

Brief Course Outline

Course Title: **ENGLISH 3999F: Creative Writing**

Course Number and Section

ENGLISH

3999F 550

Instructor Name(s): Jenny Berkel

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Disclaimer: Information in the brief course outline is subject to change. The syllabus posted on OWL Brightspace is the official and authoritative source of information for the course.

Course Description:

Welcome to 3999F, a writing course that focuses on the cultivation of your creative writing capacities. This class is rooted in poetry, but we will go beyond the poem itself—we will spend time exploring how poetic tools and approaches are used in other genres like personal essays and short stories. By closely examining different texts, engaging with writers' thoughts on craft, and opening ourselves to creative exploration, we will begin to refine our writing practices and styles. We will take the tools we have gathered and experiment with them in our own work. Students can expect to spend a significant amount of time writing and refining their pieces. Because this is a workshop course, attendance and participation is vital. We will be learning how to give and receive constructive feedback. As such, it will be critical that we create a welcoming and supportive shared space.

Learning Outcomes: one outcome per entry

Read deeply in order to identify themes and essential tools in other writers' poems, essays, and short stories

Analyze and discuss the effectiveness of the tools—and, more generally, the writing—in depth

Compose creative work in multiple genres (poetry, nonfiction, fiction) that incorporates these writing tools

Develop and/or deepen their own writing practice

Give and receive constructive feedback through workshopping

Revise and refine their own work

Textbooks and Course Materials:

Required textbook: Mary Oliver, *A Poetry Handbook*, any edition, Harper Collins, 1994. Cost: \$21.

Required textbook: Maggie Smith, *Dear Writer*, Simon and Schuster, 2025. Cost: \$26

Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of these books.

Methods of Evaluation: one assignment per entry

Assignment	Due Date mm/dd/yy	Weight - %
Poem 1	10/02/2026	10
Poem 2	10/09/2026	10
In-Class Close Reading	10/19/2026	15
Lyric Essay	11/06/2026	10
Flash Fiction	11/27/2026	10
Reading Questions	varies	5
Final Portfolio	12/09/2026	25
Participation		15

Wednesday, August 12, 2026

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For Textbooks and Course Materials (below), you are required to include the cost of each textbook or other learning material.

Note whether there are any restrictions that would prevent a student from using a second-hand copy. Here is some suggested text:

- Required textbook: [author, title, edition, publisher, date]. Cost: [insert amount].
 - Or include the weblink of the textbook’s publisher site that includes the cost information.
- Students need to purchase this edition. Second-hand or older editions will not be sufficient.
- OR Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of this textbook.
- This course has an optional field trip that costs [insert amount].
- This course has a required field component that costs [insert amount].

In solidarity with the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewak, and Chonnonton peoples on whose traditional treaty and unceded territories this course is shared.