

English 11300 Introduction to Poetry

Fall 2009
Section 01—MWF 8-8:50, Friends 205
Section 06—MWF 10-10:50, Friends 205

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MW 3-4:30, Tu 1-2 and by appointment



Course Description

How do we study poetry?

This course will introduce students to the study of poetry and the tools and terminology used in analyzing a poem. We will study various forms of poetry—including the sonnet, elegy, dramatic monologue, and ode—to gain a deeper understanding of the structure and language of poetic works. We will focus on imagery, figures, tropes, and forms that distinguish poetic language from other types of writing.

But more importantly...why study poetry?

All the technical terms in the world will not necessarily help you to appreciate poetry. We will also explore what poetic language—with all its adornments, complications, and confusions—has to offer that can't be found elsewhere. What can poetry allow us to see about our world? As we learn to recognize poetic structures and employ the technical terms of poetic analysis, we will also consider some of the themes and questions that have attracted the mind of the poet: love, belief, war, and nature, to name only a few. We will complement knowledge of the technical aspects of poetry with an appreciation of how those technicalities affect the communication and expression of ideas.

In the first unit, we will study forms and structures of poetry to give you a vocabulary of critical terms for poetic analysis. Unit 2 will examine a particular issue in the study of poetry, the relationship between the speaker and the audience. In unit 3, we will utilize this technical knowledge as we study groups of poems clustered around a number of themes. We will also take time to think about issues of poetry creation and publication, such as the effects of print culture on the development of poetry and the revision process of individual poets.

Course Text

- *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, shorter 5th edition
- Supplementary materials to be handed out in class

Requirements

1. Consistent attendance. The attendance policy is outlined below. Please read it carefully.
2. Active participation. This is a discussion-based course. Its success depends on *your* ideas, *your* questions, *your* insights, and *your* enthusiasm. I expect all members of the class to participate actively and often.
3. Written assignments. There will be several writing assignments in this course, including two short analytical exercises (2-3 pages each) and two essays (3-4 pages). Further instructions for each assignment will be handed out in class.
4. Recitation. You will be required to memorize and recite one poem from the syllabus. More information below.
5. Midterm and Final Exams. The midterm exam primarily will test your knowledge and understanding of the technical elements from unit 1. The final exam will test this knowledge but with more analysis of individual poems, including some we will not cover in class.

Grade Breakdown

Participation: 15%

Short analytical exercises: 5% each (10% total)

Essay 1: 15%

Essay 2: 20%

Recitation: 5%

Midterm Exam: 15%

Final Exam: 20%

Attendance Policy

You are allowed **five** absences, no questions asked—use them carefully. Beginning with the sixth, however, your **final course grade will drop one full letter grade** for each additional absence (eg, from B+ to C+, or A to B). Students who miss eight classes before the withdrawal deadline (Nov. 6) will be automatically dropped from the course. Students whose accumulated absences total eight or more before the end of the semester **will not pass the course**. There are, of course, exceptions to this rule. If you are seriously ill or need to attend to a personal emergency, you obviously won't be penalized. Please speak with me beforehand (or as soon as possible) regarding exceptional circumstances.

Please arrive on time to class every time. Tardiness is a huge distraction for me and for the rest of the class. For that reason, **three** tardies will result in one absence.

You are responsible for all materials and assignments given the day you miss class. **Please make arrangements with your classmates to borrow notes and for information on assignments.**

This class will focus on the text; without the text in front of you, you will be at a disadvantage. Coming to class without your text is equivalent to you not being here. If I see that this is a repeated problem, I will count you as absent each day you come to class without your book.

Attendance is a requirement for this course, but it is the bare minimum. Class operates on the active participation and engagement of all students. Your participation in our meetings weighs heavily in your grade; I expect all students to be active members of our class community.

Essay Policy

Complete guidelines for essays will be handed out with the first essay assignment. At this point, however, please note that **all work you turn in must be typed, stapled, double-spaced, with 12-point Times New Roman Font with no more than 1.25 inch margins.**

Late paper policy: Due dates for written work are listed below in the class schedule. Papers will be marked down a third letter grade for each day they are late (an A paper would become an A-, an A- a B+, etc.). If you are having trouble meeting the deadline of an assignment, please speak with me. Extensions will be granted on a case-by-case basis, but I can't help if you don't ask.

I encourage you to take advantage of all the resources available to you when working on writing assignments: meeting with me during my office hours, actively discussing your ideas in class, and visiting the Writing Center to work on your paper in a one-on-one conference.

Plagiarism: Any incident of academic misconduct will be taken very seriously and treated in accordance with the guidelines stipulated in the Ithaca College Student Policy Manual, section 7.1.2.6. These guidelines are available at:

<http://www.ithaca.edu/link_index.php?url=http://www.ithaca.edu/attorney/policies/vol7/Volume_7-70102.htm&source=handbook. See also the College policy on plagiarism in the Policy Manual, section 7.1.4.1, available at http://www.ithaca.edu/attorney/policies/vol7/Volume_7-70104.htm>.

Simply put, I expect all of your work for this course to be your own. Any ideas from other people must be used and cited correctly.

