

**Course Title:** Make It New, Make It Last: Writing Poems That Transcend Time

**Course Code:** POET 39

**Instructor:** Matthew Siegel

### **Class Sessions and Recording**

Meeting days and times: Wednesdays, 6:30-9:20pm PT

Meeting location: Zoom

The class discussions will be recorded, but workshops/sharing sessions will *not* be recorded. Please reach out with any questions about this.

### **Course Features**

- Live session
  - Lecture, discussions, and Q&A
  - Workshopping in the latter half of the course
  - Requires interaction and active participation
- Assignments & Coursework
  - Assignments and course materials posted in Canvas
  - Optional discussions in Canvas
  - Students will submit one large workshop packet (~5 pages)
  - Instructor will provide feedback on assignments
- Individual 15-min. meetings available by request

### **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)
  - Students must attend 7 class sessions, submit most writing assignments including the workshop packet, and be an active participant in discussion and critiques.
- Letter Grade (A, B, C, D, No Pass)
  - Grades will be based on involvement in class discussions, submission of short writing assignments given during the first four weeks of the course, a packet of approximately 5 pages of poetry due at the beginning of the fourth week, and participation in exercise and workshop critiques of others' work.

*\*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.*

## Learning Objectives

Great poems speak both to the present moment while maintaining their potential impact long into the future. In this course you will:

- Learn what makes a poem “work” in terms of structure and content
- Develop a critical vocabulary for discussing the craft of poetry
- Examine a variety of poetry that have endured the test of time and poetry we imagine will endure
- Explore several poetic forms including the epistolary, ghazal, haiku, pantoum, sonnet, tanka, and villanelle
- Write your own packet of revised poetry

Each week there will be writing prompts based on our readings and discussions. You are encouraged to try any of them that speak to you (and in any fashion that pleases you), but it is not required that you do anything specific with them. It could be helpful to think of these prompts simply as exercises that are part of a larger practice. The idea is to be very regular with showing up for specific tasks rather than relying on/waiting for inspiration to come.

Each writer is encouraged to post one poem per week with the group on Canvas no later than the Sunday before class. Commentary on these weekly poems is not required, though you are free to issue brief responses via email or private message if you’d like; in-depth commentary and discussion will be part of our workshop process. These weekly poems may be revised and resubmitted in your packet for workshop.

At the end of the fourth week, each writer will submit a portfolio (~5 pages) of new, revised poetry written during our course. We’ll workshop 4 portfolios per week, and participating in workshop and working on your own writing will be your only assigned work for those weeks. Comments should each be at minimum one page for each portfolio.

My goal as instructor is to make this course accessible and engaging, responding to the needs of each participant. I aim to facilitate a safe, fun, and inspiring space where creativity can ensue and each writer can establish or support a poetry writing practice.

## Textbooks/Required Materials

Readings will be provided/posted on Canvas.

## Tentative Weekly Outline

Pre-reading:

Virgil - “Eclogue 2,” D. A. Powell - “Corydon & Alexis,” “Corydon & Alexis, Redux,” May Swensen - “Little Lion Face,” Mark Doty - “Speaking in Figures,” Audre Lorde - “Poetry is Not a Luxury”

### Week 1: Setting the Stage: Intros and Intentions

Poetry definitions and the nature of metaphor.

HW: Tony Hoagland - “Je Suis ein Americano: The Genius of American Diction” and packet of contemporary poems

**Week 2: “Better immersion...than to live untouched”**

Discuss readings and writing practices. Share poems.

HW: Audre Lorde - \**“The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action,”* Li-Young Lee - \**“The Subject is Silence,”* “This Hour and What Is Dead,” “This Room and Everything In It,” Danez Smith - “Summer Somewhere,” “Tonight in Oakland,” Jane Wong - “Everything,” “I Put On My Fur Coat,” “After Preparing the Altar, the Ghosts Feast Feverishly,” Adrienne Rich - “Diving into the Wreck,” “Planetarium,” “Cartographies of Silence,” Wislawa Szymborska - “Under One Small Star,” and Zbigniew Herbert - “The Envoy of Mr. Cogito”

**Week 3: Silence and the Direct Address**

Discuss readings. Share obstacles. Share poems.

HW: Linda Gregg - \**“The Art of Finding,”* Adam Zagajewski - “Try to Praise the Mutilated World,” “Don’t Allow the Lucid Moment to Dissolve,” “Self Portrait,” and “In a Little Apartment,” epistolary poems: Oni Buchanan - “Dear Lonely Animal,” Olena Kalytiak Davis - “sweet reader, flanneled and tullede:,” Kevin Young - “I Don’t Burn,” Eugene Ostashevsky - “Dear Owl,” Kim Addonizio - “Dear Reader,” “To the Woman Crying Uncontrollably in the Next Stall,” and Jill Alexander Essbaum - “Epistolary”

***Workshop packets due on Sunday before week 4*****Week 4:** Discuss readings. Workshop round 1

HW: First workshop packets, pantoum packet, Joy Harjo - \**“Beyond Time and Place,”* Mark Doty - \**“Souls on Ice,”* “Esta Noche,” “Tiara,” Rainer Maria Rilke - “Archaic Torso of Apollo,” Eavan Boland - “The Pomegranate,” “Quarantine,” Ross Gay - “Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude”

**Week 5:** Discuss readings. Workshop round 2

HW: Workshop packets, Villanelle packet

**Week 6:** Workshop round 3

HW: Workshop Packets, Ghazal packet

**Week 7:** Workshop round 4

HW: Packets, Sonnet packet

**Week 8:** Workshop round

**PRELIMINARY COURSE SYLLABUS**

Please contact the Stanford Continuing Studies office with any questions  
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