



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
Department Of English**

**COURSE OUTLINE**

**ENGL 693: CREATIVE WRITING, POETRY: BOOK-LENGTH MANUSCRIPT**

**Winter 2022**

**Class Schedule (We 1:00 - 3:45pm/SS1059)**

<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Larissa Lai
<b>Email:</b>	larissa.lai@ucalgary.ca
<b>Web Page:</b>	D2L (access via MyUofC portal)
<b>Office Hours:</b>	I will be available to answer your questions or speak to your concerns after class every Wednesday, from 3:45 - 4:45. If you'd like to talk to me at another time, please request an appointment and I'd be happy to meet with you via Zoom.

**Course description:**

This is a mixed upper-level-undergraduate/graduate level class in poetry writing with the goal of complete a book-length manuscript by the end. This class will be structured primarily through a workshop format. Each week three students will have a selection of submitted poems workshopped, and each week all students will offer helpful feedback to those one the "hotseat:. In this way, I will train you both in poetry-writing and constructive criticism. Through constructive criticism, you will also train each other, and the class will grow into a small community of active and supportive poet/practitioners. In addition to workshop, a portion of the class will be devoted to the discussion of a contemporary issues in poetry and/or the close examination and discussion of a practicing poet's work. Possible topics for discussion include: the lyric in contemporary poetry, visual and experimental poetry, Indigenous poetics, Black voices, cultural appropriation, ecopoetics, the long poem, digital poetics, twitter poetry. Poets whose work we may read and discuss include: Jordan Abel, Liz Howard, Canisia Lubrin, Weyman Chan, Wayde Compton, Phinder Dulai, Sharron Proulx-Turner, Michael Prior, Sina Queyras, Trish Salah, Daniel Scott Tysdal.

**Class Structure and Location:**

This class will take place in the university recommended location, either in SS1059 or on Zoom, as mandated under COVID conditions in real time. It will have a strong D2L component. Because of the workshop and discussion nature of the course, it's necessary to attend class synchronously, and to actively participate. Sessions will not be recorded because recorded

sessions will be of little use after the fact. A missed class or two because of unforeseen circumstances is okay. Just let me know in advance. If you think you might miss a lot of classes, however, this course is probably not for you.

### **Course learning outcomes:**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Produce a full-length poetry manuscript.
2. Write poetry at a professional level.
3. Write in a poetic voice that is uniquely their own.
4. Engage the best forms and structures for their poetry, both at the level of the poem and at the level of the book.
5. Engage in productive creative writing workshop critiques in order to help their peers improve their writing.
6. Make use of critiques received and witnessed to improve their own work.

### **Texts and readings:**

Abel, Jordan. *Injun*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2016.

Allen, Lillian. *Make the World New: The Poetry of Lillian Allen*. Waterloo: WLUP, 2021.

Chan, Weyman. *Human Tissue: A Primer of Not Knowing*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2016.

Compton, Wayde. *49th Parallel Psalm*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp, 1999.

Dulai, Phinder. *Dream/Arteries*. Vancouver: Talonbooks, 2014.

Howard, Liz. *Letters in a Bruised Cosmos*. Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 2021.

Lubrin, Canisia. *The Dyzgraphxst*. Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 2020.

Proulx-Turner, Sharron. *She Walks for Days Inside a Thousand Eyes: A Two-Spirit Story*. Winnipeg: Turnstone, 2008.

Prior, Michael. *Burning Province*. Toronto: McLelland & Stewart, 2020.

Queyras, Sina. *MXT*. Toronto: Coach House, 2014.

Salah, Trish. *Lyric Sexology*. Montreal: Metonymy, 2017.

Tysdal, Daniel Scott. *Fauxccasional Poems*. Fredericton: Goose Lane, 2015.

