

*BRIEF, ADVANCE NOTICE COURSE DESCRIPTION*

**ENGLISH 5903.51**  
**TEXAS POETS LAUREATE**  
**FALL 2021**



**Instructor:** Dr. Stephen Souris, Professor of English, TWU’s Department of English, Speech, and Foreign Languages.

**Catalog description:** “ENG 5903. Special Topics. Investigation in traditional lecture format of a specific literary or linguistic topic. May be repeated for credit when the specific topic of investigation varies. Three lecture hours a week. Credit: Three hours.”

**Semester-specific focus:** Texas Poets Laureate.

**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 Guerrero. 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](#), as well as discussion of the recordings from Professor’s Corner sessions at the Denton Public Library on Texas Poets Laureate—all hosted by Dr. Souris; 2) projects geared toward presentation at the next [Langdon Review Weekend](#) (an annual gathering of Texas poets near Fort Worth). Students in previous offerings of this course have [presented their own poems](#) written in response to assigned poems by Texas Poets Laureate.

**Unit protocol:** For each poet-specific unit, discussion topics will be provided for individual poems. Poem-specific instructor commentaries will be made available in the middle of the unit, preceded and followed by vigorous participant activity in the discussion forums.

**Time & place:** 100% online, 100% asynchronous. There will be an initial *optional* Zoom meeting for clarification about course issues (at a time that works for folks). Depending on participant interest, there may be additional *optional* Zoom meetings throughout the semester to discuss the readings. At the end of each unit, the instructor will respond to select forum postings.

**Requirements:** 1) regular participation in discussion forums; 2) unit leader for one or more units (details TBD); 3) annotated bibliography; 4) term paper of 10-12 pages (conference length) or longer (for publication). There are no examinations in this course.

**“Response poems”:** In lieu of the term paper (or in addition to it), participants who want to can write “response poems” using assigned poems as a point of departure. We will try to form a panel of TWU students from this course reading their “response poems” at the next Langdon Review Weekend (early September 2022) in nearby Granbury, Texas following the Sept. 2016 and Sept. 2018 successes of similar panels of TWU students at the LRW.

**Bakhtin-inspired pre/post videos:** Also in lieu of the term paper (or in addition to it), participants will be invited to create videos of themselves first encountering specified poems cold and then performing them after having mastered them. Inspiration for this project comes from [Bakhtin’s “Dialogic Pedagogy” essay](#) in which he discusses the advantages of parataxis over hypotaxis. This project also has implications for the Langdon Review Weekend.

### **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. 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 having trouble obtaining the books by the beginning of the semester should e-mail the instructor.

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. Students who cannot make it to the library to use the copies on reserve will be accommodated (contact Dr. Souris for further information about that arrangement).

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

**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.

**Target audience:** Students with an interest in contemporary poetry in general (especially free verse) and/or with an interest in Texas poetry in particular. And students who seek opportunities for conference presentation and publication.

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

**Non-degree seeking individuals:** 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.

**Additional information:**

- During the Fall 2021 semester, Dr. Souris will be working on a project for TCU Press for which he has a book contract. The project involves Dr. Souris selecting great poems for the college classroom from the multivolume Texas Poets Laureate Series for inclusion in a one-volume anthology. An instructor's guide with poem-specific commentaries will accompany the anthology. Based on their responses to the assigned poems, students in the course this semester will play an important role in this project's outcome.
- The TCU Press' 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.
- The course will be “bracketed” with Eng. 4353.50 (Topics in American Literature). Students in 4353 and 5903 will have entirely different requirements. Combining 4353 and 5903 will increase the [heteroglossia](#) in the discussion forums.
- 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. 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.)

*Notes: This information is preliminary and is subject to change with notification. For further information: [SSouris@twu.edu](mailto:SSouris@twu.edu). Subject line: “ASAP—Inquiry about Eng.5903.”* 5/3/2021