

# ENGL404: The Writer in the Community Syllabus

Spring 2023 | Tuesday, 2-4.20 PM | Taper Hall 207

## Instructor Information

**Instructor**  
Hiram Sims

**Email**  
hiram sims@gmail.com

**Office Location & Hours**  
[Thursday, 11-2pm Virtual]  
856-6467-9452

## 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. 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	15%
Project 1 (Open Mic Business Plan)	35%
Final Project (Community Workshop Business Plan)	35%

## Course Materials

### Required Text

*E-Myth*, Michael Gerber

*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  Community Workshop Research DUE: 1/17
Week 2 IN PERSON	1/17	Intro to open mics.		Research five local open mics. DUE: 1/24
Week 3 IN PERSON	1/24	Defining the poet's role in the community.		
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.		
Week 7 IN PERSON	2/21	Definition, communication, and guidance through the process.		
Week 8 IN PERSON	2/28	Event planning basics.		

		<b>Discuss Midterm Presentations: Create an open mic business proposal.</b>		
<b>Week 9</b> IN PERSON	3/7	CW Workshop Best Practices <b>Midterm Presentations</b>		
<b>Week 10</b>	3/14	SPRING BREAK		
<b>Week 11</b> IN PERSON	3/21	Open Mic Business Plan		
<b>Week 12</b> IN PERSON	3/28	Midterm Presentations		MIDTERM DUE
<b>Week 13</b> IN PERSON	4/4	Calibration and punitive action.		
<b>Week 14</b> IN PERSON	4/11	Finding a performance space & building a small team. <b>Discuss Final Project Presentations:</b> Create a sixteen-week curriculum for a community workshop.		
<b>Week 15</b> IN PERSON	4/18	How to Promote Community Classes <b>PRESENTATION: Camari Carter-Hawkins, Community Literature Initiative Marketing Manager</b>		
<b>Week 16</b> IN PERSON	4/25	Final Project Presentations		
<b>Week 18</b> IN PERSON	5/2	Final Presentations		Final Project Due

## 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 <https://open.spotify.com/track/7aiDv0bk2E5zj2LjxuBcaQ> 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.