

**WEBSTER UNIVERSITY  
COURSE SYLLABUS**

**COMM 5340.01**  
**COURSE NUMBER AND SECTION**

**David Clewell**  
**INSTRUCTOR**

**Language Arts Seminars: Poetry Writing**  
**COURSE TITLE**

**TERM:F I YEAR: 2003**

**50**  
**SITE**

**F II**  
**SP I**  
**SP II**  
**SU X**

1. Course Description: (Student focus, rationale, scope, and prerequisites)

No previous poetry writing experience is required. This is, above all else, a workshop where the students' own work will be our primary material and concern. Students should be committed to exploring the processes and techniques they could be using in their own poetry and to joining in critical discussions with others involved in the same process. The "what you say" is only half of any poem; just as important is the "how is gets said" ...what makes what you're writing about a poem?

Reading and talking about a range of contemporary poems will be an important supplement to discussion of student's work. The value of "reading as a writer" will be stressed.

In addition to poems written between workshop meetings, some "hands-on" writing during workshop hours themselves will be a vital part of this class.

2. Learning Outcomes: (Goals, objectives, course outcomes, etc.)

The workshop will provide a forum for careful reading of and constructive comment on student work-in-progress.

Focus is on development of individual style and the importance of writing from personal experience.

We will learn to distinguish between "genuine emotion" and "hopeless abstraction" in the language poems use.

We will identify and explore the various practical uses of items in the poet's arsenal: the IMAGE, the LINE, the METAPHOR, the RHYTHM, etc.

Though this class is not run as a class in methods of teaching poetry, the wise student will inevitably gain some practical insight into ways of working with poetry in the classroom.

## COMM 5340.01 - Clewell

3. Schedule of required readings, class preparations and assignments, lectures, discussions, student presentations, and exams:

DAY 1: Introduction, Informal Discussion, In-class writing

DAY 2: Discussion of assigned readings from anthology; more on specific elements of poetry  
Workshop session with student poems

DAY 3: same structure as Day Two

DAY 4: same structure as Day Two

DAY 5: Final thoughts; Discussion of poems from the anthology; Final workshop session

4. Resources:

Text Used: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN POETRY--A. Poulin, editor  
(Houghton Mifflin 7th edition)

Supplemental Readings: (List and indicate how these are to be used.)

Photocopies of poems-in-progress; photocopies of poets' essays on poetry  
(to be discussed in class)

Audio Visual/Other :

5. EVALUATION:

- a) Term Paper
- b) Examinations
- c) Class participation      Active participation in discussions and workshop
- d) Class presentation
- e) Other

Final Projects:

Students should provide a self-addressed envelope (appropriate size and postage) to the instructor so project/paper can be returned.

**This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Therefore, regular attendance is required.**

