

**English 593/693 - S01: Topics in Creative Writing: Poetry  
Winter 2022**

**Instructor: Larissa Lai**

**Email: [larissa.lai@ucalgary.ca](mailto:larissa.lai@ucalgary.ca)**

**Class Time: Wednesdays 1:00pm - 3:45pm**

**Classroom: SS1059**

**Course description:**

This is a mixed upper-level-undergraduate/graduate level class in poetry writing. This class will be structured primarily through a workshop format. Depending on the numbers, between two and four students will submit a small selection of poems each week for critique the following week. 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: cultural appropriation, the biotext, conceptual poetry, spoken word, dub, the lyric and the speaking self, Indigenization, #metoo, Black Lives Matter, Asian formations, call out culture/nurturance culture, the long poem, social media. Poets whose work we may read and discuss include: Jordan Abel, Liz Howard, Billy Ray Bellcourt, Joshua Whitehead, Canisia Lubrin, Dionne Brand, Nourbese Phillip, Sina Queyras, Erin Moure, Shannon Maguire, Rachel Zolf, Kai Cheng Thom, Shazia Rafiq, Phinder Dulai, Renee Saklikar, Audre Lorde, Lyn Hejinian, Fred Wah, Adrienne Rich, Roy Miki, Rita Wong, Smokii Sumac, Vivek Shraya, Lillian Allen, d'bi young, Marie Annharte Baker, Sharanpal Ruprai, Marilyn Dumont.

**Application Requirements:**

To be considered for a place in this course, please submit the following items to [larissa.lai@ucalgary.ca](mailto:larissa.lai@ucalgary.ca) by Dec. 1, 2021:

1) a completed application form (on the final two pages of this document) (note that the questions on the second page are for fun-- they won't affect your chances but they will help me get to know you); and

2) a portfolio of 17-20 pages of poetry, in a 12-point font (unless there are poetic reasons for varying font size). In the portfolio, you are encouraged to select poems to illustrate both the range and quality of your practice. Poems may be of any length, as long as the total length of the portfolio falls within the guidelines. Please keep copies of the writing you submit. Please attach a self-addressed and stamped envelope if you would like your materials returned.

IMPORTANT: Please put "English 593/693 Application Portfolio" in the subject line of the email. I receive a lot of email, and this is the only way I can be sure I'll be able to find your application when I'm looking for it.

**Enrolment Note:**

Since enrolment portal will be closed until I have a chance to through the portfolios, please enroll in a different course for the time being. The portal will be opened to students accepted into the class by the end of December at the latest.

**Course requirements:**

Over the term, students are required to submit between several batches of poetry (depending on class size). Batch length will be confirmed in the syllabus-- expect 10-18 pages per submission. (If we do a larger number of batches, the length expectation for each will be shorter. If we do a smaller number of batches, the length expectation for each will be longer.) Students will also be required to present on one poetry book and one contemporary issue. Poetry books and contemporary issues will be laid out in the syllabus. The final assignment will be a batch of poetry which may consist of revised poems from workshop and/or new poems or a combination of both, plus a short statement on practice/aesthetics.

I will expect a lot of reading, but by the same token, I am committed to make the volume manageable.

**Pedagogy:**

I am committed to a student-centred pedagogy and to a practice of making seemingly complicated ideas accessible. This course is designed primarily to facilitate the growth of your practice in the context of contemporary poetry. It is designed to strengthen both your skills and your sense of your place as a poet in the current poetry and poetics conversation. There will thus be lots of room made for your own critical and creative concerns as they relate to the existing concerns of our historical moment. This will not be a "bird" class, but neither will it be an impossible class. I am committed to the happy medium in which students learn a ton but don't die in the trenches. This course is intended for students who already have a poetry practice and are looking to learn, deepen, grow and improve.

You will be graded based on the quality of the work you've produced, the strength and grace of your critiques for others, participation and in-class presentations.

**APPLICATION AND PORTFOLIO DUE: Dec. 1, 2021**

**APPLICATION FORM: ENGLISH 593/693 (LAI):**

**CREATIVE WRITING: POETRY**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (full)

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID#: \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

List previous English courses that may relate, and Course instructor:

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List all previous Creative Writing courses (including non-credit), and instructor:

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Your reasons for wishing to enroll in this course:

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Name a few of your favourite poets or poetry collections:

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Favourite social media forum and why (if none, explain):

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