“Before you go further,
let me tell you what a poem brings,
first you must know the secret, there is no poem
to speak of, it is a way to attain a life without boundaries…”
--Juan Felipe Herrera, U. S. Poet Laureate, from “Let Me Tell You

COURSE DESCRIPTION
When we write poems, we often explore various means of working within, stretching,
and transcending boundaries vis-a-vis our attention to particular aspects of craft, form,
and approaches to writing. With this in mind, students will draft and revise poems outside
of class, as well as occasionally participate in writing exercises during class. Assignments
and exercises will involve experimenting with extended metaphor, voice and persona,
patterns of sound and repetition, line and stanza, ekphrasis, fixed and experimental forms,
among other modes and approaches. Students will critique some of their peers’ poems-in-progress, offering suggestions for how their peers might alter various aspects of the poem
to achieve the desired effect. Students will also read, analyze, and discuss published
poems, paying attention to what the poem aims to achieve or evoke and how the poet has
constructed the poem toward this end. Our culminating project will be a portfolio of
revised poems with a reflective introductory essay.

PREREQUISITES
To take English 416, you must have junior standing, have satisfied the GER English
Composition competency requirement (C or above in English 102 or equivalent transfer
course, or EPT score of 525 or above), and have passed English 233 or English 235. If
you do not meet these requirements, email me before the class starts or see me
immediately on the first day.

REQUIRED TEXTS AND MATERIALS
2. PDF and online readings (usually a set of poems) as indicated on the course
calendar and posted in the Content area of our course D2L site. You must print
these readings and bring them to class. If you print at a campus computer lab for
eight cents per page, all of these readings together will cost you about $9.50.
3. Print-outs of your own and your classmates’ poems and of your critiques for
workshop sessions: eight cents per page if printed at a campus computer lab.
4. 8.5 x 11 notebook for journal, pen, and blank paper.

EVALUATION METHODS, COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND POLICIES
The final grade for this course will be based on the following components:

1. Participation—20%: Regular preparation and constructive class contribution includes timely completion of all reading and writing assignments; completion of all in-class exercises; attentive listening; and frequent, meaningful verbal participation in class discussions and workshops. Read attentively, jotting down on paper at least two comments or questions about each day’s readings. I may give pop quizzes from time to time to check that you are doing your reading. Absence from class, tardiness, and inappropriate use of technology will negatively affect your participation grade. See Attendance Policy** and Technology Policy*** below. In-class exercises cannot be made up due to absence.

2. Seven Major Poem Assignments (early drafts)—25%: There are eight graded poem assignments listed on the calendar throughout the course of the semester. Any seven of these (your choice) must be completed and turned in on the due dates listed on the calendar. In other words, you are allowed to skip one of these assignments without any penalty to your grade, but the seven you choose to do must be turned in/posted on time and will not be accepted more than one day late. If one day late, the poem will lose one full grade. Do NOT skip any of the poems you are having workshopped by the entire class. When a poem of yours is being workshopped, whether by the whole class or by a small group, it will be due to the D2L Discussion area several days in advance of the workshop date. When a poem is not being workshopped, it will be due to the D2L Dropbox on a Tuesday or Thursday at 12:30 a.m. All major poem assignments must be word-processed, and each may earn up to 20 points (for 100%). A grading rubric for major poem assignments will be posted in the Content area on D2L.

3. Final portfolio of four revised poems and a three-page prose introduction—20%: You will choose four poems that you’ve written during the course of the semester to revise substantially (See ***Workshops and Revision below) and include in your portfolio. Because I want to compare the early and final drafts of each poem, please save the first draft separately on your computer before you begin to revise your poem; also save and include the early draft on which I wrote comments. In addition, you will write a short introductory essay (3 pages double-spaced) that explains the underlying aesthetics that inform your poems; the approaches and/or elements/techniques with which you experimented; and what you learned about writing, language, poetry and yourself from creating these poems. All components of the portfolio must be word-processed. My assessment will be based on writing quality and on the thoughtfulness of your revision. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric will be provided in the Content area on D2L.

