

ENGL404: The Writer in the Community Syllabus

Spring 2022 | Monday, 5-7:20PM | Kaprelian Hall 137

Instructor Information

Instructor	Email	Office Location & Hours
Hiram Sims	hiram sims@gmail.com	[Wednesday, 12-2pm]

General Information

Description

The Writer in the Community is a course focused on giving students an introduction to the creation and development of community writing workshops, and the development of community performance spaces. Students will learn the fundamental skills necessary to facilitate poetry workshops that are accessible to community members in the neighborhood surrounding USC and develop a monthly open mic at The Sims Library of Poetry.

Expectations and Goals

Students are expected to arrive prepared and actively participate in every class, whether we are meeting virtually or in person. By the end of the semester, you should be familiar with the landscape of LA's poetry community, comprehend the purpose and logistics of organizing community literary events, have attended an open mic (or several), and have created (on paper) a community-based open mic and/or workshop.

Attendance

If you miss more than three classes, you will lose participation credit. If you miss more than four class sessions, you may be ineligible for a grade. You need to be present to complete in-class assignments. Lateness and early departures from class will affect your grade. Chronic lateness is both rude and disruptive. If you intend on arriving more than fifteen minutes late, please email me. Hopefully, no one will need to drop the class. However, if you do, it is your responsibility to ensure you have dropped. Any student who is still enrolled by the end of the semester will receive a grade.

Policies

Only work which is late due to an excused absence can be turned in without penalty. If a student is forced to miss a class, it is the student's responsibility to contact the professor as soon as possible (email is best). Any work that would have been due on the missed day is understood to be due on the next calendar day (or on a date to be determined by the professor if the next calendar day is delayed due to a break in the calendar.) Other late work will be penalized by 1 letter grade for each day late, beginning with the due date.

Grade Distribution

Attendance and Participation	15%
Homework	60%
Final Project	25%

Course Materials

Required Text

E-Myth, Michael Gerber

[“Can Poetry Matter?”](#), Dana Gioia

[“Responsibilities of the Poet”](#), Robert Pinsky

These Pages Speak, Hiram Sims

Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic	Reading	Assignment
Week 1 MEET ON ZOOM	1/10	Syllabus & course expectations. Intro to community workshops.		Create a vision & mission statement. IN CLASS
Week 2 IN PERSON	1/17	Intro to open mics.		Attend one open mic & write about the experience. 500-600 words. DUE
Week 3 IN PERSON	1/24	Defining the poet’s role in the community.	“Can Poetry Matter?”, Dana Gioia “Responsibilities of the Poet”, Robert Pinsky	
Week 4 IN PERSON	1/31	Classic classroom structures in a neighborhood setting.		
Week 5 IN PERSON	2/7	Addressing the multi-skill level in the workshop.		
Week 6 IN PERSON	2/14	Recruiting students from the neighborhood.		Create an outreach plan for student recruitment. DUE

		PRESENTATION: Speaker w/ experience recruiting - V. Kali, Quentin (BBLit), Kuahmel?		
Week 7 IN PERSON	2/21	Definition, communication, and guidance through the process.		
Week 8 IN PERSON	2/28	Event planning basics. PRESENTATION: Karo Ska, The Sims Library of Poetry Manager	Begin reading <i>E-Myth</i> . To discuss Week 12.	
Week 9 IN PERSON	3/7	Creating safe spaces for expression.		Create a list of 10 ethics for your open mic and/or workshop. DUE
Week 10 IN PERSON	3/14	Finding a performance space & setting mutually beneficial terms. PRESENTATION: Akoldpiece, Community Literature Initiative Booking Manager		Discuss final projects. IN CLASS
Week 11 IN PERSON	3/21	Calibration and punitive action.		
Week 12 IN PERSON	3/28	Building a small team.	Discuss <i>E-Myth</i> .	Create an organizational flowchart of your team. DUE
Week 13 IN PERSON	4/4	Addressing accessibility and bridging gaps.		
Week 14 IN PERSON	4/11	Anticipating and troubleshooting conflict.		
Week 15 IN PERSON	4/18	Networking, marketing, budgeting, and funding opportunities. PRESENTATION: Camari Carter-Hawkins, Community Literature Initiative Marketing Manager		Gather an annotated list of 5-10 potential funding resources. DUE

Week 16 IN PERSON	4/25	Present final projects.		
Week 17 IN PERSON	5/2	Last day of class.		

Additional Information and Resources

Mental Health

As a student you may experience a range of challenges that raise questions related to continued learning. These might include a variety of general student concerns like strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. You may find the workload in this class and other classes potentially overwhelming at times. Or you may find yourself struggling to balance work, school, and other activities. Counseling and Mental Health services are here to help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling (213) 740-9355 or by visiting [THIS PAGE](#) for more information. Asking for help is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Special Conditions

If you have a disability that requires special accommodations, please see me within the first week of class to arrange such accommodations.