### Short weekly readings:

Price, Katie L. "Quick Question: What is the place of lyric in modern and contemporary poetry?" *Jacket 2*. n.d. <<https://jacket2.org/commentary/what-place-lyric-modern-and-contemporary-poetry>>

"Poetic Visuality and Experimentation." CanLitGuides. 15 August 2013.  
<<https://canlitguides.ca/canlit-guides-editorial-team/poetic-visuality-and-experimentation/>>

Retallack, Joan. "What is Experimental Poetry & Why do We Need It?" *Jacket2*. April 2007.  
<<http://jacketmagazine.com/32/p-retallack.shtml>>

Cariou, Warren. "Edgework: Indigenous Poetics as Re-placement." *Indigenous Poetics in Canada*. Neal McLeod, ed. Waterloo: WLUP, 2014. 31- 28. (available as an ebook at the University of Calgary Library).

Maracle, Lee. "Indigenous Poetry and the Oral." *Indigenous Poetics in Canada*. Neal McLeod, ed. Waterloo: WLUP, 2014. 305-310. (available as an ebook at the University of Calgary Library).

Allen, Lillian. "Assessing Dub Poetry's Literary Impact: Black Voice." Anne Szumigalski Memorial Lecture, League of Canadian Poets. 6 June 2014.  
<<https://lillianallen.ca/assessing-dub-poetrys-literary-impact-black-voice/>>

"Who Owns What? Who Can Speak for Whom?" *Frieze*. 27 September 2017.  
<<https://www.frieze.com/article/who-owns-what-who-can-speak-whom>>

Gander, Forrest. "What is Eco-poetry." *Poetry Foundation*. 29 November 2008.  
<<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2008/11/what-is-eco-poetry>>

Shoptaw, John. "Why Eco-poetry?: There's no Planet B." *Poetry Foundation*. 4 January 2016.  
<<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/70299/why-ecopoetry>>

Thesen, Sharon. "After-Thoughts on the Long Poem." *The Malahat Review*. n.d.  
<[http://www.malahatreview.ca/long\\_poem\\_papers/thesen.html](http://www.malahatreview.ca/long_poem_papers/thesen.html)>

Cruz, Cynthia. "Notes Toward a New Language: The Collage."  
< <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2015/04/notes-toward-a-new-language-the-collage->>

Wells, Lisa. "Occasional Poems." <<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet-books/2020/04/occasional-poems>>

## **Learning technology requirements:**

Students will need to have access to a computer. There is a D2L site for to which you will post your poetry and critiques (see [d2L.ucalgary.ca](http://d2L.ucalgary.ca)).

## **Assessments and Evaluation:**

In principle, all work must be double-spaced and in a legible font (12 point). In practice, however, you may vary these things for aesthetic reasons, in other words, to shape the way the poem looks on the page.

There is no Registrar-scheduled Final Examination for this course. All assignments as described below must be completed in order to pass the course.

### **1. Initial Book Concept (in the Second Class) 4%**

By midnight on January 18, you will post to D2L 3-10 sentences laying out an initial theme, frame or concept for the book project you hope to write for this course. Prepare it in the clearest, most focussed way you can. That said, it does not need to be perfect. And you are allowed to change your mind later in the course. In fact, I expect you most likely will change your mind, and will see changing your mind as a mark of creativity, intelligence and strength. Nevertheless, this is an important first step and must be completed as fully as you can, by deadline. This is a "get it done" exercise. You will receive full marks for completing on time. (If you can't complete this on time, I'd suggest you drop the course, as this work is needed for the course to work. In any case, all assignments for this course must be completed to pass the course.)

### **2. Weekly poems                      14%** **4-5 pp of poetry per week**

You will write batches of 7-10 pages of new poetry per week in the direction of your project and submit them in the dropbox on D2L. You may use writing exercises or forms from the handbook of your choice, or just write out of your own head and heart. Experiment with different techniques and methods and find out what works best for you. The reward, beyond what you will learn through practice, is that if you do it— on time— you will receive full marks. This is a "get it done" exercise. In other words, for this exercise, I am not seeking quality, I am seeking timely completion. Late submissions will get a zero. You must submit 7 of these over the courses of the term.