4. Peer Critiques—15%: You must complete and post all written critiques of your peers’ poems as replies to them in the course D2L Discussion area by 4:15 p.m. on the days those poems are to be workshopped. Each critique may earn up to three points. To earn all three, you must write a thorough, constructive critique that follows the format I
provide. You will lose points on any critique that does not follow that format or is incomplete, cursory, or vague, meaning that it does not contain specific examples and advice. You will lose all points for any critique that is disrespectful to the writer or missing. The first time you lose points on a critique, I will write a note explaining why in the comments box next to your grade in the D2L grade book. After that, you will be responsible for making an appointment to discuss how you might improve your critiques. Please bring one copy of each critique to class so that you may refer to it during our verbal workshop sessions. Late critiques will not be accepted for credit; however, at the semester’s end, I will drop your three lowest critique scores, including zeroes.

5. Creative Writing Journals—15%: You will keep a weekly journal in which you write responses (12 total) to informal creative writing exercises/prompts, which are listed in a document titled “Journal Prompts” posted in the Content area on D2L. I expect you to respond thoughtfully to the prompts although your writing, in this case, will be less formal, so I do not expect it to be polished (some entries will be more like free-writes). I will collect journals twice during the semester. Journals that do not contain the required number of entries for the period will lose points. Please either type your entries or write them in a light-weight 8.5 x 11 notebook.

6. Poetry Reading Review—5%: You must attend at least one public poetry reading by a professional poet at some point during the semester, but by no later than Dec. 3, and write a two-page review that thoughtfully considers the poet’s work and recitation of it. On D2L in the Content area, you will find more detailed directions and a list of poetry readings occurring on campus and at various other venues in the Milwaukee area. You may turn this assignment in any time during the semester until Dec. 4 at 12:30 p.m.

*Attendance Policy: You are allowed up to THREE ABSENCES. I will deduct TEN percentage points from your final participation grade for each subsequent absence up to FIVE absences total. As of your sixth absence, you will have missed a significant portion of the semester and will automatically fail the course. The only absences after your third which will be considered “excused” (and not count against your grade) will be those caused by substantial, prolonged illness or hospitalization for which you provide a valid doctor’s excuse. You must use your three allowable absences to cover circumstances such as over sleeping, routine illness (a cold, the flu), sick children, automobile breakdowns, funerals, religious holidays, and other common reasons for absence. Promptness is also required. I will record late arrivals and early leaves from class, and two of them will equal one unexcused absence. You are responsible for obtaining any materials distributed and notes for classes you have missed, posting your own work to D2L on time, and being prepared for the next class. In-class exercises cannot be made up.

**Technology Policy: Your cell phone must be completely silent for the duration of the class period. Vibrate mode is not acceptable. All electronic devices must be turned off and put away unless and until I expressly give permission to use them during a given class period. Any student using a cell phone or other electronic device without permission during class time will be asked to leave and will receive an absence for the day.
***Workshops and Revision:*** Revision is an important part of the writing process and key to successful poets. Revised work is that which has undergone thoughtful change. At times, this may mean substantial development or pruning, reorganization, and/or rethinking an approach or idea altogether. At other times, it may involve tinkering with word choices, syntax, meter, line and stanza breaks, etc. This will vary from poem to poem. To help you revise, we will hold workshops (constructive peer critique sessions) during the semester. You will sign up to have **two-three** of your poems worked on by the entire class, and you will have **several** more poems worked on by a small group. When you revise, you must consider your classmates’ and professor’s suggestions, incorporate some of them, and eliminate clichés and grammatical errors that are not purposeful. You should make every effort to improve on weaknesses and try new techniques and approaches suggested to you, but you may, of course, be discretionary regarding your use of others’ suggestions and also revise according to your own instincts.

**Grade Scale:** 93-100 = A  
  90-92 = A-  
  87-89 = B+  
  83-86 = B  
  80-82 = B-77-79 = C+  
  73-76 = C  
  70-72 = C-  
  67-69 = D+  
  63-66 = D  
  60-62 = D-  
  0 – 59 = F

**ADDITIONAL COURSE AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES**
A web page maintained by the Secretary of the University contains university policies that affect the instructor and students in the course, as well as essential information specific to conduct of the course. Please see the policy links addendum below for abbreviated policy descriptions and links to the policies on-line. Also, please note the following:

**Academic Resource Center (ARC):** If you have a chronic health condition or disability that may affect your ability to meet any of the requirements of this course, please speak to me and contact the Accessibility Resource Center: [http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/](http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/) immediately so that accommodations can be made.

