WRTG 3020, Section 056: Writing to Know Poetry  
Spring Semester 2012

Instructor: Dr. Eric Burger  
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E-mail: Burgere@Colorado.edu  
Office Hours: M/W 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. and by appointment  
Class Location: HUMN 245

Required Texts:  
2) Writer’s Help (an online style guide).  
3) E-Reserve and Desire2Learn materials.  
4) Your writing (in hard copy).

Overview: Welcome to WRTG 3020, an exploration of 20th century American poetry and academic writing workshop. In this class you can expect to write plenty, and we will often spend our class time revising and discussing drafts of your papers. The primary goal of the course is to help you become stronger academic writers. To that end, WRTG 3020 emphasizes thoughtful analysis, careful reading, clear argumentation, and sustained inquiry into a subject. Our subject in this class, as mentioned, is 20th century American poetry. We’ll read Gertrude Stein, Sylvia Plath, Robert Creeley, Allen Ginsberg, Sonia Sanchez, Lyn Hejinian, and Marilyn Hacker, among many others. Additionally, this class gives you the opportunity to explore poetry through writing in a number of ways (from papers to imitations to the assortment of classroom exercises you’ll do). Academic writing (e.g. papers) will indeed be our principal writing-oriented focus, but it’ll be far from our only one. It is my hope that in writing in a number of ways about poetry—by using writing broadly as a tool for sustained inquiry into our subject—you will develop a rich, rewarding relationship with poetry, and grow as a writer in the process.

CCHE Criteria: The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), which is the governing body for our state colleges and universities, stipulates certain criteria for upper division (CO3) writing courses. To help you better understand how this course incorporates the criteria, I identify key elements below and summarize how the course speaks to each.

Rhetorical Knowledge. This course will enhance your ability to understand the subtle ways poets communicate to readers—thus enhancing your ability to do poetry analysis—by immersing you in the work associated with a variety of 20th century poetic
movements. We’ll study the High Modernists, the Objectivists, the Confessionals, the New York School Poets, the New American Surrealists, the Black Arts poets, and the Language Poets, among others. We’ll discuss the stylistic features unique to the poetry of each movement, and we’ll consider the poetry of each movement as rhetoric, which is to say we’ll think hard about the many factors (historical moment, political and philosophical orientation of the poets, perceived audience, etc.) that shape this unique, highly context-sensitive form of communication. Additionally, since there are two main audiences—literary critics and creative writers—for poetry criticism at universities, this course requires that you learn to write craft annotations (the primary papers written in creative writing classes) and literary analyses (the primary papers written in literature classes). This will enhance your ability to write persuasively on poetry for academic audiences. Our chief rhetorical text will be poet-critic Mary Oliver’s *A Poetry Handbook*, which we’ll use to extend your understanding of poetic artifice. We’ll also use *Writer’s Help*, an online style guide. Moreover, you will be asked to apply reflective strategies in class discussion, in journal assignments, and in the final paper for the course, the Reflection Paper.

**Writing Process.** This course involves frequent peer review of drafts, with an emphasis on helping you see your habits in composing papers. Additionally, in peer review sessions we will discuss concrete strategies for developing your papers, with an emphasis on the specialized vocabulary and argumentative strategies required for each assignment. You will use a variety of technologies (from word processing software to library databases to e-reserve to Desire2Learn to our online style guide) in this course and you will learn to evaluate sources for relevance through in-class exercises and discussion.

**Conventions and Content Knowledge.** Through in-class writing exercises, class discussion, individual conferences, your major paper assignments, my written comments, and more, you will hone your understanding of how to manipulate voice, diction, syntax, content, and other elements of composition in order to speak authoritatively to audiences within the poetry community. For instance, you will learn to compose with authority for both creative writers and literary critics.

**Major Assignments:** You will be required to complete the following main assignments:

1) Imitations (3)
2) Craft Annotation
3) Literary Analyses (2)
4) Memorization and Recitation
5) Reflection Paper

Below are brief descriptions of the major course assignments, including the relative weight of each in your final grade:
1) **Imitations:** You will write 3 graded imitations of assigned poets this semester. With each you will include a short description of your methodology called a methodology statement. Each imitation w/methodology statement is worth 5% of your final grade.

2) **Craft Annotation:** In this paper you will close read the work of a poet and make an argument about how the poet has *crafted* his/her poems. You will really need to think like a poet to write this paper. You will rely heavily on the vocabulary from our *Glossary of Terms* handout and Mary Oliver’s *A Poetry Handbook*. 15%.

