

BRIEF, ADVANCE NOTICE COURSE DESCRIPTION

FALL 2021

ENGLISH 4353.50

(100% online, 100% asynchronous)

TEXAS POETS LAUREATE



Instructor: Dr. Stephen Souris (SSouris@twu.edu), Professor of English, Texas Woman's University.

Catalog course title and catalog course description: "Intensive investigation of a topic related to genre, style, period, or theme of American Literature. May be repeated when topic varies...."

Semester-specific focus: Texas poets who have been named Poet Laureate by the Texas Legislature.

Semester-specific description: Contemporary Texas poets writing mostly in relatively accessible free verse. We'll focus on the volumes in the "[Texas Poet Laureate Series](#)" published by Texas Christian University Press. The poets in the series are James Hoggard, Dave Parsons, Alan Birkelbach, Paul Ruffin, Larry Thomas, Red Steagall, Steven Fromholz, Jan Seale, Karla Morton, Walt McDonald, Carmen Tafolla, Carol Coffee Reposa, Jenny Browne, and Laurie Ann Guererro. A special half-price deal for TWU students has been negotiated with the publisher (see below). Optional activities will include: 1) discussion of the recordings in the [Texas Poets Podcast series](#), hosted by Dr. Souris; 2) projects through the

Enhanced Educational Experience Plan (EEE Plan—see below) geared toward presentation at the next [Langdon Review Weekend](#) (an annual gathering of Texas poets near Fort Worth). Regarding #2: Students in previous offerings of this course have [presented their own poems](#) written in response to assigned poems by Texas Poets Laureate. This year, we will also experiment (as an optional exercise) with videotaped performances of assigned poems (pre-mastery and then post-mastery). This course is 100% online and 100% asynchronous.

Date of final exam: Saturday, December 4.

Target audience: Students with an interest in contemporary poetry in general and/or with an interest in Texas poetry in particular.

Protocol for online courses with this professor: Each poet-specific unit will have a written lecture provided by the instructor in the form of written commentaries on all the assigned poems. Lectures will be in the middle of the respective units to promote student engagement and original thinking prior to the lecture. Discussion topics for each unit will be available to stimulate discussion forum activity. Responses to selected forum postings will be provided by the course GA on a daily basis. The instructor will respond to selected forum postings in a synthesizing, integrative manner at the end of each unit.

Graduate Assistant: The Graduate Assistant will be available for assistance on any aspect of the course.

Time & place: Entirely online; entirely asynchronous (no mandatory meetings on campus or online at a designated time). There will be several *optional* class-wide video calls using Zoom for students seeking clarification about course procedures and requirements. Zoom video calls have a telephone option for audio only.

Requirements: Familiarity with Canvas; familiarity with what is required to manage and succeed in a 100% online course; discipline to handle an entirely online course; ability to work with information provided entirely in writing; regular reading; regular participation in the discussion forums (at least 2500 words total for the semester); research exercise (article review—see below); five tests in Canvas (four midterm tests and one comprehensive, cumulative final exam); avoidance of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism; and access to a telephone. Required research exercise (article review): In 3000- and 4000-level courses, at least two postings to the relevant discussion board forums must consist of a summary of and commentary on a relevant scholarly article.

Optional work on the “Enhanced Educational Experience Plan”: 1) a conventional full-length research-based term paper; 2) compare-contrast essay exercises at semester end; 3) a creative project related to the course and drawing upon special talents; 4) an extensive, annotated bibliography of secondary sources related to our readings; 5) especially extensive participation in the discussion forums following specified guidelines; 6) a collaborative project. Canvas tests can be reduced to as little as 25% of the course grade by selecting three components of the EEE Plan, which is strongly recommended. Honors Contracts, which can

incorporate the EEE Plan, are welcome. The EEE Plan is entirely optional.

Required books:

Half-price deal!: Special arrangements have been made with TCU Press for a

**half-price
deal**

for TWU students who purchase [the entire set of volumes](#) in

the Texas Poet Laureate Series directly from the Press' distributor (Texas A&M Press). We'll be reading selected poems from the entire series (covering the poets listed above). The books are slim and reasonably priced; getting half off makes them even more affordable. Shipping, handling, and taxes will be added. There is only one way to get this special deal. You must call Texas A&M Press at **800-826-8911** and say you're ordering all the books in TCU's Texas Poet Laureate Series for Dr. Souris' Fall 2021 course on Texas poets at TWU (Eng. 4353.50). You must pay by credit card over the phone or send a check or money order after placing your order by phone. Tell the person you reach by phone that this special offer was negotiated with Dr. Dan Williams, Director of TCU Press. Winona McCormick at Texas A&M Press knows about it. Anyone who is experiencing difficulty obtaining the books by the beginning of the semester should e-mail the instructor.

Resale value: Denton's Recycled Books would be very interested in a full set of this attractive, highly desirable series (per an exploratory conversation with them). For a clean, lightly-used (unmarked) set, they would offer ca. \$80 in cash or ca. \$100 for in-store credit.

Amazon: Used copies of the books covering all the assigned poets are available through amazon.

Library availability: One full set of the books will be on reserve at the TWU library. The titles of all the assigned poems for the semester will be available at the beginning of the semester.

First assignments: Poems by TWU-favorite, Karla K. Morton.

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism: Proper documentation of sources is expected. A single act of plagiarism anywhere in the course, whether on required or optional work, can result in an F on the assignment, an F in the course, and expulsion from TWU. This instructor has a zero-tolerance policy regarding plagiarism. Same for academic dishonesty in any other form.

Additional information:

- The series name sometimes appears in bibliographic records as "Texas Poet Laureate Series" and sometimes as "Texas Poets Laureate Series." That needs to be kept in mind when searching online for the series.
- Non-degree seeking course participants: If you are not in a degree program at

TWU you may still be able to take a course at TWU as a “non-degree [seeking] student.” It may even be possible to get such coursework accepted as part of a degree plan should you subsequently become enrolled in a degree program at TWU.

For details, call the Office of Admissions at 940-898-3076 or follow [this link](#) and select the “non-degree admission” category. Registration can occur after the date TWU freshmen can register using the “transient student” application form via ApplyTexas.

- Brief, advance notice course descriptions for all my courses are usually available via the “Class Schedules” platform, which is accessible to the general public following this path: twu.edu > A-Z index > Class Schedules. Alternatively, they are also available through Web Advisor / Student Planning when searching for specific courses. I try to have advance notice course descriptions available starting with March 1 for summer and fall courses and Oct. 1 for spring courses. (Tip: If you encounter a “cookie” problem, access the Class Schedules platform via the “incognito” option with Google Chrome.)
- Miscellaneous Notes: This information is preliminary and is subject to change with notification. This is not an official course syllabus; the official course syllabus, distributed at the beginning of the semester, will provide the most detailed and current information. Nor is this announcement intended to meet the requirements of House Bill 2504; a 2504 version of the course syllabus will be made available separately. A detailed course syllabus including a calendar of reading assignments from a previous semester is available upon request. The course syllabus and readings for this semester will be very similar. For further information: SSouris@twu.edu. Subject line: “Inquiry about Eng. 4353.”