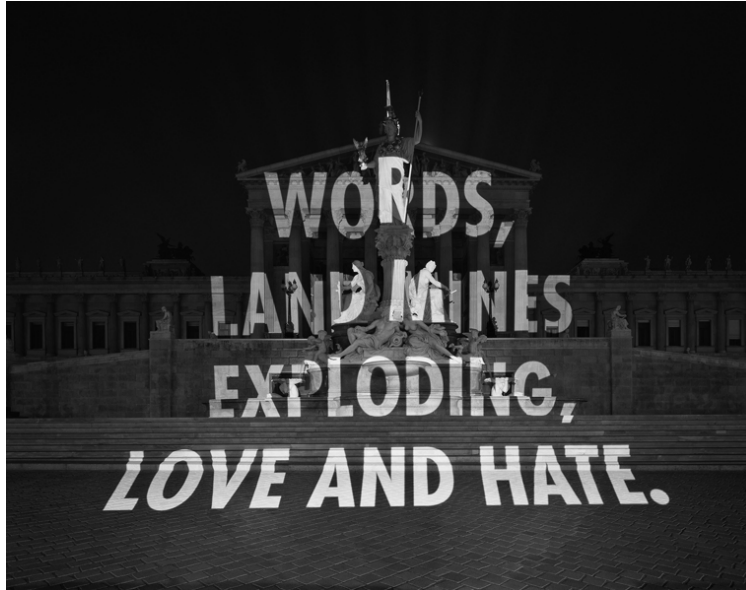


EXTRA-POETIC: The Poetic Imagination Across the Disciplines

Writing 101.7: MW 8:30-9:45am, Carr 114
Writing 101.71: MW 3:05-4:20pm, Branson Theater 202
Writing 101.55: MW 4:40-5:55pm, Bell Tower WEST 113



Instructor: Dr. Stefania Heim
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Course Website: www.sakai.duke.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The American poet Muriel Rukeyser describes poetry not by way of its formal strategies or historical tradition, but epistemologically, as “one *kind* of knowledge.” This course heeds Rukeyser’s description, asking: how does writing constitute, create, and communicate knowledge? How do poetic forms and techniques (metaphor, elision, repetition, juxtaposition, and white space among them) affect our understanding of broad, interdisciplinary fields of thought? When poets practice their art, they scrutinize each word as well as the relationships between words: we can see this in the structure of sentences and lines, as they follow or reject the rules of grammar, for example, or as they focus on music as much as sense. This attention makes poetry an exciting forum for exploring the relationships between writing and thinking, process and knowledge. The ways in which questions of audience, purpose, and subject matter shape and compel formal choices and strategies – for these poets as well as for ourselves as we write about, beside, and through their works – will be our central focus throughout the semester.

WRITING 101 GOALS AND PRACTICES

In every aspect of life we are surrounded by and immersed in language. Arguments, ideas, meaning, and feeling are created and communicated through word choice as well as formal and grammatical structures. Context, form, and assumed audience all play a role in shaping what we understand and what we believe. Frequently, however, we simply receive and send “messages” without being

conscious of how they are constructed. In this course we will become attuned to these processes and work to take control of our language.

Writing 101 is designed to introduce you to the goals and practices of academic writing. While the texts, reading practices, and writing conventions we will engage are rooted in the discipline of English, our class – like all Writing 101 classes – will emphasize writing as a socially embedded process and focus on helping you, as first-year students, practice generating arguments in a variety of contexts. Perhaps most importantly, we will approach writing not only as a medium for the transmission of ideas, but also as a tool for developing our thoughts and articulating our perspective.

Across the disciplines, academics and scholars engage with the work of others and enter into conversations about their ideas. This is precisely what we will do in our classroom – both with assigned texts and the writing of our classmates. We will attend closely to others' arguments, investigating the specifics of their language and form as well as their social, political, and historical contexts. We will also put forward our own positions and interpretations, extending the ideas of others or responding to perceived gaps and inconsistencies or underexplored complexities. Finally, we will experiment with situating particular pieces of writing for different audiences, considering how our language makes meaning variously, outside of and beyond our original intentions.

COURSE NARRATIVE

In addition to your own writing, the primary materials for this course will be a range of poetic texts that trespass into other disciplines, including physics, history, political theory, and the digital humanities: all examples of the thriving field of “Investigative Poetics.” These poems make artistic use of, as well as critical arguments about, a wide range of contemporary issues like labor conditions, environmental disaster, and space exploration. As examples of creative expression they also raise thorny issues of beauty, pleasure, and emotion. In order to build a creative and critical framework for engaging them, we will begin the semester by developing shared grounding in the activities and attitudes that go into the interpretation of poetry in general, working collaboratively to understand the tools (visual, sonic, and figurative) that poets use. We will read and write in order to frame and explore questions, including: What is poetry good for? How does it work? Why does it look the way it does? How should/can we read and respond to it? Muriel Rukeyser's *Life of Poetry* will provide a theoretical and practical framework as we bring these questions into interdisciplinary realms.

