English 9CT
Poetic Forms: Tradition and Innovation

Stanford University – Winter 2017
MW 3:30-5:20pm
Office Hours: TBA
Office: Margaret Jacks #211
Instructor: Michael Shewmaker
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Art hurts. Art urges voyages—
and it is easier to stay at home.
-Gwendolyn Brooks

Course Description
This course is a poetry workshop. We will spend the first half of the quarter reading and writing in traditional forms (blank verse, sonnet, villanelle, ghazal, sestina, etc.) and the second half innovating from those forms. We will consider how a writer might honor tradition without being confined by it. The culmination of the course will be a project in which the student invents (and writes in) a form of their own.

Required Materials


Grading
Participation 30%
Leading Class Discussion 10%
Poems for Workshop 10%
Final Portfolio 40%
Attend Readings 10%

Participation (30%)—A workshop is only valuable if its participants are present and engaged. I cannot stress this enough. While I will do everything in my power to facilitate our discussions, the success of this course is largely dependent on you. You will share your work and critique the work of your peers. Every voice is necessary and will be respectfully considered. You will gain what you give. Out of respect for your peers’ work, you will be expected to be prepared for all workshops. Your participation also requires you to provide your peers with written comments for each of their submitted poems.

Leading Class Discussion (10%)—Over the quarter, you will lead a discussion on one of our assigned forms. We will discuss one form per week, excepting the first and last weeks of the course. Your discussion can be as creative as you like. Feel free to provide supplemental materials to me and your peers, but this is not required.
Poems for Workshop (10%)—You will have the opportunity to workshop between five and six poems over the course of the quarter. I prefer that the poems workshopped be written during the term. You will be responsible to bring copies for me and your peers the week prior to your workshop.

Final Portfolio (40%)—The culmination of our course, your final portfolio will consist of eight poems, two of which must be revisions. I prefer that those revisions be of poems that went through our workshop. One of the eight must be a poem written in a form of your own invention. You will also write a brief 3-4 page preface discussing your work and your experience of the course.

Attend Readings (10%)—While I encourage you to attend as many readings as possible, you will be required to attend at least three readings sponsored by the Creative Writing Program. You can find information about upcoming readings on the creative writing website (http://creativewriting.stanford.edu/event-list). A list of readings can be found at http://creativewriting.stanford.edu & http://events.stanford.edu. If you have not already done so, please also sign up for the Creative Writing Events Listserv by going to http://mailman.stanford.edu and joining “cw-undergrad”.

Attendance
Because this course is largely discussion based, your attendance is vital. You will be allowed two unexcused absences. Any additional absence will result in your final grade being dropped by an entire letter (A+ will become a B+, etc.). Five absences will result in a failing grade for the course.

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/oa).

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.

Emergency Numbers
Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 650-723-3785; The Bridge Peer Counseling: 650-723-3392.