

**Speak.**

week to week

# Intro to Spoken Word

Week 1

# “Shake the Dust”, Anis Mojgani



# “Wait”, Carlos Andres Gomez, Jeanann Verlee



# Meeting Notes

We watched two videos as an introduction to spoken word. We talked about what kinds of things members wanted out of the club.

## Some ideas:

- Weekly writing themes and prompts
- Field trips
- Creating a safe writing and performing environment
- Hearing others perform their own works
- Events
- A guest speaker
- A workshop
- A “mid-semester assessment”

# An Open Letter to...

Week 2

# “An Open Letter to the Last Person I will Ever Love”, Carrie Rudzinski



# “An Open Letter to Snapple”, Omar Holmon





# “Dear Straight People”, Denice Frohman



# Meeting Notes

Prompt: Write “An open letter to...” or “Dear...” poem

The idea behind this prompt, was that new writers may find it easier to write when given a specific format to write in. This prompt guides a writer nicely into writing a poem without limiting the subject matter of what they write.

**More Dear\_\_\_\_\_**

Week3

# “To JK Rowling from Cho Chang”, Rachel Rostad



# “Pretty”, Katie Makkai



# Meeting Notes:

The “Open Letter to” and “Dear” prompts drew a few poems for people to share. Poems this week were largely in the phase of getting people more comfortable with the group as a whole and setting up a safe environment. Specifically asking “what would you like to hear from the group” opened up the opportunity for people to ask for advice, edits, or just to appreciate it as it was. This is important!

Prompt: A bottle of...

# Writing Week

Week 4

# “Jezebel Revisits the Book of Kings”, Jeanann Verlee





# “Isms”, Nuyorican Poets Cafe



# Meeting Notes:

- The bottle of... prompt drew some poems people were comfortable and not comfortable with sharing.
- More people may write poems if prompted in person during the week. Some people did write a poem but were not comfortable sharing with the group. We were glad to have them write, but spoken word is also about sharing and communicating with an audience, which poses an interesting dilemma.
- 10 min Prompt: On the road... Everyone wrote a poem and shared it with the group. This collected a very diverse group of poems and some people read their work for the first time here.
- Prompt: Write something with a clear message. Anything. As long as the message is clear.

# Performance

Week 5

# NPS 2014

Excerpts from

<http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/37447029>

- 1:44:30
- 1:50:00

# Meeting Notes:

- Initial Plan
  - Perform a dramatic scene
  - Perform your spoken word poem
  - Discuss team poems
  - Prompt: Write a team poem about a secret
- Unfortunately only 2 people showed up. Making group scenes and poems a little more difficult. Instead we talked about something we would all feel strongly about in some regard. Olin. This led into our prompt for next week to write about Olin. Hopefully this will encourage more responses at our next meeting.
- Prompt: Write about Olin

# Break

Week 6

# Meeting notes

This week we did not hold a meeting at our regularly scheduled time. Instead, we encouraged people to go to the BARCC workshop at that time. We may change our format a little to try and engage club members throughout the week by sending daily prompts or poems.

# Olin

Week 7



# Meeting Notes:

**Open Exercise:** Reading from a SLAM (spoken word anthology)

**Purpose:** get people reading and performing by taking away from pressure of reading own work.

**Effect:** +, sparked conversation on why we write poems and what parts resonated with each other.

**Shared Poems:** Everyone wrote this week, we believe because Olinis an easy topic to discuss and everyone has a very strong connection to it. Poems this week drew lots of specific feedback on lines that were very strong and sparked lots of discussion. For this reason, we decided to make next week's prompt something just as relatable.

**Next Prompt:** Working in teams

# Spring Break

Week 8

# Teams

Week 9

# Siri: A coping Mechanism by Patrick Roche



# Mirrors by Alice Frederick



# Meeting Notes

This week, a member of the club brought two videos for us to watch that were personal to them. They knew the performers.