3) **Literary Analyses:** You will write 2 literary analysis papers this semester. In each you will close read the work of a poet and make a thesis-driven argument about the poet’s work, using analysis as the primary tool for making a persuasive argument. We will discuss the subtle distinctions between this paper and the craft annotation later in the semester; however, 2 crucial differences are 1) the literary analysis requires library research, and 2) in the literary analysis you should rely more on the specialized vocabulary of the literary critic. Each literary analysis paper is worth 20% of your final grade.

4) **Memorization and Recitation:** You will memorize a poem and recite it in class. 5%

5) **Reflection Paper:** In this, the final paper you will write in this class, you will have a chance to reflect on the different ways you’ve engaged with poetry this semester. You will have a chance to reflect on what you’ve learned (or haven’t). 10%

**The Portfolio System:** You won’t turn the above-listed major assignments in “piecemeal,” but rather, you’ll hand the majority of them in as part of portfolios. You will produce 3 portfolios this semester (Portfolio 1, Portfolio 2 and Portfolio 3)—a portfolio for each unit of the class. Here is what you’ll hand in with each portfolio:

1) the major paper for the unit (either the craft annotation or a literary analysis);
2) an imitation—you will imitate the same poet you have focused on in the major paper for the unit;
3) a methodology statement—in this you will describe the elements of composition you have focused on in your imitation;
4) related drafts and written student feedback.

**Drafts and the Portfolio Process:** Since the emphasis in this class is on developing and revising your work, you will produce drafts of each of the major assignments, and you will get feedback from the class on those drafts (except for the Reflection Paper, which you will turn in during finals week). You should **hold onto all drafts and written feedback you get** because, as I mention above, each time a portfolio is due you will hand in related drafts and feedback. This is so I can see that you have been working hard at revising and improving your writing; I want to see that you are taking into consideration the observations of your peers and that you are engaged in the tricky process of revision. It’s also a way for me to emphasize how central revision is in the writing process. Good
writers work hard at revision and they understand that it takes a lot of time and effort to get to that finished product.

**The Journal:**

There are two ways to journal in this class: 1) electronically (in this case you’ll bring your laptop to class every time we meet), and 2) “old school” (in this case you’ll bring an “old school” paper notebook to class every time we meet). I don’t have a preference, but make sure that you save all in-class writing on your laptop if you elect to compose in-class writing electronically.

We’ll spend roughly 10-15 minutes journaling most class periods. I will assign the topic just before you start writing. Sometimes the journal entry will be on the assigned reading. Sometimes it will be on a topic from our discussions. Sometimes it will be related to a major assignment and it might serve as a leaping-off point for a dialogue about that assignment. In all cases, the journal entries should help you reflect on the course material and get more out of the class than you would have otherwise.

Each journal entry should be dated at the top, like this for instance: “1/18/12.” I will collect your journals at the end of the semester (NOTE: you’ll have to print up your responses if you journal electronically) and I will be looking to see that you’ve legitimately engaged with each assigned topic and engaged with writing itself. Challenge yourself as a writer, stylistically and intellectually, in the journal entries. They’re in-class writings, so I don’t expect them to be perfect. But you’ll notice, in our readings, that most professional writers are good at ruminating on a subject in a distinctive and appealing way. If you can find or develop your own distinctive and engaging way to “think on the page” as you journal this semester, that will be excellent.

**Grading:** Your grade for the class will be calculated as follows:

**Major Assignments:** 85%
**Participation:** 15%

**Important Information on Participation:** Active participation is essential in WRTG 3020. We will spend the majority of classroom time involved in discussion and workshop activities and these are vital to your development in the course. If you have trouble speaking up in groups (because of nerves, shyness, etc.) please see me after class so I’m aware.

Verbal participation, attendance, on-time assignments, your journal, and preparedness are the main components of class participation. Preparedness is very important. Make sure you always show up to class having read the assigned materials for that day. Make sure you have the assigned materials with you. E-reserve and Desire2Learn materials can be accessed in class on your laptop if you like. However, even if you access assigned
reading in class on your laptop you must have notes about the reading on paper with you at the beginning of class. This is because I collect notes occasionally to see that students are engaging with the assigned reading. In effect, there are three ways to take notes on the assigned reading for this class: 1) take notes in a paper notebook, 2) take notes on your laptop and print them up before class, and 3) underline (or use a highlighter) and jot notes in the margins of assigned readings—in this case you will have to print up readings if they’re from e-reserve or Desire2Learn. Please choose whatever works best for you.

**Grading Criteria:** For each of your major papers, you will receive a handout detailing the specific requirements of the assignment. However, the following general criteria for grading should help familiarize you with the standards of this upper-division writing class.

