

## ENGL4302: Topics in Literacy (Spoken Word Poetry and Pedagogy)

Fall 2017, LSU

Professor Sue Weinstein  
Allen Hall 43A  
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Class meeting time: MWF 2:30-3:20  
Classroom: Allen 32  
Office hours: MW 12-2 and by appt.

### Description

This class will introduce students to the discourse of contemporary U.S. spoken word poetry, tracing its history, practices, and norms. We will also study the field of youth spoken word poetry, including its approaches to the teaching of poetry, performance, and critical thinking. Participants will engage with local, regional, and national poets, teaching artists, and program administrators, and will document the practices of local poetry events and organizations.

### Readings

Students are responsible for having the following books and bringing them to class according to the syllabus. Additional required readings are posted by week on our course Moodle site.

#### Collections/Anthologies

Coval, Kevin; Lansana, Quraysh Ali; Marshall, Nate. (2015). *Break Beat Poets: New American Poetry in the Age of Hip-Hop*.

Eleveld, Mark. (2007). *Spoken Word Revolution Redux*.

Olson, Alix (ed.). (2007). *Word Warriors: 35 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution*.

Medina, Tony & Rivera, Luis Reyes. (2001). *Bum Rush the Page*.

Anglesey, Zoe (ed.). (1999). *Listen Up! Spoken Word Poetry*.

Algarin, Miguel and Holman, Bob. (1994). *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets' Cafe*.

#### Criticism

Wheeler, Lesley. (2008). *Voicing American Poetry: Sound and Performance from the 1920s to the Present* (book).

#### Pedagogy

Fisher, Maisha. *Writing in Rhythm*.

### Assignments

1. Follow-a-Poet. For this assignment, each student will select a spoken word poet whom they will learn about during the semester and create a digital page about for our class website. Grade is based on the digital page. (25%)
2. Community Poetry Site Report. Students will identify a local site where poetry is discussed/written/performed. They will attend at least 2 events/activities at the site, and will write a 3-page report on the site and their experience with it. (25%)

3. Seminar Project. Students will identify a major project to be completed by the end of the semester. The project should focus on some element of spoken word poetry as we have studied it in class, including its history, contemporary forms, genres and styles, etc. The topic and a brief description of the topic are due to Dr. Weinstein for approval by mid-term. (35%)

4. Homework & attendance. This is an interactive class for which you will be asked to do various kinds of preparation, including reading, searching online, responding to peers, etc. You will be graded for your overall performance of these activities and on your attendance, which affects your ability to participate in class. (15%)

### CLASS SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignments
Monday 8/21	Introductions	
Wednesday 8/23	What is spoken word poetry? Share quotations, generate a class definition. Oral poetry; excerpts from Foley, from my chapter, maybe put movements and forms etc on slips in envelopes and have groups develop definitions around them	Read Audre Lorde, "Poetry Is Not a Luxury"
Friday 8/25	Class visit from Forward Arts -overview of local community poetry; spoken word poetry in Baton Rouge	Read Weinstein, "Chapter 4: What Is Spoken Word Poetry and Where Did It Come From?", pp. 1-10 (up to "Aesthetic Influences" heading).  View videos and readings under "Forward Arts" on course Moodle site, read Weinstein excerpt on WordPlay
Monday 8/28	Defining "performance" in oral poetry Watch and discuss BNV Team Hawai'i, "Kaona" Watch and discuss Rudy Ray Moore, "Shine and the Titanic"	Foley, "Being There: Performance Theory" (from <i>How to Read an Oral Poem</i> , pp. 79-94)
8/30	<b>CLASS CANCELLED DUE TO T.S. HARVEY</b>	
Friday 9/1	Visit from Donney Rose, poet, teaching artist, and marketing director for Forward Arts.	Read and view poems in "Donney Rose" Moodle file
<b>Monday 9/4</b>	<b>LABOR DAY</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
Wednesday 9/6	Aesthetic influences on contemporary U.S. spoken word poetry	Read Weinstein, "Chapter 4: What Is Spoken Word Poetry and Where Did It Come

	Read poems from Section III of <i>Aloud!</i> Read "Black Art" by Amiri Baraka	From?", pp. 10-36 (start with "Aesthetic Influences" and end before "Hip-Hop")
Friday 9/8	Spoken word poetry & hip-hop	
Monday 9/11	Course assignment introduction	
Wednesday 9/13	Course assignments: Details and topics	
<b>Friday 9/15</b>	<b>NO CLASS MEETING DR. WEINSTEIN AT TEACHER LEADER INSTITUTE IN LAFAYETTE</b>	
Monday 9/18	Spoken word poetry & hip-hop cont'd.  Listen to "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five Listen to "Doo Wop (That Thing)" by Lauryn Hill Listen to "New York State of Mind" by Nas Listen to "Love" by Mos Def	Read Weinstein, "Chapter 4: What Is Spoken Word Poetry and Where Did It Come From?", pp. 36-43 (from "Hip-Hop" to end of chapter)  Read "Rap Poetry 101" by Adam Bradley
Wednesday, 9/20	Nuyorican Poetry	Read "Nuyorican Literature" by Miguel Algarin
Friday 9/22	<b>Visit from Brittany Marshall</b> , poet and English Secondary Education concentrator; member of 2017 LSU CUPSI team and Baton Rouge NPS team, among others.	Read/view poems in "Brittany Marshall" Moodle file
Monday 9/25	Black women's poetics in 1970s U.S.A.  Read/listen to Black women's poetry and music of the 1970s	Read "'Nice & Rough': Unapologetically Black, Beautiful, and Bold: A Conversation with Sheila Jackson on Black Women's Participation in Cultural Production in the 1970s"
Wednesday 9/27	Feminist/lesbian poetics in 1970s U.S.A.  Poems from <i>Word Warriors</i> anthology	Read "Southern Lesbian Poets' Workshop," "Lesbian Poetry," and "Poetry Power," originally published in <i>Off Our Backs</i>  Bring <i>Word Warriors</i> to class

