all major assignments on time. To receive full credit, all assignments must be submitted on time, in the proper format (to be explained in separate format sheets), and with the required supporting material. If you have a question about my comments or the grades you have received, be sure to talk to me about it immediately. The classroom, the telephone, email, Blackboard, and the class blog are inappropriate forums for discussing your grade. If you need to discuss your grade, please arrange to see me during office hours.

**Communication of Grades:** In accordance with administrative policies, grades may not be discussed by email or telephone.

**Participation:** This is an active learning course based on class discussion and workshops, so in-class participation is absolutely crucial to your success. Participation is defined as quality verbal and intellectual engagement in class discussions throughout the entire semester. Obviously, you cannot participate if you do not prepare for and attend class. Failure to abide by class conduct policies will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

**Blog Posts:** I will create a blog for the course, which we will use to augment class discussion. I will explain the blog in detail in a separate assignment sheet.

**Workshops and Final Portfolio:** I will assign several writing assignments during the semester. Each assignment will be explained in a separate assignment sheet, which I will post to Blackboard or the class blog in advance of each due date. You will make copies of each draft, which you will hand out on the due date for that particular writing. We will take home copies of the writings and critique them. We will then return and conduct in-class workshops of the writings. Make sure to keep copies of all the workshop critiques that you receive during the semester. At the end of the semester, you will submit a final portfolio. I will explain the final portfolio in a separate assignment sheet.

**A Note on Reading:** Before your first visit to Kutztown University, you consulted people or things that helped orient you to the campus: maps, employees, friends, and so on. Likewise, before you begin reading the assigned texts, orient yourself by skimming the introductions and prefaces. Get a sense of the scope and objective of the books. Look at glossaries and indices. Think of introductions, prefaces, glossaries, and indices as maps that help orient you before entering the landscape of the book.

**A Note on Reading *Metro*:** You will notice that there are hundreds of writing prompts in *Metro: Journeys in Writing Creatively*. Although you are not required to do these assignments, I strongly suggest using them to help you develop as a writer. Prompts are oftentimes helpful as a kind of outward command to begin writing.

### **An Allegory of Reading and Writing**

A post-graduate student equipped with honors and diplomas went to Agassiz\* to receive the final and finishing touches. The great man offered him a small fish and told him to describe it.

Post-Graduate Student: "That's only a sunfish."

Agassiz: "I know that. Write a description of it."

After a few minutes the student returned with the description of the *Ichthus Heliodiplodokus*, or whatever term is used to conceal the common sunfish from vulgar knowledge, family *Heliichtherinkus*, etc., as found in textbooks of the subject.

Agassiz again told the student to describe the fish.

The student produced a four-page essay.

Agassiz then told him to look at the fish.

At the end of three weeks the fish was in an advanced state of decomposition, but the student knew something about it.

—Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading*

\* Louis Agassiz (1807-1873): Swiss-born US paleontologist and geologist.

**Additional Resources (Poetry Anthologies):** Anthologies (*anthos-logos*, "a book of flowers") are useful as introductions to a wide range of writers. Here are a few recommended poetry anthologies:

Kenneth Koch, Kate Farrell. *Sleeping on the Wing*.

Norton Anthology of Poetry; Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry.

Douglas Messerli. *From the Other Side of the Century*.

Bruce Andrews, Charles Bernstein. *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book*.

Eliot Weinberger. *Innovators & Outsiders*.

Ron Silliman. *In the American Tree*.

Mary Margaret Sloan. *Moving Borders: Three Decades of Innovative Writing by Women*.

Carolyn Forché. *Against Forgetting: Twentieth-Century Poetry of Witness*.

Pierre Joris, Jerome Rothenberg. *Poems for the Millennium, vol. I & II*.

Jerome Rothenberg. *Technicians of the Sacred; Symposium of the Whole; Shaking the Pumpkin*.

Ron Padgett. *The Teachers & Writers Handbook of Poetic Forms*.

Larry Fagin. *The List Poem: A Guide to Teaching & Writing Catalog Verse*.

