



**Course Title:** Writing Poetry: Your Sources of Inspiration

**Course Code:** POET 25 W

**Instructor:** Allison Pitinii Davis, PhD

### Grade Options and Requirements:

- No Grade Requested (NGR)
  - This is the default option. No work will be required; no credit shall be received; no proof of attendance can be provided.
- Credit/No Credit (CR/NC)
  - Your participation in discussion and response forums and the completion of five poems will account for full credit.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Your participation in discussions and response forums and the completion and revision of a collection of nine poems will account for 100% of your grade.

**\*Please Note:** If you require proof that you completed a Continuing Studies course for any reason (for example, employer reimbursement), you must choose either the Letter Grade or Credit/No Credit option. Courses taken for NGR will not appear on official transcripts or grade reports.

### Tentative Zoom Schedule\*:

Each Wednesday from 1-2pm Pacific Time (PT), we will meet for an optional, hour-long Zoom meeting to discuss course material, read our workshop poems aloud, and share constructive feedback.

During weeks 7-9, each participant will meet with me for a fifteen-minute, one-on-one consultation. We can meet during our regularly scheduled Zoom time or by appointment.

Here is the tentative Zoom schedule:

January 12 from 1-2 pm PT: Week 1 Group Zoom  
 January 19 from 1-2pm PT: Group Zoom with Visiting Writer Shelley Wong  
 January 26 from 1-2 pm PT: Week 3 Group Zoom  
 February 2 from 1-2 pm PT: Group Zoom with Visiting Writer Rebecca Morgan Frank  
 February 9 from 1-2 pm PT: Week 5 Group Zoom  
 February 16 from 1-2 pm PT: Week 6 Group Zoom  
 February 23 from 1-2 pm PT: 1:1 consultations  
 March 2 from 1-2 pm PT: 1:1 consultations  
 March 9 from 1-2 pm PT: 1:1 consultations  
 March 16 from 1-2 pm PT: Week 10 Group Zoom

While I hope to maintain this consistent Zoom time for group meetings, if another time works better for several participants, then we can alternate meeting times to ensure maximum participation.

\*Please note that the Zoom schedule is subject to change. The live video sessions are recorded; student attendance is optional.

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
 365 Lasuen St., Stanford, CA 94305  
 continuingstudies@stanford.edu  
 650-725-2650

## Textbooks/Required Materials:

Our class readings will include the below required texts and online readings:

### Required texts:

Kim Addonizio and Dorianne Laux, *The Poet's Companion: A Guide to the Pleasures of Writing*, any edition (ISBN 0393316548)

Louise Glück, *Meadowlands*, any edition (ISBN 0880015063)

Natasha Trethewey, *Domestic Work*, any edition (ISBN 1555973094)

### Online Readings:

Jack Gilbert, "[A Taste of Grit or Whatever](#)," "[Portrait Number Five: Against a New York Summer](#)" "[Tear It Down](#)," "[Alone](#)," and "[The Forgotten Dialect of the Heart](#)"

Visiting Poet Rebecca Morgan Frank, selections from *Oh You Robot Saints!* ([1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#)) and [Interview](#)

Ilya Kaminsky, selections from [Deaf Republic](#)

Rachel Mennies, selections from [The Naomi Letters](#)

Harryette Mullen, selections from [Recyclopedia](#)

Charles Reznikoff, "[Autobiography: New York](#)"

Viplav Saini, "[To My Future Lover in Pakistan](#)" and "[How to Raise a Bonsai](#)"

Vijay Seshadri, "[Nursing Home](#)"

Wallace Stevens, "[Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bird](#)"

Visiting Poet Shelly Wong, selections from [Rare Birds](#) and [As She Appears](#) and [Interview](#)

## Tentative Weekly Outline:

### Week 1: Jan. 10-14

#### Introductions

Inspiration Inventory

Reading: online selections from Charles Reznikoff and Jack Gilbert

Poetry Handbook: "Writing and Knowing" and "Death and Grief"

Submit poem Inspiration Inventory and poem 1

Group Zoom 1

### Week 2: Jan. 17-21

#### Planning the Collection

Reading: *Domestic Work*, sections 1 and 2 and online selections from Visiting Poet Shelly Wong

Poetry Handbook: "Family: Inspiration and Obstacle" and "Witnessing"

Submit poem 2

Group Zoom 2 with Visiting Poet Shelley Wong

### Week 3: Jan. 24-28

#### Forms

Reading: online selections from Ilya Kaminsky and Rachel Mennies

Poetry Handbook: "Meter, Rhyme, and Form"

Submit poem 3

Group Zoom 3

Week 4: Jan. 31-Feb. 4

**Line and Sound**

Reading: *Meadowlands*: The Telemachus poems and online selections from Visiting Poet Rebecca Morgan Frank

Poetry Handbook: "The Music of the Line" and "A Grammatical Excursion"

