

Faculty End-of Course *Reflection* Summary

Purpose of this course

(general discussion of the course, what it contains, what it contributes to student learning, student audience, where it “fits” in your program major curriculum, etc)

ENG 386, Poetry Writing, is designed to teach student to write and edit poetry, as well as to acquire a better understanding of its nuances. Each day the students were required to write or edit poetry, as well as read the assignments. Initially, most students write with a lack of clarity and brevity, as well as poor verb choices for action-oriented poetry. They typically write in vague obscurities and abstractions. The goal is to break down the process to manageable sections then reconstruct the poem through revision. Students are required to learn to assess their own poetry, and that of other poets. During this process, they also edit the poetry.

1. They learn to construct a poem, including characterization, plot, dramatic situations, dialogue, image, setting, point of view, voice, tone, and structure.
2. By the conclusion of the semester, they will have completed a 10 to 15-page poetry manuscript.
3. They learn to comprehend, analyze, and edit the work of other poets, as well as effectively edit and critique the writing of other students in class and broaden their scope of contemporary poetry.
4. They learn to revise your own writing.
5. *Most importantly, they establish the discipline needed to become a writer.*

Student Learning Outcomes (SLO)

(insert the SLO's from your syllabus)

1. Learn to identify imagery, setting, diction, point of view, voice, tone, plot, literal and figurative language structure, insight and tension, comprehend and analyze characterization in poetry
2. Become familiar with the poetry workshop process

3. Learn and apply literary terms to assigned texts
4. Understand some of the social and cultural manifestations of these texts
5. Learn to be an editor (or a better editor)
6. Create a publishable manuscript portfolio. This should consist of a final copy of the student's poetry for the semester.

Overall comments/impressions

What was different this time: (if appropriate - discuss and/or assessments Student Learning Outcomes that were new or modified from previous methodology)

During the Fall semester 2023, poet, Jocelyn Heath visited Reinhardt University as part of the reading series. The reading was well-attended by the students, with about 80% of the poetry writing class in attendance. However, overall, there were between 70+ in attendance for the reading, which demonstrates a healthy creative atmosphere on campus. She conducted an interview with a writing student, which discussed poetry, but also dealing with issues as an artist.

In October, via ZOOM, Pulitzer Prize Runner-up poet Dorianne Laux, whose reputation is national and well-respected, spoke to the poetry class for more than an hour. She answered their specific questions and spoke about poetry in general terms. This was a major coup—to have Laux meet the students and answer their questions. She did this gratis.

What worked: (discuss specific SLO's and/or assessments that succeeded; comment on why it worked well)

We conducted a creative experiment whereby each student utilized an AI platform to write a poem by asking the computer to “write a poem” based on four or five criteria. The results were astonishing to all in the class, as the AI does not have the ability to “create” anything of artist substance or beauty. All the poems were worse than terrible, which was the consensus of the class. However, the class came to the conclusion, in time, an AI platform will most likely improve and be able to write a “good” poem. The students then attempted to utilize some portion of the AI-generated poem into a new poem of theirs. It was extremely difficult to incorporate this material. The lesson they learned is that the human mind, the creative imagination is untethered and limitless. Whereas, AI is restrained by technology ... for the moment.

Students studied poetic structures and formats, which is a modification of Aristotle's structure for storytelling (poetry) where the first level is the rising action (or complication) placed between the lowest left and the highest middle and the second is the

falling action placed between the highest middle and the conclusion. Within a poem, there exist the possibility for many structures, there are micro-structures for plot twist and extended dramatic complications, imagery, dialogue, and other poetic nuances. This illustrated procedure, along with studying specific texts (the poetry of James Dickey, David Bottoms, Anne Sexton, Marie Howe, and many others.

What could be better: (describe SLO's and/or assessments that could have been better met; comment on why improvement is needed)

The format for the class is complete; however, what needs to occur is a consistent rotation of new material for the students to study from semester to semester, especially if they enroll in the advanced class, ENG 486, which is a cross. I do not want to repeat the material and bore the students. We are consistently looking a new contemporary poems, but also harking back to the past without repeating the same material. For instance, we read the entire poem, "Howl" in all of its grandeur and complications. It brought up the topic of censorship and banning of books, which harks back to the 1956 lawsuit against City Lights Bookstore in the 9th Circuit District Court (San Francisco).

Suggested changes for this course: (discuss any "tweaks" you will implement, tied to specific SLO's; discuss your "vision" for this course the next time you teach it)

There are no "tweaks" in the foreseeable future; however, we will continue to address the advancements and nuances with AI. As well, we will explore new poets and issues.