Friday 9/29	Poems from <i>Word Warriors</i> anthology (Pick up discussion of "I Am From, Third Cycle" with Moy comment, and with question about relationship between author and poem)	Read around in <i>Word Warriors</i> , select one poem to post about in "Word Warriors" Moodle Forum  Bring <i>Word Warriors</i> to class
Monday 10/2	What do we mean when we talk about poetic "voice"? How does that conception of voice interact with spoken word poetry, which features a literal, performer's voice? What about taking on other people's voices through poetry? Is there poetry that is voiceless?	Read Wheeler, <i>Voicing American Poetry</i> , Introduction & Chapter 1 (pp. 1-38)
Wednesday 10/4	Radio & spoken word poetry - Edna St. Vincent Millay, record industry "spoken word" category, new version: podcasts (introduce Vs, Drawl, find others)	Read Wheeler, <i>Voicing American Poetry</i> , Chapter 2 (pp. 39-59)
Friday 10/6	Langston Hughes, the Harlem Renaissance, Gwendolyn Brooks - the African American roots of SWP	Read Wheeler, <i>Voicing American Poetry</i> , Chapter 3 (pp. 60-88)
Monday 10/9	Poetry readings, poetry performances, poetry slam: Forms and purposes	Read Wheeler, <i>Voicing American Poetry</i> , Chapter 5 (pp. 127-163)
Wednesday 10/11	<b>Follow-a-poet discussion.</b>	<b>Follow-a-poet reports due noon today.</b>
Friday 10/13	Read/view/listen to poetry from <i>Aloud!</i> anthology, Section III: Founding Poems.	Read "congratulations. you have found the hidden book" by Bob Holman, and "the sidewalk of high art" by Miguel Algarín, in <i>Aloud!: Voices from the New York Poets' Café</i> .
Monday 10/16	Read and discuss poems from <i>Aloud!</i> Section II: Poetry of the 1990s.	Read around in the 1990s section of <i>Aloud!</i> , select one poem and post a one paragraph response to it on "Aloud! 1990s Poems" Moodle Forum.
Wednesday 10/18	Read and discuss poems from <i>Aloud!</i> Section I: Poetry Into the Twenty-First Century	Read around in the Section I of <i>Aloud!</i> . Select one poem and post a one-paragraph response on "Aloud! Into the

		Twenty-First Century Poems" Moodle Forum.
<b>Friday 10/20</b>	<b>FALL HOLIDAY</b>	<b>NO CLASSES</b>
Monday 10/23	Students present on <i>BRtP</i> sections: theme, poets, connections within/across poems	<i>Bum Rush the Page</i> - read and prepare your section (11 sections - 2 students per section; they can divide work)
Wednesday 10/25	Students present on <i>BRtP</i> sections: theme, poets, connections within/across poems	<i>Bum Rush the Page</i> - read and prepare your section (11 sections - 2 students per section; they can divide work)
Friday 10/27	Spoken Word Poetry in the secondary classroom	Fisher, <i>Writing in Rhythm</i> (read full book for today) Fisher, <i>Writing in Rhythm</i> (cont'd)
Monday 10/30	Benefits of youth spoken word poetry  Watch and discuss youth poems representing common themes	Fisher, <i>Writing in Rhythm</i> (read full book for today) Fisher, <i>Writing in Rhythm</i> (cont'd)
Wednesday 11/1	<b>Joint class meeting with McKinley Writing Lab and Internship elective. MEET IN 102 ALLEN.</b>	Materials under "McKinley Writing Lab" on class Moodle site
Friday 11/3	<b>COMMUNITY POETRY REPORTS</b>	<b>Community poetry reports due to Dr. Weinstein via email by noon today.</b>
Monday, 11/6	<b>COMMUNITY POETRY REPORTS</b>	
Wednesday 11/8	Skype visit with Peter Kahn, Oak Park River Forest High School spoken word poetry teacher	Weinstein <b>section on teaching artists and the relationship between poetry and pedagogy (artivism, articles from "teaching artist resources" folder)</b>  "Poetry in Perilous Times" interview with Peter Kahn

		Sam-La Rose, "The rise of spoken word educators in UK schools"
Friday 11/10	Youth spoken word poetry in/and the media: films, television, YouTube, public framing, risks and benefits of mediated representations	Watch film documentary <i>To Be Heard</i> , post one-paragraph response to Moodle "To Be Heard" forum
Monday 11/13	Spoken word poetry from 1994 to 2015	<i>Breakbeat Poets</i> - read intro  <i>Listen Up!</i> - read whole book
Wednesday 11/15	Spoken word poetry from 1994 to 2015 (cont'd).	<i>Breakbeat Poets</i> <i>Listen Up!</i>
Friday 11/17	Current developments: The professionalization of spoken word poets	
Monday 11/20	Current developments: The professionalization of spoken word poets	
<b>Wednesday 11/22</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
<b>Friday 11/24</b>	<b>THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY</b>	<b>NO CLASS</b>
Monday 11/27	Discussion of course projects	<b>SEMINAR PROJECTS DUE</b>
Wednesday 11/29	Class visit	
Friday 12/1	Discussion of course projects	