**Schedule**

Unless otherwise noted, make sure to bring all reading materials to each class meeting. The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus.

**BB = Blackboard Document**  
**CRB = Copy, Read, Bring to Class**  
**I = I Remember**  
**M = Metro**

**Metro key: chapter-and-section (e.g., 18:4–6 = read chapter 18, sections 4 through 6)**

**Unless otherwise noted, blog posts are due by 8:00 p.m. See below for specific dates.**

<b>Week 1: Introductions</b>	
Mon, 7/7	Introductions and course overview
Tues, 7/8	<b>READ: M</b> (Introduction xxiv–xxvi; Prologue xxvii–xxix; 1:1–17) <b>CRB: BB</b> Assignment Sheet 1 (Name Anatomy); Portfolio Assignment Sheet <b>BRING:</b> 8 copies of a favorite poem or lyric <b>DISCUSSION:</b> What is poetry? What is “good” poetry? Online anagram generators
Wed, 7/9	<b>READ: M</b> (2:1; 2:3–12; 2:14–15; 2:19–20; 2:23–24; 2:26); Lorde, “Learning to Write”; Dickinson, #712 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Lorde, Dickinson
Thurs, 7/10	<b>READ: M</b> (3:8; 3:10–12; 3:17–19) <b>DUE:</b> Assignment 1 (Name Anatomy); Blog Post 1 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Lorde, Dickinson
<b>Week 2: Language: Name Anatomy</b>	
Mon, 7/14	<b>WORKSHOP 1 (Name Anatomy)</b>
Tues, 7/15	<b>READ: M</b> (2:9; 4:1–3; 4:5; 4:7–8; 4:10–13); Hughes, “Harlem”; Auden, “Musée des Beaux Arts” <b>CRB: BB</b> Assignment Sheet 2 (In Situ Poem) <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Hughes, Auden
Wed, 7/16	<b>CRB: BB</b> In Situ Anthology <b>DISCUSSION:</b> In Situ Anthology
Thurs, 7/17	<b>BRING:</b> In Situ Anthology <b>DUE:</b> Assignment 2 (In Situ Poem); Blog Post 2 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> In Situ Anthology

<b>Week 3: Objects: In Situ</b>	
Mon, 7/21	<b>WORKSHOP 2 (In Situ Poem)</b>
Tues, 7/22	<b>READ: M</b> (2:29–31; 3:1–5); <b>I</b> (“Afterword,” “About the Author”) <b>CRB: BB</b> Assignment Sheet 3 (I Remember) <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Brainard
Wed, 7/23	<b>READ: M</b> (5:5; 5:7; 5:11; 5:13–14; 5:18); <b>I</b> pp. 7–100 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Brainard
Thurs, 7/24	<b>READ: I</b> pp. 101–167 <b>DUE:</b> Assignment 3 (I Remember); Blog Post 3 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Brainard
<b>Week 4: Memory: I Remember</b>	
Mon, 7/28	<b>WORKSHOP 3 (I Remember)</b>
Tues, 7/29	<b>READ: M</b> (2:16; 6:1–3; 6:6–7; 6:10–15); Wright, “Library Card” <b>CRB: BB</b> Assignment Sheet 4 (Memoir) <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Wright
Wed, 7/30	<b>READ: M</b> Ortiz-Taylor, “Street Map” and “RE/Collection” <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Ortiz-Taylor
Thurs, 7/31	<b>BRING:</b> Memoir <b>DUE:</b> Assignment 4 (Memoir ); Blog Post 4 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Ortiz-Taylor
<b>Week 5: Memoir</b>	
Mon, 8/4	<b>WORKSHOP 4 (Memoir )</b>
Tues, 8/5	<b>READ: M</b> O’Brien, “How to Tell a True War Story” <b>DISCUSSION:</b> O’Brien
Wed, 8/6	<b>DISCUSSION:</b> O’Brien
Thurs, 8/7	<b>DUE:</b> Portfolio; Blog Post 5 <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Final Remarks