**Academic Conduct/Mis-Conduct:** Plagiarism and academic dishonesty is forbidden in this course and will result in a failing grade. Such acts are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions. Please find the policy link in addendum #1.

**Firearms Policy:** Individuals, including licensees, are prohibited from carrying firearms and dangerous weapons into buildings or portions of buildings that are owned, occupied, or controlled by UWM. Please see Policy S-24.5.

**English Department internship possibilities:** [https://uwm.edu/english/undergraduate/resources/internships/](https://uwm.edu/english/undergraduate/resources/internships/).

**NOTE:** This syllabus and the course calendar are subject to change as the instructor deems necessary. You will be provided with any changes in writing.
Syllabus Addendum #1:
Policy Links

1. **Students with disabilities.** Notice to these students should appear prominently in the syllabus so that special accommodations are provided in a timely manner. [http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACItf.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/sac/SACItf.pdf)

2. **Religious observances.** Accommodations for absences due to religious observance should be noted. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S1.5.htm)

3. **Students called to active military duty.** Accommodations for absences due to call-up of reserves to active military duty should be noted.
   Students: [http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/current_students/military_call_up.cfm)
   Employees: [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S40.htm)

   (Editorially Revised, 3/25/09)

4. **Incompletes.** A notation of "incomplete" may be given in lieu of a final grade to a student who has carried a subject successfully until the end of a semester but who, because of illness or other unusual and substantiated cause beyond the student's control, has been unable to take or complete the final examination or to complete some limited amount of term work. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S31.pdf)

5. **Discriminatory conduct (such as sexual harassment).** Discriminatory conduct will not be tolerated by the University. It poisons the work and learning environment of the University and threatens the careers, educational experience, and well-being of students, faculty, and staff. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S47.pdf)

6. **Academic misconduct.** Cheating on exams or plagiarism are violations of the academic honor code and carry severe sanctions, including failing a course or even suspension or dismissal from the University. [http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm](http://www4.uwm.edu/acad_aff/policy/academicmisconduct.cfm)

7. **Complaint procedures.** Students may direct complaints to the head of the academic unit or department in which the complaint occurs. If the complaint allegedly violates a specific university policy, it may be directed to the head of the department or academic unit in which the complaint occurred or to the appropriate university office responsible for enforcing the policy. [http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm](http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S49.7.htm)

8. **Grade appeal procedures.** A student may appeal a grade on the grounds that it is based on a capricious or arbitrary decision of the course instructor. Such an appeal

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1 Supplement to UWM FACULTY DOCUMENT NO. 1895, October 21, 1993; Revised March 16, 2006; Revised January 24, 2008; Editorialy Revised, 8/26/11.
shall follow the established procedures adopted by the department, college, or school in which the course resides or in the case of graduate students, the Graduate School. These procedures are available in writing from the respective department chairperson or the Academic Dean of the College/School.
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S28.htm

9. *Other* The final exam requirement, the final exam date requirement, etc.
http://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/other/S22.htm

*Syllabus Addendum #2:
Credit Hours*

The university has asked departments to break down for students how much time they will spend working on various aspects of their classes. As the UW System assumes “that study leading to one semester credit represents an investment of time by the average student of not fewer than 48 hours” (UWS ACPS 4), a 3-credit course such as this one will require a minimum of 144 (3 x 48) hours of your time. You may find it necessary to spend additional time on a course; the numbers below only indicate that the course will not require any less of your time.

Because this is a **traditional, or face-to-face** course, you will spend a **minimum of**
- **37.5** hours in the classroom
- **75** hours preparing for class, which may include reading, note taking, completing minor exercises and assignments, and discussing course topics with classmates and the instructor in structured settings
- **31.5** hours preparing for and writing major papers and/or exams.

*Notes*
- UWM Credit Hour Policy, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Faculty Document No. 2838, can be found at [https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/2838_Credit_Hour_Policy.pdf](https://www4.uwm.edu/secu/docs/faculty/2838_Credit_Hour_Policy.pdf).
- UWS ACPS 4, the University Of Wisconsin System Policy On Academic Year Definition And Assorted Derivatives, can be found at [http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acps/acps4.pdf](http://www.uwsa.edu/acss/acps/acps4.pdf).

NOTE: A course calendar will be provided by the first day of class.