

Dr. Tina Barr

Advanced Poetry Workshop, Course # 300

Tuesdays and Thursdays, 11:20-12:50

My office is on the 3rd Floor of Palmer Hall, number 307. My phone # is 843-3979 and my email address is TinaBarr@rhodes.edu. Please do not hesitate to contact me regarding questions or to arrange a conference.

Required Texts *The Poem's Heartbeat*, a manual of prosody by Alfred Corn (Story Line Press, 1997); *Modern Poems*, a Norton Introduction, 2nd edition, edited by Ellman and O'Clair (Norton, 1989); *The Writer's Survival Guide* by Rachel Simon ((Story Press, 1997) *The Practice of Poetry*, edited by Robin Behn & Chase Twitchell, and a coursepack of essays: excerpts from *The Life of Poetry* by Muriel Rukeyser, "What Is Not Poetry," by Karl Shapiro, "Modern and Post Modern: Symbolist and Immanentist Modes of Poetic Thought" by Charles Altieri, "Projective Verse" by Charles Olson, T.S. Eliot's essays, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "Hamlet," "The Metaphysical Poets," and two essays on "Marianne Moore," by William Carlos Williams.

If you do not own a copy of *The Practice of Poetry* by Robin Behn & Chase Twitchell, pick up a copy in the bookstore.

Structure of Course Students will be reading about poetry, reading poems and working on their own poetry. The course will have 2 goals. The **first goal** will be to help prepare students to write better poems, to challenge themselves, and to set up a basic writing schedule for producing work for their portfolios. I hope Rachel Simon's book will assist you in this endeavor, as well as the book of writing exercises by Behn and Twitchell. The **second goal** will be no less important. It will be to educate students about traditional ways of writing poetry, by reading Alfred Corn's manual of prosody, *The Poem's Heartbeat*, by reading selected poems in our Norton anthology, and by reading essays in the coursepack.

Workshop Format The method we have used in the past is for you to give me 2 copies of each poem you would like discussed, either during class or by putting them in the box outside my office door. Duplicated copies are distributed to the class. Please read these distributed copies and write notes for the individual writer. Return your sheet to the author of the poem after we have finished our discussion.

Course Requirements **1. Submit portfolio at mid-term and end of term 2. Diligently complete all reading and writing assignments 3. Complete oral report and essay**

Organization of Materials Keep a folder of all your work, including drafts. Never dispose of drafts; print out all drafts. Attach drafts to subsequent copies. Maintain separate folders for each poem and its drafts. Submit all final drafts and packets of revisions in your portfolio. Keep another folder for all student work. **All final copies submitted in the portfolio and to class must be printed, never handwritten.**

Journal Purchase a notebook or writing book of your choice to maintain a process journal, in which to take notes and freewrite.

Conferences You should see me at least twice during the semester for a conference. See me in conference early in the semester and again after midterm. Please see me more often if you have a question or would like to discuss poems that you prefer not to share with the class. Never hesitate to arrange an extra conference.

While I always attempt to abide by the syllabus, it is a statement of course goals and we may, at times, run behind schedule.

If You Miss A Class You are responsible for speaking with another student to learn about our discussion. Consult the syllabus and catch up with the assignments.

Week 1, 8/27

Introductions, page 37, exercise in Behn and Twitchell: “No Sentences but in Things”
Page 37, Tabloid Tone exercise page 73

Assignment to be done this week for next week, the second week of class: Freewrite in your journal for 20 minutes. Write up an **anonymous** answer to this question: “Why do I write?” Bring your response to class. I will collect it. Read in Simon’s *The Writer’s Survival Guide* pages 1-18 and 64-85. Read Chapter 1 in *The Poem’s Heartbeat*. **Be prepared to discuss it in class.** Read the excerpt from Whitman’s “Song of Myself” in the Norton, as well as the Dickinson poems “Wild Nights,” “After Great Pain,” and “I Heard a Fly Buzz.” Work on exercises you did in class and work them up to turn in next Tuesday at the beginning of class. Read Shapiro’s essay “What is Not Poetry.”

Week 2, 9/1 & 9/3

Discussion of writing process and Simon’s and Shapiro’s ideas. Discussion of Chapter 1 in *The Poem’s Heartbeat* and poems by Whitman and Dickinson.

Discussion of student poems.

Assignment to be done this week for next week, the third week of the semester: Go back to your freewriting exercise in your journal. Can you work it into a poem? If not, keep freewriting. Read 87-131 in Rachel Simon’s book. Type up anonymous responses to these questions and turn them in on Tuesday of next week: “What doubts come up in your mind about your writing?” “What are your concerns and interests in your daily life?” “What are your concerns and interests in the world?” **Remember these answers are anonymous! So be honest.** Read chapter 2 in Alfred Corn’s book on prosody. Read “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” “When You Are Old,” “The Second Coming,” “Sailing to Byzantium,” “Byzantium,” and “Under Ben Bulbin” by Yeats (page 67) in the Norton. Read Robinson’s “Luke Havergal,” page 114. Read Frost’s “The Road Not Taken,” “Birches,” and “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.” (page 124, etc) If your

freewriting doesn't yield up a poem, do an exercise from Behn and Twitchell, part 1 and write the name of the exercise at the top of the page you are turning in.

Week 3, 9/8 and 9/10

Discussion of chapter 2 in Corn and poetry by modernists. Turn in student poems; each student must turn in at least one poem this Tuesday. Turn in typed up responses to questions on Tuesday, 9/8. Discussion of Simon's ideas and your responses.