Note, however, that the course offers 10 opportunities to submit poetry batches. This means that you get three "throwaways", in other words, three occasions during which you can bow out, skip, forget, be sick, or have a major family event or emergency with no explanation required and no consequences. The flipside of this is that I will accept no excuses for not posting at least seven batches of poetry to D2L.

You can, of course, write as many poems during the term as you like. However, you'll have the opportunity to post a maximum of ten batches. You'll get points for seven batches.

### **3. "Hot Seat" Poems            4%**

Twice over the course of the term you will put a batch of poems up for workshop, in other words for feedback from your professor and peers. For each of these "hot seat" poetry batches you will receive two points on top of the three you'd receive for an ordinary, non-workshopped batches. You must always post your work in a timely fashion, but it is extra important to do so for the "hot seat" poems because your peers will need time to do their critiques.

These poems will be posted in a special D2L folder under the "Discussions" tab, which will be accessible for critique by your peers. On your hotseat day, you will receive a full round of verbal feedback from your professor and peers on the poem you submitted for critique. You can use this critique to make the poem stronger. (On days when you're not on the hotseat, listen to the kinds of critiques that are being made for the person who is. Can you extrapolate from that critique to make your own work stronger?)

The protocol when you are in the hotseat is to listen quietly and take notes. Take note especially of the critiques that will be useful to help you make the poem stronger. If you don't agree with any particular critique, your job is not to respond. In fact, you must not respond; defensiveness is annoying and beside the point. Instead, consider what it might be that you've put on the page that has prompted the disagreeable critique. What could you change in your own writing to foreclose such a critique? (Note that it's impossible to completely foreclose odd or undesirable critiques. Sometimes we just have to live with them. One of the major contradictions of being a writer is remaining a sensitive person, yet developing a thick skin. Another is finding a sense of balance between what you put on the page and the readings you're able to live with.)

### **4. Critiques                    14%**

Each class you will produce three to ten sentences of written feedback for each of the writers being critiqued that week on the Discussion tab under the poster's poem. The day your own work is being critiqued, you obviously do not need to critique your own work, but you are still required to provide a critique for that week's other writer(s). Critiques are compulsory, and you will be graded on the depth and intelligence of your engagement with the work of your peers. Critiques should generally begin by saying something both specific and positive about the work under scrutiny, followed by more substantive/difficult critique. Please close your critique with a second specific and positive observation. Specific and positive comments could pertain to what is working well or could address a specific detail that strikes you as sharp, beautiful, interesting etc. Substantive critique should always be framed constructively, in other words, it should be framed to help the writer improve. Ad hominem attacks are strictly forbidden. Overly general statements, positive or negative, are also discouraged. ("I like it" is not any more useful than "I didn't like it".) Under no circumstances are you to dismiss another student's work

because you don't like its form or subject matter. Critique must be conducted in terms of what the work in question is attempting to accomplish.

Each student is required to critique his/her colleagues' work with care and in some detail. These critiques are due the night before the class discussion; it should be your own initial and thoughtful response to the work. Keep in mind how useful these critiques are to you as a writer. It follows that to receive helpful critiques you must give helpful critiques. Each critique should not take you hours, but should be an encapsulation of your careful, intense reading skill, which you will hone to a sharp edge over the course of the term. This is a "get it done" exercise, however, you'll find it is in your interest to make a solid effort here, and to read and criticize constructively and intelligently. You'll be amazed as well how much you learn about your own practice by critiquing the work of others.

As with the poetry batch submissions, you must do seven out of ten sets of these (for three-four peers each time). Thus, you get three throwaways, for which you do not need to account in any way.

### **5. Discussion Questions 7%**

Each week you will post two discussion questions, one on the poetry book under discussion that week, and one on the issue or topic under discussion that week. You must do seven out of ten sets of these over the course of the term. These questions must be posted by midnight the night before class.

As with the poetry batches and critiques, you get three throwaways, no questions asked and no excuses necessary. This is a "get it done" exercise.