A Range: Exceptional in form and content: paper is well-organized; observations are insightful, original, surprising. Evidence supports primary and local claims convincingly. Style is graceful and appropriate. Paper is largely error free.

B Range: Strong in form and content: paper is clearly organized; observations are largely accurate and demonstrate above-average interpretive/critical thinking skills. Evidence supports primary claims and largely supports local claims. Style is clear and appropriate. There may be minor grammatical issues.

C Range: Satisfactory in form and content: paper might have some issues with organization, but the argument is relatively clear; observations are largely accurate, but perhaps they’re somewhat obvious and/or underdeveloped. Evidence supports primary claims but some doesn’t support local claims—or evidence is simply lacking in places. Style is acceptable, but perhaps uneven or underdeveloped. There may be recurring grammatical errors.

D Range: Not satisfactory in form and content: paper has serious issues with organization; the argument is difficult to follow. Observations are poor; they are underdeveloped and often incorrect. Evidence does not convincingly support primary claims and often doesn’t support local claims. Evidence is lacking in places. There may be pervasive grammatical errors.

F (not passing): Seriously underdeveloped content. May be extremely difficult to follow. There is little evidence and most of it is unconvincing. There may be pervasive grammatical errors. This grade might also result from plagiarizing or lateness.

**Grade Chart:**

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>88-89</td>
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<td>B</td>
<td>83-87</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
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<td>C+</td>
<td>78-79</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73-77</td>
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<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>68-69</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>63-67</td>
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<tr>
<td>D-</td>
<td>60-62</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
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Revision of a Major Assignment for a Grade Change:

I will allow you to re-submit one of your major assignments for re-evaluation and potential grade change. If you elect to do this, I suggest that you meet with me (in my office, after class, etc.) to discuss the assignment. You will have to attach the original graded version and you will also have to submit a 2-page report in which you describe your revision strategy. Revised major assignments will be due at the end of the semester.

Basic Information and Course Policies:

Assignments: All out-of-class assignments must be typed and double-spaced (poetry imitations can be single-spaced). Staple if longer than a page. Use standard 12-point font size and standard 1-inch margins. Do not email assignments to me; all assignments must be handed in as hard copies. Late assignments will only be evaluated for full credit if you have asked me for an extension, I have granted it, and you get the assignment in on the revised due date.

Attendance: Regular attendance is mandatory. If you miss 4 classes, your final grade may be lowered 1 full letter grade (e.g., from a B to a C). If you miss 5 classes your final grade may be lowered 2 full letter grades. If you miss 6 classes or more you may fail the class. It is very important you understand this policy. If you miss 4 classes, your final grade may be lowered 1 full letter grade. If you miss 5 classes your final grade may be lowered 2 full letter grades. If you miss 6 classes or more you may fail the class. In other words, you get three free passes (but please remember that nothing in this world is ever really free: missing class means missing assignments and classroom exercises and that will negatively affect your participation grade). Be aware that I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, except in the most extreme cases (e.g., serious illness, death of an immediate family member). In such circumstances, contact me ASAP and submit appropriate documentation and I will make accommodations. I will also make accommodations for students exercising their rights to religious observance and in such cases students will not be penalized in any way for missing class. Please note that a missed group or individual conference counts as 1 absence.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of presenting another author’s work as your own. All work in WRTG 3020 must be original. If you plagiarize in any part of an assignment you will get a failing grade for that assignment and you may fail the course. I may also choose to report plagiarism to the Honor Council. Remember, when you paraphrase or quote the work of others you must cite your sources. If you don’t, it’s plagiarism. And it doesn’t matter if you have plagiarized intentionally or not; presenting another’s work as your own is plagiarism. Also, you may not hand in the same paper to two different classes; all work for WRTG 3020 should be unique to WRTG 3020. You are responsible for reading, understanding, and complying with the CU Honor Code, which you can find at http://honorcode.colorado.edu/about-honor-code
If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism please ask me. I’ll be glad to answer your questions.