Assignment due next week: Read chapter 3 in the Corn. Read essay by Charles Altieri, "Modern and Postmodern" etc. on symbolist and immanentist modes of thought. Read Stevens' poetry in the Norton: "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," "Anecdote of the Jar," "The Snow Man," "The Idea of Order at Key West," and Williams' "The Widow's Lament," "The Great Figure," "Spring and All," and "The Young Housewife." Complete writing exercise from Behn etc., part 2. Turn this poem in next week.

Week 4, 9/15 & 9/17

Turn in poem for class discussion. Discussion of Corn's chapter 3 and Altieri's essay. Discussion of Stevens and Williams.

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 4 in the Corn. Read Marianne Moore's "The Fish," and "Poetry," and the essays on her by Williams. Complete writing exercise from Behn, part 3.

Week 5, 9/22 & 9/24

Discussion of chapter 4 in Corn. Discussion of Moore. Discussion of student poems. Discussion of any writing difficulties, use of Simon as resource book.

Assignment for next week: Read chapter 5 in Corn, along with poets in Norton: Eliot: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," "Claude McKay's "Harlem Dancer," E.E. Cummings' "O Sweet Spontaneous," and "The Cambridge Ladies Who Live, etc." Read Eliot's essays in coursepack. Complete writing exercise in Behn, part 4.

Week 6, 9/29 & 10/1

Portfolios due 10/6, no exceptions!!!!!! Turn in writing exercise. Discussion of student poems. Discussion of Eliot, McKay and Cummings and Eliot's essays. Discuss chapter 5 in Corn.

Assignment for next week: **Prepare portfolio to be turned in on 10/6.** Read poetry by Patricia Spears Jones, our visiting poet on October 22nd.

Week 7, 10/6 & 10/8

Turn in portfolio. In-class exercises and conferences. Discussion of Patricia Jones' work.

Assignment for next week: Read the Rukeyser excerpt from *The Life of Poetry* in the coursepack. Write a response (to be turned in next week) to her ideas, which you will turn in next week. It can be a paragraph to 1 to 2 pages. You need to articulate your response. Write up drafts from exercises and turn in next week. Write up a list of 3 questions to ask Patricia Spears Jones. Hand in on 10/13.

Week 8, 10/13 Discussion of Rukeyser. Turn in student poems. *No class on October 15th*; make sure you have seen me at least once in conference before this date.

Fall Break

Week 9, 10/22 class visit with Patricia Spears Jones. ***Required Attendance at Jones/Stern Reading October 22nd, Blount Auditorium, 7:30 pm.***

Assignment: Read chapter 6 in Corn. Also read the following entertaining poems: "Women," by Louise Bogan, page 335 in the Norton, Hart Crane's "Proem: To Brooklyn Bridge," page 343, Langston Hughes', "The Negro Speaks of Rivers," "The Weary Blues," "Brass Spittoons," "Morning After," and "Theme for English B," starting on page 360, and Countee Cullen's "Yet Do I Marvel," page 370. These are great, and lively, so read them! Do exercise in part 6 of Behn and Twitchell; choose an exercise that asks you to write in a verse form such as a villanelle, pantoum, etc.

Week 10, 10/27 & 10/29

Turn in exercise. Class discussion of chapter 6 in Alfred Corn's book on prosody. Discussion of poems by Bogan, Crane, Hughes and Cullen. Discussion of student poems.

Assignment: Read Chapter 7 in Corn. Read poems in the Norton: Auden's "Lullaby," page 414, "Musee des Beaux Arts," and "In Memory of W.B. Yeats." Roethke's "Cuttings," "Cuttings, (later)" "The Waking," and "I Knew A Woman." Read Robert Hayden's "The Ballad of Sue Ellen Westerfield," "Those Winter Sundays," and "A Plague of Starlings." Do an exercise from section 7a in Behn and Twitchell.

Week 11, 11/3 & 11/5

Turn in exercise. Discussion of poems by Auden, Roethke, and Hayden in conjunction with chapter 6. Discussion of student poems. Turn to next page for assignment:

Assignment: Read chapter 8 in Corn. Read Gwendolyn Brooks' "Boy Breaking Glass," "Richard Wilber's "Love Calls Us to the Things of This World," Larkin's "The Whitsun Weddings," Levertov's "The Dog of Art." Do an exercise from *The Practice of Poetry* section 7B.

Week 12, 11/10 & 11/12

Discussion of assigned poets and chapter 7. Turn in exercise. Discussion of student poems.

Assignment: I am giving you a very brief assignment, so that you can focus on your analysis and oral report. Read chapter 9 in Corn. Read "Poetry," by Moore, page 259 in the Norton. **Prepare oral report and 3 page analysis, due after Thanksgiving. This weekend you should complete the preparation and write the analysis.**

Week 13, 11/17 & 11/19

Discussion of chapter 9 in *The Poem's Heartbeat* by Corn in conjunction with analysis of Marianne Moore's work. Discuss student poems. Generate more work by continuing to freewrite in your journal.

Assignment: Read chapter 10 in *The Poem's Heartbeat*. Read Ammons' "Corson's Inlet," page 618 in the Norton, "The Broken Home," by James Merrill, "A Wicker Basket," by Robert Creeley, "The Instruction Manual," by John Ashbery and "To the Child Trapped in a Barbershop," by Phil Levine. I am assigning this reading now so you won't have to work over Thanksgiving. Please read and study these poems carefully. **Practice Oral report and proofread 3 page analysis, due Weeks 14 & 15.**

Week 14, 11/24

Oral Reports and analyses due, and begin discussion of chapter 10 and poems by Merrill, Ashbery, Ammons, Levine, and Creeley.
Discuss student poems

Thanksgiving Break

Week 15, 12/1 & 12/3

Student Oral Reports and analyses due. Conclude with discussion of free verse.

Week 16, 12/9 Last Day of Class, evaluations, reading and party.