It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

-William Carlos Williams
Participation (25%)—Perhaps more than any other course, the success of this course relies on your participation. The amount you give to your peers is the amount you get in return. You are expected, out of respect to your peers’ work as writers and your own work as writers, to attend each workshop fully prepared. Full preparation means having completed all the reading to date, being ready to pose and answer questions on these readings, having prepared comments on your peers’ poems, making a good faith effort to prepare your own poem for workshop, and being willing to share your insights with the class. The class, both the work inside and outside of it, is one big experiment. Its success relies on our willingness to feel our way around out loud, respectfully, curiously. I will take notes at the end of each class on your level of participation. I will be happy to discuss your participation grade as it stands at week 5, if you wish, in office hours.

Writing exercises and poems (20%)—There will be a short period in the beginning of class devoted to writing based on in-class prompts. You will also be required to bring 3-4 poems in for workshop according to the schedule set in class. These poems must engage with at least one craft or thematic question raised in class discussion. Please see late work policy below.

Lead a discussion (20%)—Individually or in pairs, each of you will lead one discussion based on our readings according to the schedule set in class. Each week, we will be reading a number of poems. For the purpose of discussion, however, you will have the class focus on 1-3 poems. Leading the discussion does not mean presenting a lecture. It does require, however, the following: 1) informing the class the session before you present what poems you will be focusing on; 2) introducing briefly the poet(s) you will be discussing with relevant biographical details; 3) a fly-over view of the poems discussed, including why you picked them; 4) questions related to craft to get class discussion going.

Final revisions and processing letter (20%)—Writing is mostly revising. At the end of the quarter, you will submit the first draft brought into class and the latest revision of each of the poems you submitted. You will include a processing letter with these revisions. The letter must have 1) a separate brief (100-200 word) description of how you revised each poem, including specific comments from your peers and myself that you took into consideration; 2) a brief (100-200 word) synopsis of how this revision process and discussion in workshop (including at least 3 poems/poets discussed) has impacted your approach as a poet.

Written critiques (10%)—Each week, the poets being workshopped will bring in a copy of their poem for each classmate. We will read the poems and discuss them during that class (reading poems out loud and commenting on them without having seen them first is called a “blind
reading"). After this class, you will take these poems home and write constructive comments on them. The next class, you will return the poems with comments to the poet and you will bring a copy to turn in to me. I will be looking for the level of rigor and care that is afforded these comments. Do these comments inspire one to return to one’s work? Do they point in helpful directions? This is your chance to not only help your peers sharpen their work, but to also help sharpen yourself into your own editor.

**Attending readings** (5%)—The department requires attending at least three department readings. You can find the schedule here: http://creativewriting.stanford.edu and http://events.stanford.edu. At the end of the quarter, you will submit a brief write-up of the events you attended.

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**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You are allowed two absences. Any additional absence will result in your final grade dropping a whole letter grade (A- will become B-, etc.). Leaving early or arriving more than 10 minutes late will count as an absence.

**LATE ASSIGNMENTS**

Late assignments will not receive a grade higher than a C. This includes assignments that were completed but not printed or copied when required. I will not accept any late assignments by email. They must be printed out and placed in my box.

**OFFICE HOURS/CONFERENCES**

Scheduling a time to attend office hours is not required, but highly recommended. If the times set do not work for you, we can schedule another time. This is a chance to get in-depth feedback on your work and your revisions, to ask about the readings, to ask about other possible readings, to discuss any trepidations or reservations you might have, and on and on. I’d be thrilled to see you there.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you have any questions, please see me in office hours before you email me. I check and respond to email only once a day. I suggest, if you are comfortable, exchanging emails with a couple of people in this class. Many lasting poetic friendships have begun in workshops— you might even send each other work for years to come.

**ELECTRONICS**

Please: no open laptops, no cell phones, no other electronic devices in class. This class is about paying keen attention to those around you. Just bring that notebook and pen. Anyway, it’s a good exercise in minimizing distraction when writing outside of class.
TRUST

All of these requirements—participating in conversation, working together to lead a discussion, not disrupting the class by being late, etc.—are designed to foster an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect. It’s not easy to write poems. It’s even harder to share them out loud. Harder, still, to share them for criticism. Know that you are all sharing this risk. So, the final thing: please do not share poems classmates have written for workshop with people outside this classroom.

While you are in this class, you will be treated as poets—not just students who write poetry. You will be taken seriously as poets. I trust you will find yourself willing to give the same in turn.

HONOR CODE

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work. The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. That they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
2. That they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code;
3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code;
4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL:http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).