### **6. Poetry Book Presentation 9%**

Each student will give a ten-minute presentation on one of the poetry books on the course syllabus. The presentation should answer the question: What makes the book of poetry work? Consider how the author has made the book cohere-- is it drawn together by a set of thematics? A formal device? A political commitment? You can still talk about all the things you would talk about in addressing a single poem: language, form, line, content, history, the body and so on. End your presentation with two discussion questions, provided to the class beforehand on D2L.

Practice your presentation before you give it, and time it carefully.

One week after you have given the presentation, please hand in a 2-5 page summary for grading. Please write the summary in the present tense, as you would an ordinary academic paper. This exercise will be graded for quality.

### **7. Issue or Topic Presentation 9%**

It's important at this stage in your poetry education to understand how your own work is situated within larger national and international poetry conversations. To this end, each student will give one ten-minute presentation on one of the topics posted for each week of the course. Taking up the essay or article posted for the week you've signed up for, lay out what is at stake in the article. What is its main argument? What are the major contradictions or disagreements at work in the issue at stake? Where do the possibilities for further development lie? Where do the possibilities for creating new work lie? Are the new possibilities formal, content-based, both, or neither? What do they look/sound/feel like? . End your presentation with two discussion questions, provided to the class beforehand on D2L.

Practice your presentation before you give it, and time it carefully.

One week after you have given the presentation, please hand in a 2-5 page summary for grading. Please write the summary in the present tense, as you would an ordinary academic paper. This exercise will be graded for quality.

### **8. Mid-Term Book Proposal 15%**

The Mid-Term assignment is a letter of inquiry that describes your book and compares it to at least two recent Canadian titles, plus 15-20 sample poems. You can address it to me, pretending that I am the managing editor of an imaginary press called True Lai's Poetry Chapbook Press. (This exercise is very close to the submission processes for Coach House Press and Wolsak & Wynn. Look at their submission pages if you wish to get an idea of how this works in the real world.)

With the Mid-Term Book Proposal, please submit also the three best critiques you prepared for a classmate so far in the term.

This course component will be graded for quality. The Mid-Term Book Proposal may be submitted late; however, a late Mid-Term Portfolio will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (eg., an A- to B+) for each calendar day (not class meeting) that the Mid-Term Portfolio is overdue. No assignments will be accepted one week past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

### **9. Full-Length Book Manuscript 24%**

A seventy-page manuscript prepared as though for publication. It should consist of poems written during this course, revised to make them as strong as they can be. You will likely have to write additional poems to complete the manuscript. You may include previously written poems as long as they fit the framework of your book.

This course component will be graded for quality. The Full-Length Book Manuscript may be submitted late; however, late manuscripts will be penalized with the loss of a third of a grade (eg., an A- to B+) for each calendar day that the manuscript is overdue. No assignments will be accepted five days past the assignment deadline without the prior consent of the instructor.

**10. Extra credit:** Attend and submit a one-page report on a public poetry reading to receive 5% extra. Extra credit marks will be added to your final grade up to a limit of 100%. This is a "get it done" exercise-- if you do it, you'll get the extra 5%.

**Attendance and participation expectations:**

This is a workshop-based creative writing class. Attendance is compulsory because it is necessary to make the class work. While there is no participation grade as such, you must attend class in order to receive the grades for the poems, critiques, remarks and questions that you will post for each class as described above. You are expected to be present and fully-engaged for all classes.

If you must miss a class or two for reasons unforeseen, please let me know in advance. One or two missed classes is no big deal. More than that, and will be penalized as described above.

**Conduct:**

Students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate behaviour in class that promotes and maintains a positive and productive learning environment. As members of the University community, students, employees, and academic staff are expected to demonstrate conduct that is consistent with the University of Calgary Calendar, the Code of Conduct and Non-Academic Misconduct policy and procedures, which can be found at:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html>

**Policy on use of electronic devices:**

Since this is an online class, you are expected to be at your computer, phone or other device in order to take part in the class. Please refrain from checking email, social media, or texts or engaging in other distractions-- digital or material-- during class time.



