EN 609-320: Form and Theory Practice The Art of …: Surveying the Graywolf Press Series, or Choose Your Own Adventure
308 Morgan Hall, 11-11:50 a.m. T
Professor L. Lamar Wilson, 207 Rowand-Johnson Hall
Office Hours: By appointment (ideally 1-4 p.m. Tuesdays & Wednesdays)
Contact: llwilson4@ua.edu (profllamarwilson on Gchat)
*Allow 24 hours for response. After 9 p.m., the 24-hour window begins the following morning, when email likely will be read.*

Course Description & Learning Outcomes
We’ll read, reflect, & play (or prep to play). Simply that. We’ll start with books in the Graywolf series that focus upon risk & syntax in poetics; then meander into those that discuss characterization, real & imagined histories, & conflict resolution in fiction; & finally blur all lines & give time to the business of limning our lives in creative nonfiction. Along the way, you’ll be encouraged to “choose your own adventure,” across genres, & read books in whatever genres you divine whose modes of writing guide you deeper into or out of the spaces Graywolf’s master artists highlight.

By semester’s end, you will be empowered to:
1. Discuss and experiment with theories of poetics, fiction, and creative nonfiction from master artists.
2. Collate a portfolio of up to 25 pages of original creative work that engages this course’s concerns.

Required Readings

Possible Supplemental Readings
Poetry
Hoang, Lily. Abestía. Cleveland: Cleveland State University Poetry Center, 2016.


Nonfiction (Memoir, Cultural & Literary Criticism)


**Course Requirements & Grading Policies**

This is a pass/fail course. To pass, you must do the following, assessed based upon the following point system:

- In-class participation/attendance of Visiting Writers & MFA Readings series........................................200 points
- Portfolio of original work (up to 25 pages; due week of 11/27).................................................................200 points

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment Apparatus</th>
<th>Point Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discuss and experiment with theories of poetics, fiction, and creative nonfiction from master artists.</td>
<td>In-class discussion &amp; writing; class attendance</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise and collate original work that grapples with techniques outlined in Graywolf books</td>
<td>Portfolio of up to 25 pages of original creative work</td>
<td>200 points</td>
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386-400 = A+  
370-381 = A  
358-369 = A-  
306-317 = C+  
290-305 = C  
278-289 = C-  
266-277 = D+  
250-265 = D  
238-249 = D-  
<237 = F

**Attendance Policy**

This course’s work involves discussion; weekly attendance is mandatory. One unexcused absence is allowed; all others will negatively impact your participation and final grades. If you come to class and clearly exhibit you have not read the assigned texts, you not only will be marked absent, but you may be asked to leave class. Excessive tardiness (greater than 15 minutes) and arrival without work will count as an absence. Your second and subsequent absences will cost you 20 points of your participation grade. After three unexcused absences, you will automatically. Illnesses and other emergencies may occur and will be considered as absences & participation grades are assessed.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

Attending Visiting Writers & MFA Reading series is mandatory unless there’s a course or work conflict. You’re encouraged to attend and participate in as many Pure Products readings and other CW events as well.

8/26 Syllabus & Day Dreaming  
9/4 Phillips  
9/11 Phillips  
9/18 Voigt  
9/25 Voigt  
10/2 El Akkad Master Class  
10/9 D’Erasmo  
10/16 Hollars Master Class  
10/23 D’Erasmo/Danticat  
10/30 Danticat  
11/6 Bram  
11/13 Bram  
11/20 Birkert  
11/27 Birkert (Portfolios due in class or by week’s end)
On-campus Readings & Creative Writing Events

Making creativity part of your everyday life is a major part of this MFA journey. To that end, you are encouraged to interact with visiting writers and others in our community. The lineup so far:

• **Michael Martone & Mike Mejia Reading** (multigenre, metafiction, nonfiction)
  *Melts in Your Mind*, Thursday, Sept. 20, Chuck’s Fish, 5 p.m.

• **Robin Behn** Master Class (poetry and music), Tuesday, Sept. 18, 2 p.m., 301 Morgan Hall

• **Robin Behn & Heidi Lynn Staples** (poetry), Monday, Sept. 24, 7 p.m., 205 Gorgas Library

• **Omar El Akkad** Master Class (fiction, *American War*, Honors One Book)
  Tuesday, Oct. 2, 11 a.m., 301 Morgan Hall

• **Skype Class, “Cardboard Computer”** (on video game/digital narrative)
  Thursday, Oct. 4, 9:30 a.m., 301 Morgan Hall

• **Meg Day** (poetry), Oct. 9, 7 p.m., 205 Gorgas Library

• **Akhil Sharma** (fiction), Thursday, Oct. 11, 7 p.m., 205 Gorgas Library

• **The Conversation** Readings & Master Classes (poetry)
  Tuesday, Oct. 16, 3 & 6 p.m., 301 Morgan Hall & 205 Gorgas Library
  Wednesday, Oct. 17, 3 & 7 p.m., 301 Morgan Hall & 205 Gorgas Library

• **BJ Hollars Craft Talk** (nonfiction, writing about/out of trauma), Oct. 23, 301 Morgan Hall

• **Ada Limón** (poetry), Monday, Oct. 29, 7 p.m., Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center
  Craft Talk, Tuesday, Oct. 30, 9:30 a.m., 301 Morgan Hall

• **“Table Reading”: Breakfast at Tiffany’s** (playwriting), Sunday, Nov. 4, 2 p.m. Dinah Washington Center

• **Doug Nichol** (screenwriting), Nov. 6, 3 p.m., 301 Morgan Hall

• **California Typewriter** Screening, Nov. 6, 6:30 p.m., Bama Theatre

• **Steve Birch** (playwriting), “Is My Verse Alive?: A Play Emily Dickinson,” Monday, Nov. 12, 6:30 p.m.,
  Dinah Washington Center for Cultural Arts

• **Sloan Harris** (publishing/literary agency), Friday, Nov. 9, TBA time, 301 Morgan Hall

• **Pure Products**, Monarch Espresso Bar, Thursdays @ 7 p.m.: Sept. 6-Nov. 29

• **MFA Reading Series**, 7 p.m.: Wednesday, Sept. 19, Nov. 7, Nov. 28; Friday, Oct. 5

UAct

The University of Alabama is committed to an ethical, inclusive community defined by respect and civility. The UAct website ([www.ua.edu/uact](http://www.ua.edu/uact)) provides extensive information on how to report or obtain assistance with a variety of issues, including issues related to dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual assault, sexual violence or other Title IX violations, illegal discrimination, harassment, child abuse or neglect, hazing, threat assessment, retaliation, and ethical violations or fraud.

Students With Disabilities

If you are registered with the Office of Disability Services, please see me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations you need. I’m happy to help. If you have a disability, but have not contacted ODS, please call 348-4285 or visit 220 Research Drive to register. Students with disabilities must be registered before receiving academic adjustments.

Severe Weather Protocol

In case of severe weather, take shelter and stay safe! Visit [www.ua.edu](http://www.ua.edu) for general information in case of an emergency. Following an emergency/disaster, I will communicate any relevant course information via Blackboard.