

Poetry for the people is a program for political and artistic empowerment of students. It is motivated by the moral wish to mitigate the invisibility and the imposed silence of those less privileged than we. Originating inside a public institution, and enjoying full academic accreditation, there are certain ground rules that must be respected inside this experimental and hopeful society:

1. "The People" shall not be defined as a group excluding or derogating anyone on the basis of race, religion, ethnicity, language, sexual orientation, class or age.
2. "The People" shall consciously undertake to respect and encourage each other to feel safe enough to attempt the building of a community of trust in which all may try to be truthful and deeply serious in the messages they craft for the world to contemplate.
3. Poetry for the People rest upon a belief that the art of telling the truth is a necessary and healthy way to create powerful and positive, connections among people who, otherwise remain (unknown or unaware) strangers. The goal is not to kill connections, but rather to create and to deepen them among truly different men and women.

All teaching and writing within this program shall seek to honor this belief.