**Writing Center:** If you want additional help with your writing, the Writing Center in Norlin Library (Norlin E111) is a great place to go to talk about ideas, improve your thesis or essay organization, or just generally work on your writing skills. Check the Writing Center website for more information about hours and services, or request an appointment online at http://www.colorado.edu/pwr/writingcenter.html

**Discrimination and Harassment:** The University of Colorado at Boulder policy on Discrimination and Harassment, the University of Colorado policy on Sexual Harassment, and the University of Colorado policy on Amorous Relationships apply to all students, staff, and faculty. Any student, staff, or faculty member who believes s/he has been the subject of discrimination or harassment based upon race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status should contact the Office of Discrimination and Harassment (ODH) at 303-492-2127 or the Office of Judicial Affairs at 303-492-5550. Information about the ODH, the above referenced policies, and the campus resources available to assist individuals regarding discrimination or harassment can be obtained at http://www.colorado.edu/odh

**Disabilities:** If you qualify for accommodations because of a disability, please submit a letter to me from Disability Services in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. Disability services determines accommodations based on documented disabilities. For more information call 303-492-8671, visit Center for Community Room N200, or see http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices

**Classroom Etiquette:** Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. General CU guidelines regarding classroom behavior can be found online at http://www.colorado.edu/policies/classbehavior.html

**Gadgets:** Cell phones, ipods, PDAs, etc. must be turned off during class time. Additionally, please do not access websites on your laptop unless I ask you to. The 21st century is one with a seemingly unlimited reservoir of technology-driven distractions (author David Foster Wallace refers to it as the “Total Noise” century) and distraction in the classroom is detrimental to learning. When you’re in the classroom, you should be focused on the discussion/activity at hand and that only.

**Directions to My Office:** One last thing! My office is in the stadium and, occasionally, students have trouble finding it. I encourage you to come by during office hours to discuss your writing. Here’s how you find me:

1) Enter Stadium Gate 9
2) Go through the first door on the left
3) Go up one flight of stairs
4) Go through the door on the left
5) Go down the hall until you see 266 on the right
6) Enter and find me in 266E
WRTG 3020 DAILY SYLLABUS

Notes: Daily assignments are subject to change. Assignments may also be added to this schedule. Any changes will be announced in class. Each E-Reserve poetry packet is comprised of roughly 8-12 poems. E-Reserve materials can be found at http://libraries.colorado.edu/search/p. You may need to use/install the VPN Client to access E-Reserve materials from off campus. See http://oit.colorado.edu/vpn for information and a link to VPN downloads. In this class we will be piloting a new online style guide (Writer’s Help) and the majority of assignments that will be added to the schedule will come from it.

PH = A Poetry Handbook

Week One: Introduction to WRTG 3020
M 1/16 NO CLASS—Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
W 1/18 In Class: Course introduction
Discussion: William Stafford’s “Traveling through the Dark”

Week Two: Understanding Poetry from the Inside
M 1/23 For Class: Buy course textbook (A Poetry Handbook)
Read “The Music of the Line” by Kim Addonizio & Dorianne Laux (handout)
In Class: Discussion
Journal Entry: Lineation exercise
W 1/25 For Class: Read PH pp. 19-34: “Sound”
Read PH pp. 92-108: “Imagery”
In Class: Discussion
Journal Entry: Analyzing a poem for sonic effects
Journal Entry: Concrete language exercise

Week Three: Understanding Poetry from the Inside
M 1/30 For Class: Read PH pp. 67-91: “Verse That Is Free” and “Diction, Tone, Voice”
Complete concrete language exercise
In Class: Discussion
Journal Entry: Scansion exercise
W 2/1 For Class: Read “Glossary of Terms” by Steve Orlen (handout)
Memory Map poem due
In Class: Review of terms
Discussion: The Modernist project
Voices & Visions video: William Carlos Williams

Week Four: The Modernists
M 2/6 For Class: Read “Poems: William Carlos Williams” (E-Reserve)
Discussion
Journal Entry: William Carlos Williams imitation
Week Five: The Modernists

M 2/13 For Class:  Read “Poems: Wallace Stevens” (E-Reserve)
Read the section on Wallace Stevens in “Lyric Modernism: Wallace Stevens & Hart Crane” by Christopher Beach (E-Reserve)

In Class:  Voices & Visions video: Wallace Stevens
Discussion

W 2/15 For Class:  Re-Read “Poems: Wallace Stevens” (E-Reserve)

In Class:  Journal Entry: Stein or Stevens imitation (your choice)
Seminar on using Writer’s Help (bring in your laptop if you want to follow along on your own computer)

Week Six: The Modernists

M 2/20 For Class:  Draft of Portfolio #1 due (3 copies)

In Class:  Workshop

W 2/22 For Class:  Prepare for Peer Review

In Class:  Peer Review

Week Seven: Mid-Century Movements: The Beats, New York School Poets, Projective Verse

M 2/27 For Class:  Portfolio #1 due
Read “Poems: Frank O’Hara” (E-Reserve)