The prompt for this week was to write about working in teams. We found this was a difficult topic for people to write about for a few reasons. One, disagreements from working in teams can form make very personal problems that call out specific individuals. People weren't comfortable writing poems in this level of specificity. Additionally, it seemed that people couldn't quite pinpoint what made a good team or a bad team. It seemed difficult to draw this conclusions to put together into a poem. It was also difficult for some people to see their information about teams put into poem form. It did not seem the correct outlet for that information.

This week, Babson's spoken word club will be putting on a slam. Any interested members of the club will go, and perform if they so desire. The theme of the slam is gender lines. More notes on this slam are to follow.

The prompt for next week is therefore to write about gender lines or gender identity.

# Babson Slam!

Week 10

# T Miller- “Halloween Suggestions”





# Meeting Notes: Group Poem

Last Friday, two members of Speak. performed at the Babson Gender Lines Poetry Slam. A video of their poem can be found here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/krwgnugmzo46geu/How%20to%20Be.m4v>

The poem was written over the course of the day before the slam and performed a handful of times before the actual performance. Though the poem was performed by two club members, four were involved in the writing and brainstorming process. This was everyone's first experience in group poem writing and we learned about the process by attempting it. Multiple members of the club went to the event at Babson and were able to see collections of poems by some expert poets.

# Meeting Notes

**Open Exercise:** Reading individual poems physically standing up

**Purpose:** get people performing more.

**Effect:** +, sparked more articulate choices of phrasing and pausing!!

## Logistics!

Decided to set date for Olin slam/open mic- **April 25th, @9pm**

Decided to make it Speakeasy event, and location will be informal

Prompt: This week we've asked group members to either write a group poem, or revisit a piece of work from the past.

# Final Preparation

Week 11

# Meeting Notes:

This week is the final meeting before the slam on Friday. Everybody worked on preparing their pieces, editing pieces, or ideating. We had group discussions around types of information: information you look for and information that finds you. We also discussed introversion and expectations of others. This topics would be turned into poems for two of the club members. It was valuable having this discussion so that members could write creatively about something that was important to them.

On Thursday, the night before the slam, the club went to Susan's house for dinner, dessert, and practice performances. Multiple club members performed their pieces. This was very helpful to have a small audience to get more comfortable in the performance space.

The slam on Friday went fantastically. We created a relaxing and engaging environment for performers and audience. Multiple people decided on the spot to perform. A video will follow soon of the open mic. About 35 people attended and 15 performed over the course of about two hours.

# The Final Slam!

Videos can be found here!:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLK1Lh5pamCBgoUQ4nGiAaTkcgTm7upYHA>

The slam was an overwhelming success, with 35 attendees and 15 performers. Poems and other performances went extraordinarily well and the environment was comfortable enough for many people to share sensitive topic without worry.

# Feedback

Week 12

# Meeting Notes

The end of the year was wrapped up with a feedback session in the group. What did people like and not like? What do they wish happened? What worked well for them? The feedback is as follows and will help us grow as a club over the next year:

- Diversified Prompts are a plus. Don't do similar prompts all in a row because you lose creativity and content after thinking about the same thing for too long.
- The space was made very comfortable. People enjoyed the open discussion and the possibility for any conversation. The space was conducive to feedback and discussion which would help lead to a prompt.
- No deadlines was a plus. Deadlines force poor work.
- Ten minute prompts were okay in the beginning to force you to write but generally didn't produce the best work. It was good because everyone shared. Self generated work is higher quality but sometimes activation energy is difficult and you need to be forced into action. Continuous 10 minute prompts would be tedious but a few in the beginning break barriers
- Videos can be inspiring. Appreciating poems at the surface level is just as valuable as deep level appreciation. Videos don't need to be analyzed to be enjoyed. Dissecting the poems wouldn't be good.
- Rants to a notebook are exciting to turn into art
- Events off campus would have been a plus. Like going to a club or a slam.
- Have videos technically set up in order to avoid wasting time.
- Listening to people is great. Especially to people outside of the group you would normally interact with
- It's nice to feel comfortable talking about weakness and not worrying about being judged.