We will continue to build reading, thinking, and writing skills through close examination of an investigative poetry “test case”: Claudia Rankine's recent National Book Award Winning *Citizen: An American Lyric*, which incorporates prose, visual art, and current events in its exploration of race, racism, and artistic practice in the United States. Through the writing and workshopping of several short assignments, in-class writing experiments, and vibrant discussion, each of you will work to articulate your own responses to and interpretations of this urgent book and to place those interpretations in a larger context. We will close-read selections; develop arguments about the relationship between interdisciplinary materials and poetic methods; position our own arguments in relationship to those of critics; and try our hands at some poetic techniques. These activities form the interrelated building blocks that go into any substantive and nuanced study of literature.

We will carry these practices and frames into the next portion of the course, in which each of you will become an expert on a contemporary book of poems (four different collections will be assigned to three students each, based on interest). This unit, which includes a variety of collaborative and

independent projects and activities including significant workshopping and peer review, will culminate in a research paper and the opportunity to direct class discussion – two important, different ways of communicating both knowledge and perspectives. Finally, the class will work together to create a collaborative online anthology of Investigative Poetry. Writing about poetry doesn't only exist in scholarly books and articles, it also has an important – perhaps even *more* important – life online. This project will ask you both to reflect on the fundamental principles and potential of Investigative Poetry as well as to experiment with the tone and formal strategies appropriate to the public sphere.

COURSE TEXTS

Required for Everyone (available at Duke Book Store):

- *Citizen: An American Lyric*, by Claudia Rankine (Graywolf Press: ISBN 978-1555976903)
- *The Life of Poetry*, by Muriel Rukeyser (Paris Press: ISBN 978-0963818331)

One of the following (to be assigned based on interest, available online):

- *Coal Mountain Elementary*, Mark Nowak (Coffee House Press: ISBN 978-1566892285)
- *One Big Self*, C.D. Wright (Copper Canyon Press: ISBN 978-1556592584)
- *Approaching Ice*, Elizabeth Bradfield (Persea Books: ISBN 978-0892553556)
- *Life on Mars*, Tracy K. Smith (Graywolf Press: 978-1555975845)

Additional readings will be made available on Sakai. Because active reading and annotating will be so important to our work, please print these texts out and bring them to class. It is mandatory that you bring the appropriate reading – including writing by your classmates – to class every day.

ASSIGNMENTS

The major course assignments are as follows:

- **Citizen Writing Portfolio:** Through 4, interrelated short writing assignments, you will work to construct a robust interpretation of Claudia Rankine's *Citizen*. The individual assignments will receive a check, check +, or check - and will frequently form the basis of class discussion. The portfolio as a whole – which is due on Monday, September 28 and will include a cover letter integrating these various assignments and putting forward an argument – will receive a letter grade.
 - Writing 1a: Close Reading
 - Writing 1b: Analysis of the Artist's Sources
 - Writing 1c: Interpreting the Criticism
 - Writing 1d: Creative Exploration
- **Investigative Poetry Research Paper:** An 8-10 page paper in which you research, close read, and interpret a contemporary collection of poetry, making an original and debatable argument that is in conversation with published critical responses to the work. Similar to the *Citizen* Writing Portfolio, this project will be undertaken in discrete and manageable steps with two drafts undergoing peer workshopping and revision before the final paper is due. With the assistance of our course librarian, you will locate: a critical essay engaging your book; a work (of whatever kind) that your poet cites as a source for the book; and a piece of writing about the disciplinary topic your poet engages. In addition to your book of poetry, these materials will make up the major sources of your own writing. You will also have opportunities to share sources with classmates writing on the same book.

- Writing 2a: Critical Essay Abstract & Analysis
- Writing 2b: Engaging References and Sources
- Research Paper (draft 1)
- Research Paper (draft 2)
- Research Paper (final draft)
- **Discussion Guide:** With the two other individuals assigned to the same book, you will be responsible for choosing a selection from the collection to assign to your classmates, giving a brief presentation on the contextual material you unearthed in your research, and drawing up a discussion guide.
- **In-Class Formal Writing:** An essay synthesizing some element of the four books presented and exploring the contours of the field of Investigative Poetry. You are welcome to make use of all of the course texts and your notes to write this essay. Though we will spend the class period writing, this essay will not be due until 9pm that evening.
- **Collaborative Investigative Poetry Anthology:** Together we will create a collaborative online anthology of Investigative Poetry. You will be responsible for identifying a poem (it may be from the collection you researched, or another collection by that same author), annotating the poem, and writing an introduction that puts the poem into conversation with course themes. There are possibilities for creative online presentations of these components, which we will discuss as the semester progresses. As a class you will collaboratively determine an organizing principle for the anthology, “publish” the anthology in some form, and write an introduction to the project as a whole.