In Class:  Discussion
Journal Entry: Frank O’Hara imitation

W 2/29 For Class:  Read “Poems: Allen Ginsberg” (E-Reserve)
Read “Variations on a Generation” by Ann Charters (E-Reserve)

In Class:  Discussion
Journal Entry

Week Eight: Mid-Century Movements: The Beats, New York School Poets, Projective Verse

M 3/5 For Class:  Read “Poems: Robert Creeley” (E-Reserve)
Read “Introduction to Postmodern American Poetry” by Paul Hoover (E-Reserve)
Read “Projective Verse” by Charles Olson (E-Reserve)

In Class:  Discussion

W 3/7 For Class:  Read “Poems: Sylvia Plath” (E-Reserve)

In Class:  Voices & Visions video clips: Sylvia Plath
Discussion: The Literary Analysis
Discussion: Sylvia Plath
Week Nine: The ‘60s & ‘70s: The Daughters of Midas

M 3/12 For Class: Read “Poems: Adrienne Rich” (E-Reserve)
    Read “Adrienne Rich: Consciousness Raising as Poetic Method” by Helen M. Dennis (E-Reserve)
In Class: Discussion
        Writing Exercise

W 3/14 For Class: Read “Poems: Elizabeth Bishop” (E-Reserve)
In Class: Voices & Visions video clips: Elizabeth Bishop
        Discussion

Week Ten: The ‘60s & ‘70s: The Daughters of Midas

M 3/19 For Class: Read material from Writer’s Help on disciplinary writing (specifics TBA)
In Class: Discussion
        Seminar on Chinook & CU databases (bring in your laptop if you want to follow along on your own computer)

W 3/21 For Class: Draft of Portfolio #2 due (3 copies)
    Bring your 3 best sources for your draft to class—be prepared to discuss why they were most useful.
In Class: Workshop

Week Eleven: Spring Break

Eat & sleep & eat some more & watch movies & read poems & sit in the sun & relax & relax & relax

Week Twelve: The ‘60s & ‘70s: The Daughters of Midas

M 4/2 For Class: Prepare for Peer Review
    Peer Review

W 4/4 For Class: “Treated” draft of Literary Analysis due (1 copy)
    Workshop on sentence-level refining

Week Thirteen: The ‘60s & ‘70s: The New Surrealism/Black Arts Movement

M 4/9 For Class: Portfolio #2 due
    Read “Poems: Russell Edson” (E-Reserve)
    Read “Poems: James Tate” (E-Reserve)
    Recommended (not required) Reading: “Introduction to Great American Prose Poems: From Poe to the Present” by David Lehman (E-Reserve)
In Class: Discussion
        Journal Entry: Prose poem exercise

W 4/11 For Class: Read “Poems: Sonia Sanchez” (E-Reserve)
In Class: Discussion
        Journal Entry
### Week Fourteen: The ‘80s & ‘90s: New Formalism

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<th>In Class:</th>
<th>Journal Entry:</th>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>Read “Poems: Brad Leithauser” (E-Reserve)</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Composing in metrical verse</td>
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<td>Read “The Confinement of Free Verse” by Brad Leithauser (E-Reserve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>Read “Poems: Marilyn Hacker” (E-Reserve)</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
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<td>Read “Neo-Formalism: A Dangerous Nostalgia” by Ira Sadoff (E-Reserve)</td>
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<td>Marilyn Hacker imitation</td>
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### Week Fifteen: Into a New Century: Language Poetry

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<th>Journal Entry:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>Read “Poems: Lyn Hejinian” (E-Reserve)</td>
<td>Discussion: Recitation and Reflection Paper</td>
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<td>Read “Introduction to Language Poetries” by Douglas Messerli (E-Reserve)</td>
<td>Discussion: Lyn Hejinian</td>
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<td>Recommended (not required) Reading: “Introduction to <em>The Best American Poetry 1990</em>” by Jorie Graham (E-Reserve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>Draft of Portfolio #3 due (3 copies)</td>
<td>Workshop</td>
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### Week Sixteen: Recitation & Reflection

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<th>For Class:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>Prepare for Peer Review</td>
<td>Peer Review</td>
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<tr>
<td>W</td>
<td>5/2</td>
<td>Prepare for Recitations</td>
<td>Recitations</td>
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**Portfolio #3 due** (Portfolio #3 is due by 4 pm. You can put the portfolio in my box in ENVD or hand it to me in my office.)

**NOTE:** The Reflection Paper and optional Revision Assignment are due (provisionally) Monday, May 7 by 4 pm. You can put them in my box in ENVD or hand them to me in my office.

*Try again. Fail again. Fail better.*
- Samuel Beckett