

CUYAMACA COLLEGE
COURSE OUTLINE OF RECORD

English 140 – Poetry Writing I

3 hours of lecture, 3 units

Catalog Description

Explore the art and language of poetry in this introductory poetry writing course. You'll read work by poets past and present, experiment with form and voice, and create original poems that express your unique perspectives, experiences, and interests. Workshops and peer feedback help you grow as both writer and reader. This is an open access course (all are welcome) and no prior experience is required; courses in the sequence may be taken individually.

Prerequisite

Placement into ENGL C1000 (formerly ENGL 120) or ESL 122

Recommended Preparation

"C" grade or higher or "Pass" in ENGL 126 or equivalent

Course Content

- 1) Invention, composition, and revision of poetry
- 2) Fundamental tools, techniques, and forms of poetry, including genre, voice, structure, imagery, figurative language, sound, diction, allusion, theme
- 3) Written and oral critical commentary of original poems by peers
- 4) A diversity of poems in traditional and free verse forms by emerging, established, and/or contemporary writers, in print and online chapbooks, books, anthologies, literary magazines, and journals
- 5) In-class writing exercises
- 6) Critical essays on poetics
- 7) Strategies for performatively reading poetry
- 8) Practice in assembling a poetry chapbook
- 9) Introduction to publishing

Course Objectives

Students will be able to:

- 1) Distinguish, both orally and in writing, the fundamental tools, techniques, and forms used by professional practitioners of poetry, including genre, imagery, metaphor, simile, alliteration, assonance, rhyme, meter, allusion, theme, traditional and contemporary forms.
- 2) Identify and employ basic techniques of invention.
- 3) Write and revise poems utilizing fundamental forms and poetic techniques.
- 4) Evaluate benefits of criticism of their own work and demonstrate application of feedback in consequent revisions.
- 5) Develop ability to critique other students' poetry, both orally and in writing.
- 6) Cultivate aesthetic criteria for poetry.
- 7) Evaluate the oral readings of poets and practice performatively reading their own poems.
- 8) Practice competency in grammar, punctuation, and mechanics used in the writing of poetry.

Method of Evaluation

Grades are based on demonstrated proficiency in the subject matter determined by multiple measurements for evaluation. Assessment frameworks may include alternative, equity-minded approaches to evaluation, such as ungrading, labor-based grading, contract-based grading, etc.

The instructor continually evaluates students' writing and provides regular and timely feedback so that students can improve their writing skills. Feedback is strengths-based and supportive. The instructor also proactively addresses concerns with attendance and assignment outcomes before the student is in danger of failing the course.

Methods of evaluation may include:

- 1) Student writing and revision of poetry.
- 2) Participation in writers' workshop, both orally and in writing.
- 3) Participation in class discussion, and writing exercises such as modeling based on published authors
- 4) Completion of poetry portfolio (including exercises, drafts and revisions) as a final project.
- 5) Performative reading of original works composed for the class, presented as part of a final examination.

Special Materials Required of Student

None

Minimum Instructional Facilities

Smart classroom

Method of Instruction

Instructors use culturally relevant and equity-minded approaches to teaching and learning. These approaches center student identities, values, experiences, and goals; use strengths-based approaches to learning; convey growth-minded faculty mindsets about student potential; offer just-in-time remediation strategies to boost language and writing skills; are attentive to student affective domains; and individualize support so that students may have equitable learning experiences.

On writing assignments, the instructor will include comments to indicate strengths and areas for improvement, enabling students to revise their work. Class time is also devoted to explaining and discussing various writing techniques, analysis and discussion of published and student writing, and peer commentary of selected assignments. A variety of teaching methods may be used:

- 1) Lecture by instructor, visiting writers, and media
- 2) Workshopping, reviewing, and reading activities in small or large groups
- 3) Discussion and writing exercises based on tools, techniques, and forms of poetry
- 4) Discussion and analysis of poetry by emerging, traditional, and/or contemporary authors
- 5) Individual conferences

Out-of-Class Assignments

- 1) **Reading:** Reading and studying of work by emerging, established and/or contemporary poets, researching material for poems, such as memories, historical events, specialized lexicons, and/or artistic aesthetic movements.
- 2) **Writing:** Composing and revising poems, reading and writing critiques of classmates' poems, Craft and imitation exercises.
- 3) **Other:** Attending and/or participating in campus and community literary events and readings, submitting poems to the Cuyamaca College literary journal, *The Cuyamaca Creative*, as well as researching online and print publication opportunities.

Texts and References

- 1) Required (representative examples):
 - a. Burt, Steph. *The Poem Is You: 60 Contemporary American Poems and How to Read Them*. Belknap Press, 2020.
 - b. Lehman, David and Terence Winch, editors. *Best American Poetry 2025*. Simon & Schuster, 2025.
 - c. Meyer, Michael. *Poetry: An Introduction*. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2012. Classic.
 - d. Salerno, Christopher and Kelsea Habecker. *How to Write Poetry: A Guided Journal*. Rockridge Press, 2020.
 - e. Turco, Lewis. *The Book of Forms: A Handbook of Poetics*. 5th ed. University Press of New England, 2020.
- 2) Supplemental: None.

Exit Skills

Students having successfully completed this course exit with the following skills, competencies and/or knowledge:

- 1) Create original poetry using the fundamental tools, techniques, and forms used by professional practitioners of poetry at a novice level.
- 2) Evaluate and critique poetry, both orally and in writing, at a novice level.

Student Learning Outcomes

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

- 1) Create poetry that employs the fundamental tools, techniques, and forms of the craft at a novice level.
- 2) Use workshops and/or other review exercises to critically evaluate their own poetry manuscripts as well as the manuscripts of others.