Paper formatting

All papers should use MLA formatting, including parenthetical citations and a Works Cited page if you are using more than one source. Please use a standard, serif 12-point font (like Times or Garamond) with one-inch margins on all sides. Here are some helpful MLA formatting resources: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/15/>
http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/tutorials/mla/mla_tutorial.html

Lateness

Please submit all writing assignments in the format requested on the day they are due. Writing projects build progressively and course themes and discussions develop alongside them. Late assignments will compromise this progress and with it your intellectual experience and that of your classmates. For the *Citizen* Portfolio and the Research Paper, each late day (beginning when papers are collected) will result in the reduction of your grade by two-thirds. To illustrate: the maximum grade for an essay turned in more than 15 minutes after the start of the class session on which it is due is an A-; if a paper is 24 to 48 hours late, a B; 48 to 72 hours, a C+; etc.

Academic Integrity

This class requires that you follow the [Duke Community Standard](#), remembering that it entails acting honorably and cultivating a culture of integrity. In accordance with the Standard and the University’s academic policies, all of the work that you turn in for this course must be your own. The University has created a [video](#) and a [web-tutorial](#) on plagiarism. We will also spend time in class discussing how and when to use citations. If I suspect anyone of plagiarism, I am obligated to report it to the Duke University Office of Student Conduct. Plagiarism will result in failure of the particular

assignment. It can result in failure of the course and/or suspension or expulsion from Duke University.

Course Requirements & Policies

Attendance: This is a discussion and workshop-based course, which means that much of our work happens in the classroom; therefore regular attendance is mandatory. You are permitted three absences; any absence after that, for any reason, will result in the reduction of your final grade as follows: after four absences the highest grade you can receive in the course is a B+; after five absences it is a C+; and six absences will result in failure. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If you arrive more than 15 minutes late you will be marked late. Three latenesses will be counted as one absence. You are responsible for the material covered in class and must contact a fellow student for this material; do not email me for this information.

Participation: I expect you to come to class prepared to participate in discussions in a focused, attentive, and respectful manner. In addition to completing assignments, please arrive in class armed with questions and insights about course texts and activities, ready to listen attentively to your classmates. Verbal participation is not the only kind, and I welcome other forms of engagement with our course activities.

GRADING

Your final grade for this course will be comprised as follows:

Participation, In-Class Writing & Group Work:	10%
<i>Citizen</i> Writing Portfolio:	25%
Research Paper:	35%
Discussion Leading & Guide:	15%
Investigative Poetry Anthology:	15%

Writing 101 Support & Resources

Course Librarian

Our course librarian is Arianne Hartsell-Gundy. She has partnered with me to familiarize you with Duke's library system and to assist you with formulating and pursuing your research project. Ms. Hartsell-Gundy will lead us in a large-group workshop and is available for individual consultations.

The Writing Studio

Duke's Writing Studio is an excellent resource for obtaining assistance with and responses to your work as a writer. The consultants at the Writing Studio are trained professionals, and they offer one-on-one help with any phase of any writing project you do as a Duke student. Visit <http://twp.duke.edu/writing-studio> to access practical handouts and resources, to schedule a face-to-face or e-tutoring appointment, and to learn more about services and locations.

Students with Disabilities

Students who may need special accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the [Student Disability Access Office](#) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)

Each of you will face some level of challenge during your time at Duke – whether an “everyday” challenge like procrastination, or a more profound challenge that impairs your ability to function. The CAPS staff includes psychologists, clinical social workers, and psychiatrists experienced in working with college-age adults.

[The Academic Resource Center](#)

The ARC provides academic support and programming for all Duke undergraduates. Their services include one-on-one consultations and peer tutoring, and they work alongside the Student Disability Access Office to serve students with diagnosed learning disabilities. Their programs include opportunities for students to study together in structured groups (“learning communities”), as well as workshops offered throughout the semester.