Submit poem 4

Group Zoom 4 with Visiting Poet Rebecca Morgan Frank

Week 5: Feb. 7-11

**Setting and Image**

Reading: online selections from Ilya Kaminsky and Jack Gilbert

Poetry Handbook: "Images" and "Poetry and Place"

Submit poem 5

Group Zoom 5

Week 6: Feb. 14-18

**Voice, Persona, and Perspective**

Reading: *Meadowlands*: The Circe and Penelope poems and online selections from Vijay Seshadri

Poetry Handbook: "Voice and Sound" and "Simile and Metaphor"

Submit poem 6

Group Zoom 6

Week 7: Feb. 21-25

**Transitions and Links**

Readings: online selections from Wallace Stevens

Poetry Handbook: "The Shadow"

Submit poem 7

Zoom 1:1 Consultations

Week 8: Feb. 28-March 4

**Experimentation**

Reading: online selections from Harryette Mullen

Poetry Handbook: "Stop Making Sense: Dreams and Experiments" and "Repetition, Rhythm, and Blues"

Submit poem 8

Zoom 1:1 Consultations

Week 9: March 7-11

**Revision**

Reading: *Domestic Work*, sections 3 and 4

Poetry Handbook: "The Energy of Revision"

Submit revision

Zoom 1:1 Consultations

Week 10: March 14-18

**Organization and Publication**

Reading: Poem of your choice and online selections from Viplav Saini

Poetry Handbook: "The Writing Life"

Submit final collection, including poem 9

Final Group Zoom

## Navigating Canvas:

**Module:** In the Module section, you will find course materials:

- Weekly craft lectures
- Online poems
- Weekly discussion questions based upon the readings
- Weekly writing prompts

**Discussion:** In the Discussion section, you will find three types of forums:

- Discussion: space to respond to discussion questions
- Workshop Groups A-E: space to post weekly poems
- Instructor Workshop: space to post four poems and a final manuscript for my review

## Weekly Schedule:

- **Friday afternoon:** I will update the Module with a new lecture, reading assignment, discussion questions, and writing prompt.
- **Monday morning:** Discussion forums open. Respond to the discussion questions by Friday afternoon.
- **Wednesday from 1:00-2:00 pm Pacific Time:** Tentative Zoom meeting
- **Wednesday by 9:00 pm Pacific Time:** Submit a poem to a Workshop Group (A, B, C, D, or E). Four times during the quarter, please also submit a poem to the Instructor Workshop.
- **Thursday-Friday:** Respond to the three other poems in your forum.

## Reading Assignments:

In this class, we will approach poetry as both readers and writers. We will practice critical reading by questioning the texts—how do we respond to each poem? What craft choices did the writer make to produce the poem’s formal, sonic, and thematic qualities?

Each Friday afternoon, I will assign poems that we will discuss as a class the following week. I will complement each week’s reading with craft lectures from our handbook.

For each set of readings, I will post questions to Topics for Discussion. In response, each student should post one short paragraph (around 5 sentences) a week to the Discussion Bulletin Board. As participation is the foundation of a writing community, I encourage you to read and comment on the responses of others.

## Writing Assignments:

I ask you to write and share one poem each week based on a set of prompts I have created to encourage the writing of a collection. If you complete all of the weekly writing assignments, you will finish this ten-week course with nine poems and at least one revision.

Each Wednesday, you will post one poem in one of the forums by 9 PM Pacific Time. Up to four students are welcome in each forum. Once four poems have been posted in one forum, please post in another forum. This will ensure you experience the poetry of different writers each week. We will also share poems aloud during our optional Zoom meetings.

### Feedback on Writing Assignments:

#### Your Feedback:

Online classes allow poets from a variety of places and perspectives to learn from each other. This is an exciting opportunity, and I have designed the class to maximize community interaction. Weekly, the four poets who post to a forum will leave constructive feedback on each other's work. Poets who leave thoughtful critiques often receive thoughtful critiques in return. Please note which types of feedback are encouraging to you as a poet and extend similar commentary to others—sometimes just a few careful observations jumpstart revision. Please complete all feedback by Friday evenings or earlier. Aim for a paragraph of at least five sentences.

#### Instructor Feedback:

Each student may choose four assignments on which to receive in-depth instructor commentary and criticism. One assignment may be the revision. In addition, each student will submit a final collection for my review. Please post four poems and final collections in both the regular Workshop thread and in the Instructor Workshop thread. I will respond to writing in order of submission. To keep the momentum of the course moving forward, I typically do not respond to late assignments.

### A Note on Time Commitment:

Sometimes daily responsibilities take priority over writing. If you miss a discussion one week or don't have time to write a poem, please stay encouraged. Our mutual respect for poetry resulted in this unique community, and the insights we can provide each other with are the most valuable part of the course. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me. I'm grateful for the opportunity to read your poetry, and I look forward to working with you.