Reading and Recitation

To be appreciated fully, many poems should be read aloud. We will begin each class with a reading of the poem (or part of it, if it's a longer one). Each student will be expected to read aloud several times over the course of the semester.

You will also complete a recitation assignment. You will choose a poem from the syllabus (or a part of a longer poem) and recite it aloud in my office before the end of the semester. You must memorize at least 5 lines of iambic pentameter (or its equivalent). To earn an A, you must recite the poem accurately *and* with expression. To earn a B, you may recite the poem with expression and a couple of minor errors. Reciting without much expression or with repeated stumbles or major errors earns a C, and so on. If you undertake to memorize a longer piece, I will be slightly more lenient as far as errors go. This exercise will count for 5% of your final grade.

**I take course requirements and policies very seriously. You should, too.
Get to know this syllabus, and refer to it throughout the semester.**

Class Schedule

Unit 1: Forms and Contours

Week 1

W Aug. 26 Introduction to course. William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”

F Aug. 28 Soyinka, “Telephone Conversation” (1159)

Week 2

M Aug. 30 Marlowe, “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” (168)

W Sept. 2 Poe, “The Raven” (615)

F Sept. 4 Li, “Persimmons” (1243)

Week 3

M Sept. 7 **NO CLASS—Labor Day**

W Sept. 9 Wyatt, “They Flee from Me” (104)
****Short Exercise #1 due****

F Sept. 11 Rich, “Diving into the Wreck” (1119)

Week 4

M Sept. 14 Shakespeare, Sonnets 73 (173) and 130 (177), Pope, selections from “An Essay on Criticism” (handout)

W Sept. 16 Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* 28 (handout), Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* 1 (221)

F Sept. 18 Wallace, “The Bad Sonnet” (handout), Keats, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (537) and “On the Sonnet” (579)

Week 5

M Sept. 21 Pound, “Sestina: Altaforte” (handout), Sidney, “Ye Goatherd Gods” (154)

W Sept. 23 Bishop, “One Art” (966), Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (991)

F Sept. 25 Herbert, “Easter Wings” (236), Hollander, “Swan and Shadow” (1104)

Week 6

M Sept. 28 Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (410)

W Sept. 30 Tennyson, *In Memoriam A.H.H.* 1, 2 (633), Warburton, “Preparing the Eulogy” (handout)

F Oct. 2 Keats, “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (585)

Week 7

M Oct. 5 **MIDTERM**

Unit 2: Speaking and Listening

W Oct. 7 Browning, “My Last Duchess” (643)

F Oct. 9 Donne, “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” (198), Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress” (293)

Week 8

M Oct. 12 Coleridge, “Frost at Midnight” (488)

W Oct. 14 How we see a poem: publication and anthologies

F Oct. 16 **NO CLASS—Fall Break**

Week 9

M Oct. 19 Arnold, “Dover Beach” (711), Hecht, “The Dover Bitch” (1037)

W Oct. 21 Stevens, “The Idea of Order at Key West” (824)

F Oct. 23 Donne, “The Sun Rising” (193)
****Essay 1 due****

Week 10

M Oct. 26 Eliot, “The Hollow Men” (879)

W Oct. 28 Millay, “[I, Being Born a Woman and Distressed]” (887), Hughes, “Theme for English B” (915)

F Oct. 30 Duhamel, “It’s My Body” and “Math Class is Tough” (handout)

Week 11

M Nov. 2 Gunn, “The Missing” (1103), Shelley, “Ozymandias” (541)
****Short Exercise #2 due****

W Nov. 4 Dickinson, 409, 591, 764 (page 725 and following)

F Nov. 6 Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” (684)

Unit 3: Lyrical Relations

Week 12: Belief

- M Nov. 9** Herbert, “The Collar” (242), Hafiz, “I Know I Was the Water” (handout)
- W Nov. 11** Gascoyne, “Ecce Homo” (994), Donne, Holy Sonnet 14 (208)
- F Nov. 13** Larkin, “Church Going” (1027), Hopkins, “[Thou Art Indeed Just, Lord...] (759)

Week 13: Poetry

- M Nov. 16** Nemerov, “Strange Metamorphosis of Poets” (1017), Ginsberg, “A Supermarket in California” (1067)
- W Nov. 18** Heaney, “Digging” (1179), O’Hara, “Why I Am Not a Painter” (1076)
- F Nov. 20** Moore, “Poetry” (856 and other versions in handout)

Nov. 21-29—Thanksgiving Break

Week 14: War

- M Nov. 30** Owen, “Dulce Et Decorum Est” (890), Sassoon, “They” (853)
- W Dec. 2** Yeats, “Easter 1916” (772), Lewis, “Where are the War Poets?” (927)
- F Dec. 4** Lowell, “For the Union Dead” (1007)
****Essay #2 due****

Week 15: Nature

- M Dec. 7** Wordsworth, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” (483), “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” (458)
- W Dec. 9** Yeats, “The Wild Swans at Coole” (771), Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind” (543)
- F Dec. 11** Frost, “Design” (805)

FINAL EXAMS: Section 01—Wednesday Dec. 16, 10:30 am-1 pm
Section 06—Thursday Dec. 17, 1:30 pm-4 pm