## Grading System:

Students will be given a percentage grade for each class assignment. The final grade will be converted to a letter grade at the end of term. Fractions of percentage points will generally be rounded up. Students will receive a letter grade on their transcripts. The percentage conversation scale is as follows:

90 + %	A+	4.0	67 – 69 %	C+	2.3
85 – 89 %	A	4.0	64 – 66 %	C	2.0
80 – 84 %	A–	3.7	60 – 63 %	C–	1.7
77 – 79 %	B+	3.3	55 – 59 %	D+	1.3
74 – 76 %	B	3.0	50 – 54 %	D	1.0
70 – 73 %	B–	2.7	0 – 49 %	F	0

Students must reach the minimum percentage threshold for the grade range to receive that letter grade (e.g., to receive an A- a student will have surpassed the minimum threshold of 80.00% in the course).

Please refer to the Graduate Grading System at the following link, where a B- is the lowest passing grade: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/grad/current/gs-h-1.html> .

### University of Calgary : H.1 Distribution of Grades

2500 University Drive NW, Calgary, AB, Canada T2N 1N4 Switchboard: +1 (403) 220-5110  
[www.ucalgary.ca](http://www.ucalgary.ca)

## Academic Integrity:

This course, like all courses at the University of Calgary, holds students to high standards of honest and responsible scholarship. Please consult the [Academic Integrity website](#) for a detailed description of university policies, which will be enforced in this course. Cases of suspected academic misconduct will be referred to the Associate Dean of Arts for a ruling.

Plagiarism is a type of academic misconduct. Plagiarism occurs when a student presents the ideas, expression of ideas, or work of another person as their own. Another equally serious form of plagiarism occurs when a student submits something they have written themselves for credit in two or more courses without first securing written permission from all those course instructors. Consequences for plagiarism include failure on the assignment, failure in the course, and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense.

**Deferral of term work and final examinations:**

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an [Application of Deferment of Term Work](#) must be completed. It is the student's responsibility to initiate this process with the instructor. The University also has regulations governing the [deferral of final examinations](#).

**Grade appeals:**

To pursue a Reassessment of Graded Term Work or a Reappraisal of an Academic Assessment, Consult the [University Calendar](#) and request advice from the English Department at [engl@ucalgary.ca](mailto:engl@ucalgary.ca). Please note that mere dissatisfaction with a grade is not sufficient grounds for an appeal.

**[English Department Website:](#)**

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English.

**Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:**

The [Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club](#) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. Our email address is [smecuofc@gmail.com](mailto:smecuofc@gmail.com).

**Writing support:**

[The Student Success Centre](#) offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students.

**[Academic regulations and schedules](#)****Student Academic Accommodations:**

The Student Accessibility Services website is available [here](#). University accommodation policies can be found at the following links:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-1.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6.html>

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/b-6-2.html>

**Program Advising and Student Information Resources** is done through the Faculty of Arts Students' Centre. Office location: SS102; phone: 403-220-3580; email: [ascarts@ucalgary.ca](mailto:ascarts@ucalgary.ca)  
Website: <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate>

**Instructor's Intellectual Property**

Course materials created by instructors, including presentations, posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments, and exams, remain the intellectual property of the instructor. These materials may not be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the instructor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites

without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing.

### **Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy**

Student information will be collected in accordance with usual classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty and teaching assistants. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

### **Sexual violence policy:**

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/policies/files/policies/sexual-violence-policy.pdf>

### **Other important information:**

- [Wellness and Mental Health Resources](#)
- [Student Success](#)
- [Student Ombuds Office](#)
- [Student Union \(SU\) Information](#)
- [Graduate Students' Association \(GSA\) Information](#)
- [Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points](#)
- [Safewalk](#)

### **Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):**

Please participate in [USRI Surveys](#) toward the end of the course. The feedback they provide helps us evaluate teaching, enhance student learning, and guide students as they select courses.