[The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity](#)

This center provides education, advocacy, support, mentoring, academic engagement, and space for lesbian, gay, bisexual, pansexual, transgender, transsexual, intersex, questioning, queer and allied students, staff, and faculty at Duke. The Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity also serves and supports Duke alumni/ae and the greater LGBTQ community.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1

Mon, Aug. 24	Introduction
Wed, Aug. 26	<i>How to Read a Poem</i> <u>Gwendolyn Brooks</u> , “Boy Breaking Glass” <u>Emily Groscholz</u> , “Poems Overheard at a Conference on Relativity Theory”

Week 2

Mon, Aug. 31	<i>Why to Read a Poem</i> <u>Muriel Rukeyser</u> , <i>The Life of Poetry</i> (chapters 1-3) “Absalom,” “Alloy,” “Conjugation of the Paramecium”
Wed, Sept. 2	<i>Poetic Test Case</i> <u>Claudia Rankine</u> , <i>Citizen</i>

Week 3

Mon, Sept. 7	<u>Claudia Rankine</u> , <i>Citizen</i> Writing 1a: Close Reading due
Wed, Sept. 9	<u>Derald Wing Sue</u> , “Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life” <u>Amitai Etzioni</u> , “Don’t Sweat the Microaggressions” “The Counted” (<i>The Guardian</i> ’s interactive map of people killed by police in the U.S.) “Saartjie Baartman (the Hottentot Venus)” Writing 1a: Close Reading (Revised) due

Week 4

- Mon, Sept. 14 Rankine's source images
Writing 1b: Analysis of the Artist's Sources due
- Wed, Sept. 16 Critical responses to *Citizen*:
Erica Hunt in *Los Angeles Review of Books*
"Color Codes": Dan Chiasson in *The New Yorker*
"A New Way of Writing About Race": Nick Laird in *NYRB*
"Chokehold": BK Fischer in *Boston Review*

Week 5

- Mon, Sept. 21 *Joining Critical Conversations*
Writing 1c: Interpreting the Criticism due
- Wed, Sept. 23 *Creative Writing Workshop*
Writing 1d: Creative Exploration due

Week 6

- Mon, Sept. 28 In-class Writing: *Integrating the Elements of an Analysis & Imagining an Argument*
Due: *Citizen* Portfolio (9pm on Sakai)
- Wed, Sept. 30 Assigned Poetry Collection Small Group Discussion
Mark Nowak: *Coal Mountain Elementary*
C.D. Wright: *One Big Self*
Elizabeth Bradfield: *Approaching Ice*
Tracy K. Smith: *Life on Mars*

Week 7

- Mon, Oct. 5 LIBRARY VISIT (class meets in Lilly Library)
- Wed, Oct. 7 INDIVIDUAL CONFERENCES
- [Mid-semester grades submitted]**

Week 8

- Mon, Oct. 12 **NO CLASS: FALL BREAK**
- Wed, Oct. 14 *Engaging Critical Texts*
Writing 2a: Critical Essay Abstract & Analysis due

Week 9

- Mon, Oct. 19 *Poetry-off-the-page (interlude)*
Sharing Ideas
Writing 2b: Engaging References and Sources due
- Wed, Oct. 21 Muriel Rukeyser, *The Life of Poetry* (chs. 5 & 10)
Collaborative Work Day

Week 10

- Mon, Oct. 26 *Large Group Workshop*
Research Paper Draft Due (3 papers to be workshopped mailed to entire class by noon on Sunday, Oct. 25)
Selected poems from each group due
- Wed, Oct. 28-
Fri, Oct. 30 *Small group workshops outside of class*
Research Paper Draft Due (emailed to small groups by noon the day before workshop)

Week 11

- Mon, Nov. 2 Mark Nowak: Selections from *Coal Mountain Elementary*
Group A Leads Discussion
- Wed, Nov. 4 CD Wright: Selections from *One Big Self*
Group B Leads Discussion
Due: Group A FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS

Week 12

- Mon, Nov. 9 Elizabeth Bradfield: Selections from *Approaching Ice*
Group C Leads Discussion
Due: Group B FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS
- Wed, Nov. 11 Tracy K. Smith: Selections from *Life on Mars*
Group D Leads Discussion
Due: Group C FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS

Week 13

- Mon, Nov. 16 *Creative Writing Workshop*
Due: Group D FINAL RESEARCH PAPERS
- Wed, Nov. 18 Reading: Introductions to Anthologies
Poem Choices (due 9pm)

Week 14

- Mon, Nov. 23 *Collaborative Work Day*
- Wed, Nov. 25 **NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING**

Week 15

- Mon, Nov. 30 *Collaborative Work Day*
Poem Introductions & Annotations due
- Wed, Dec. 2 *Presentation / Unveiling / Celebration of Final Project*
Final Anthology due