FYS 21st Century Poetry
FAC 304 MW 12:30 - 1:45 p.m.
Professor Brian Spears
Office: Howard 307
Office Hours: 9:30 - 10:30 am and by appointment
Email: brian.spears@drake.edu

Required Texts:
The Self Unstable by Elisa Gabbert
Becoming the Villainess by Jeannine Hall Gailey
The Black Automaton by Douglas Kearney
The New Black by Evie Shockley
An essay packet supplied by the professor
A journal for in class writing assignments, to be collected periodically
A computer with internet access

Course Goals and Objectives:
We're fifteen years into the new century and the poetry world has undergone some pretty amazing changes during that period. To be clear, it's not like something magical happened on January 1, 2001 that changed poetry forever, but there have been some pretty amazing technological advances in that general time frame that have affected the ways poets create and access works of art. Our focus, then, will be on the current century, on how the rise of the internet as a communications network has changed the nature of poetry for some artists, and a little on how publishing poetry has changed over that time frame as well. One major group project this semester will include the creation of an e-chapbook of your original work, a project that would have been difficult ten years ago and impossible fifty years ago.

To that end, we will explore work by some contemporary poets--the four required books for this course have all been published within the last ten years--and you will investigate some ways in which contemporary poets are making their work accessible to a wider audience and in different ways than their predecessors may have ever dreamed possible. We'll look at animated and video poems, and listen to recordings made by poets of their own and other poets' work. We'll discover how technology has given artists easier access to tools to broaden the definition of poetry, tools which in the past required significant investments in both money and education. And so by extension we will talk about communications technology as a democratizing influence on the art of poetry, and on the intersection of art and politics.

Absences:
More than two absences will result in the loss of a letter grade for the attendance portion of this course. Two tardies (defined as coming in to class after I have taken the roll) will count for a single absence.

Classroom Policies:
Oral classroom participation **is required** in a course of this type. You will often be participating in small group work as well as discussions involving the entire class. You never know when a comment you make will spark fellow classmates to think of a subject in a new way or provide them with a creative spark.

However, a modicum of good manners is absolutely necessary for quality discussion. Failure to behave in a mannerly fashion may result in a lower grade or, in extreme cases, a request that you withdraw from the course. Students deficient in this area will be given one warning from the instructor before being penalized or asked to withdraw from the course.

Electronic devices may be used in class if they are being used for classroom activities only. Understand that if you are using an electronic device in class, you are giving everyone in the class permission to see what you are using it for.

We will often take part in writing exercises during class. Everyone is expected to participate in these exercises no matter how silly they may seem at the time.

Assignments are **not** accepted late without prior approval of the professor. In case of technical difficulties, take extraordinary measures to show that you have completed the work on time, then submit the work properly at the first possible opportunity.

**Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:**
Neither academic dishonesty nor plagiarism will be tolerated in this course. Students who are found to have violated Drake University’s policies on academic dishonesty and plagiarism (available here: [http://www.drake.edu/dos/handbook/academic.php](http://www.drake.edu/dos/handbook/academic.php)) will be dealt with according to the guidelines noted under the College of Arts and Sciences at the above link.

**Students with Disabilities**
Students with documented disabilities should meet with me individually to discuss what accommodations will be necessary. Students should provide accommodation request forms as early in the semester as possible. Guidelines can be found online at [http://www.drake.edu/acadassist/disability/currstud.php](http://www.drake.edu/acadassist/disability/currstud.php)

**Student Services:**
The Coordinator for Sexual Violence Response and Healthy Relationship Promotion’s primary role is to act as a resource for students who have been subjected to interpersonal [gender] violence including sexual assault/harassment, dating/domestic violence, gender-based discrimination, and stalking and will advocate on behalf of the student victim’s requests if services are voluntarily initiated. The coordinator can explain how to initiate a complaint within the university and through criminal/civil processes, assist with referrals to a confidential crisis advocate and/or counselor and appropriate medical or legal professionals. The coordinator must report “known” student campus assaults to the Dean of Students and/or Title IX Coordinator, but the complainant still has rights to participate or withdraw from the university process. Other services include providing crisis intervention (safety plan, crisis counseling, rights information), and assistance in academic and housing accommodations as needed. To contact the
coordinator, Alysa Mozak, call 515-271-4141 or email alysa.mozak@drake.edu. The Violence Intervention Partner (V.I.P.) program through this office provides peer-based 24/7 confidential advocacy services. To access a V.I.P. advocate call or text 515-512-2972. For more information about these services visit www.drake.edu/sexual-assault/

Grading:
Formal Writing Assignment: 30%
Book Review: 25%
Participation/Journal Writing: 15%
Group Work: 15%
E-Chapbook Project: 10%

Grading scale: A 90-100 B 80-89 C 70-79 D 60-69 F 0-59

Schedule of Classes (subject to change)


9/7 - 9/9 Monday is Labor Day. Class will not meet. Writing exercises. Class discussion of “Ways of Seeing.” Reading assignment for the weekend: Becoming the Villainess by Jeannine Hall Gailey


10/5 - 10/7 Writing exercises. Video poems due and screened. Discuss The Self Unstable.


10/19 - 10/21 Fall Break. Monday’s class will not meet. Writing exercises. Book review due. Group work: more on uncreative writing. Reading assignment for the weekend: The Black Automaton by Douglas Kearney

10/26 - 10/28 Writing exercises. Discuss Poem 1 assignment. Discuss The Black Automaton


11/16 - 11/18 Workshop poems. Reading assignment: *The New Black* by Evie Shockley

11/23 - 11/25 **Thanksgiving. Wednesday’s class will not meet.** Discuss *The New Black*. Collect journals.


12/7 - 12/9 Complete e-book assignment. End of semester conferences with instructor.

**Final Exam Period: Monday, December 14, 9:30 - 11:20 a.m** Presentation of e-books, class reading of creative work written this semester, snacks.