

Prospective Graduate Students: This is a one-credit course open to all English graduate students. It's a way to engage in both critical writing (a book review) and in creative writing (flash fiction or lineated poem) as well as to attend several literary readings. Here is the syllabus for the fall semester. Next semester we'll read a collection of poems and bring said poet to campus via Zoom for a craft talk & short reading. The poet for the spring has not yet been announced.

Mauricio K. G.

Project in Creative Writing: Independent Study/Visiting Writers Fall 2020

Instructor: Mauricio Kilwein Guevara

Course: ENG 819-001

Meeting Pattern: Irregular

Classroom: ONLINE WEB

E-mail: maurice@uwm.edu

Office: Virtual

English Department: CRT439 & 229-4511

My Teams telephone number: (414) 251-7798

Office Hours:

There will be no set office hours for this course. Instead, at a mutually convenient time, I'm happy to conference with any student via my Teams telephone number (above). We can do voice only or video chat. Students will initiate a desire to meet by sending me an email (above).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We will all read one shared, required text and attend a Zoom reading & craft talk by the journalist/novelist, Omar El Akkad. In addition, you will attend another virtual prose reading via Boswell Books and two virtual poetry readings of your choice sponsored by Woodland Pattern Book Center. The other significant activity will involve "Writing with the Other Hand": you will draft and workshop an original, brand-new work outside of the genre that got you into the Creative Writing Program. In addition, every student will write and try to publish a review of a recently published book.

At the virtual readings you attend, I encourage you to be conspicuously participatory, if Q&A is an option! When our class joins the Creative Writing Program-sponsored reading and craft discussion by journalist/novelist Omar El-Akkad, we will of course be mindful and considerate of others. However, we will come to each event with a number of questions to bring to the table, and we should not feel inhibited to ask follow-up questions. We will be, to a certain extent, participant-observers in Milwaukee's (virtual) literary communities and events. As such, we will join these literary events with our notebooks open and ready to record our impressions, responses, queries, etcetera.

Your culminating task will be to write and submit a 1-2 pp. letter of reflection related to your engagement in this course and an activity report. Let me know where you sent your book review and if you've heard back from the periodical as well as a list of all the readings and/or craft talks you attended (activity report).

REQUIRED TEXT

(Available at Woodland Pattern Book Center, 720 East Locust Street in Riverwest—a brisk 15-minute stroll from Curtin Hall. Let them know you are a UWM student to get a **special discount**. Phone: 414-263-5001.)

El-Akkad, Omar. *American War*. NY: Knopf, 2017.

EVALUATION METHODS

Attendance and participation: 50 points.

Book review: 20 points

Drafting/workshopping and submitting your own (non-primary genre) literary work. 25 points.

Letter of reflection with activity report: 5 points.

Total points for the class: 100

To receive a “satisfactory” grade for this course, by the end of the course you’ll need to have accumulated a minimum of 75 points.

I’m mindful of the fact that this is NOT a 3-credit graduate course. The class attendance requirement will involve two Zoom meetings (the start-up and the workshop/peer feedback session). Also, I am requiring that you attend the El-Akkad event and one other prose reading and two poetry readings of your choosing sponsored by Woodland Pattern Book Center. If for some reason you cannot make a particular event, touch base with me ahead of time, so that we can agree upon an alternative activity. 50 points.

The critical reception (book review) assignment will involve your choosing a forthcoming or very recently released publication and reviewing it for publication. To this end, you might want to first query your intended publication and receive the greenlight to write and submit your review exclusively to the journal of your choosing. Your review should follow the selected periodical’s length and style guidelines. Your review should be at least 400 words, although a bit longer than that would of course be wunderbar. I’m not interested in your writing short-short reviews for this assignment; that is, I’m looking for a full-length review rather than a thumbnail summary of a few sentences to a paragraph. 20 points.

Writing with the Other Hand: If you identify primarily as a poet, you’ll write an original flash fiction for this course of 500-750 words. On the other hand, if your primary genre is fiction, you’ll compose a lineated poem of 18-24 lines. These new, original works will be the focus of our discussion session in November. 25 points.

Culminating letter of reflection: You’ll write by a letter of reflection (no more than 500 words) that will identify and discuss the various components of the course, what you were most interested in, what aspects you felt that you excelled in and why, what did not work as well as you might have hoped and why, and any other observations that you would like to share with me. This document should also include your activity report: What readings you went to (who, when, where), any craft talks, what book you reviewed, where you sent it, and the outcome of that submission, if known. The activity report is done on the honor system. Letter of reflection with activity report: 5 points.

COURSE CALENDAR

Since the program has only one visiting writer this semester, Omar El-Akkad, you will also need to attend one other prose reading and two virtual poetry readings of your choice sponsored by Milwaukee’s literary center, Woodland Pattern:

<https://woodlandpattern.org/events/>

For fiction offerings, try Boswell Books:

<https://www.boswellbooks.com/upcoming-events>

September

Friday (9/11) Start-up meeting. Zoom, 11a-12:15p.
Go to a reading of your choice? (See links above.)

October

Tuesday 10/27 at 7p on Zoom. **Required event:** Fall 2020 Boudreaux Visiting Writer Omar El-Akkad will give a very short reading from his novel *American War* followed immediately on the same session by a craft talk and Q&A session. Length of the event: 75 minutes.

Go to a reading of your choice? (See links above.)

Friday 10/30. **Day of the Deadline.** **Attention:** Email your original “Writing with the Other Hand” text, **as a Word doc (not as a PDF)**, to me (maurice@uwm.edu) and the class.

November

Friday (11/6). 5-7:15p. Zoom Breakout groups. **Group A** meets at **5p** and **Group B** (Canese Jarboe, Camilla Lee, Kelly Saunders) meets at **6:20p**. Workshopping session: Writing with the Other Hand. For a reminder, please see **Evaluation Methods** (above).

Go to a reading of your choice? (See links above.)

December

Go to a reading of your choice? (See links above.)

Thursday (12/3). Reflection Letter with activity report (no more than 500 words) and your book review **emailed** to me by noon.

Addenda:

Here are helpful websites for this course:

Woodland Pattern Book Center: <https://www.woodlandpattern.org>

Boswell Book Company: <https://www.boswellbooks.com>

Academy of American Poets: <https://www.poets.org>

Poetry Foundation: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org>

Penn Sound: <http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound>

and for flash fiction: <https://www.newyorker.com/books/flash-fiction> or <http://flashfiction.net/author-index/>

Writing a book review, an introduction:

<http://www.collegeofthedesert.edu/students/asc/SiteAssets/Pages/Research-and-Study-Skills/Book%20Review.pdf>

NetGalley is a site where book reviewers and other professional readers can read books before they are published, in e-galley or digital galley form. Members register for free and can request review copies or be invited to review by the publisher:

<https://www.netgalley.com/>

Sample an omnibus book review by our own Elizabeth Dally Hoover:

<https://www.kenyonreview.org/reviews/three-anthologies-738439/>

A review of a literary criticism monograph by yours truly:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/blar.12386>

More student resources you might be able to use:

<https://uwm.edu/ctl/wp-content/uploads/sites/128/2020/08/UWM-Milwaukee-Campus-Resources-.pdf>

N.B.: Please be sure to check your UWM email account on a regular basis (several times per week), as it will be the primary mechanism by which I'll communicate with you.