

English 106-12994
Introduction to Literature: Poetry
Fall 2013

Professor: Veronica Alfano
Phone: (541) 346-1526 (not a great way to reach me)
Email: valfano@uoregon.edu (the best way to reach me)

Schedule: Tues./Thurs. 8:30 am - 9:50 am
Room: Volcanology 307
Office Hours: Tues. 2:30-5:30, 519 PLC

Course Description

“A poem should be palpable and mute / As a globed fruit.” “A Sonnet is a moment’s monument.” “I write / signals hurrying from left to right, / or right to left, by obscure routes.” What do Archibald MacLeish, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, and Anne Sexton mean when they describe verse in these terms? What should poetry aim to accomplish, if anything? And how are we to understand a poem both as a cultural production and as an aesthetic object? In this course, we will read a variety of verse as we seek to answer these questions. For the most part, we’ll be analyzing British and American lyric poetry of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with several forays into earlier time periods and longer works. Our chief focus will be poetic language and poetic form. The way in which a poem is put together – its stanzas, rhythmic patterns, rhyme scheme, line breaks, diction, metaphors, use of alliteration, and so on – determines the meaning of that poem, shaping a reader’s understanding of its subject matter. As we learn to pay close attention to the powerful subtleties of language and formal structure (poetry itself, says writer Donald Revell, is “a form of attention”), asking how our form-based readings illuminate recurring themes of lyric verse, we will develop techniques both for finding complexity in poems that seem simple or transparent and for getting to the heart of poems that appear impenetrable or obscure.

Required Texts

Please purchase *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (eds. Ferguson, Salter, and Stallworthy), Fifth Edition. You’ll find it at the UO Duck Shop Bookstore. Additional readings will be emailed or handed out.

Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading

In English 106, you will write two formal, thesis-driven essays (due on October 29 and December 5), compose short weekly responses, and take a final exam (December 13). Finally, in lieu of a midterm exam, every student will be required to recite a memorized poem of his or her choosing in class on October 31. More details about these assignments will be forthcoming. Please note that an Incomplete will be granted only when there has been a genuine emergency beyond a student’s control. Before turning in a paper, you will visit my office hours for a consultation (more on this later in the semester).

Here is the grading breakdown:

Paper 1:	15%
Paper 2:	25%
Weekly Responses:	10%
Recitation:	10%
Final:	25%
Attendance & Participation:	15%

Not every assigned poem will be discussed in class. As a rule, you should avoid writing papers about poems we’ve covered extensively in our meetings. I can, however, make exceptions if you speak to me in advance.

Please email me a brief response to each week’s reading, due via email by 10 pm every Sunday (although your first response will be due by 5 pm on Wednesday October 2). Tell me which poems you would like to discuss and why; you might mention a few lines that puzzle or fascinate you, or reflect on a theme that connects several poems. These responses – though they are required – will not be given individual grades,

are not meant to be burdensome, and should not exceed a paragraph or so in length. I will read selected responses aloud in class, asking their authors to comment and expand on them.

Please check your UO email frequently, particularly if you are absent, because I will be sending you important messages and documents! Please also keep your graded first paper on file to consult as you compose your second paper; reviewing your work is one of the best ways to become a better writer.

All materials should be submitted promptly. Last-second extensions will not be granted, and late papers will be graded down – or, if significantly late, not accepted. If you miss class the day an assignment is due, please place that assignment in my English Department mailbox by noon the same day.

I hope that you look forward to – and enjoy – class. We will be reading and discussing some of the most amazing poems in the English language – what better way to spend a morning? On the slim chance that you disagree, though, remember that attendance is both important and required. Exceptions may be made in the case of unforeseen and dire emergency; however, you are expected to make this class your priority over all other engagements, unless you have a truly compelling reason not to do so. If you know that you must be late or absent, speak to me in advance. You are responsible for all work assigned and all material covered during absences. If class is ever canceled due to inclement weather, I will notify you by email as far in advance as possible.

Come to class in spirit as well as in body! Bring all the course materials; bring enthusiasm and engagement. (You'll find that said enthusiasm will be easier to muster if you have read the poems carefully, and you'll find that speaking up regularly will help you understand the material better.) I expect every person to participate meaningfully in class. Ask thoughtful questions or share exciting insights, direct our attention to an important passage, respond to the perceptions of your peers. It is important for every member of the course to have a voice. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable talking in class, please let me know. Being absent, arriving late, or not contributing to our discussions will lower your attendance/participation grade.

And if at any point you feel that you are struggling with the material or would like extra feedback, please see me! I am happy to talk about your papers at any stage of the writing process; as a matter of fact, I am happy to talk about any questions or concerns at any time. Find me after class, come to my office hours, send me an email, or make an appointment to see me. I especially encourage you to meet with me about paper ideas and theses before you start to write. You should also know that the Writing Lab, located in 72 PLC, can provide extra help.

Plagiarism involves using someone else's words or ideas without properly citing your source; this applies to direct quotations or paraphrases of *any* source material, printed or digital. Do not attempt to pass others' work off as your own; doing so is unethical. Students who are unsure how and when to cite should consult with me or with a librarian. Consequences of plagiarism may range from failing the assignment, to failing the class, to being reported to the university for disciplinary action. See also the UO Student Conduct Code.

If you anticipate needing accommodations for accessible education in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please also request that the Accessible Education Center (<http://aec.uoregon.edu>; [541] 346-1155) send a letter outlining your needs.

Course Schedule (subject to change)

The listed readings will be supplemented with handouts and/or online resources as necessary. All assignments will be announced and explained in advance, both in person and via email.

Poems with page numbers are in *The Norton Anthology*; others (with asterisks) are in the supplementary handouts. Please complete each week's reading by Tuesday, and concentrate on re-reading for Thursday.

Week 1

October 1: Introduction – What is Poetry?

Archibald MacLeish, “Ars Poetica” (1381)

Theodore Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz” (1494)

October 3: Ballad Forms and the 4X4

Anonymous, “Western Wind” (84)

Anonymous, “The Twa Corbies” (102)

William Blake, “The Tyger” (743)

William Wordsworth, “A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal” (790)

Emily Dickinson, 314 (1114), 340 (1115), 591 (1121), 1263 (1126)

Thomas Hardy, “Neutral Tones” (1153)

Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken” (1232)

E. E. Cummings, “anyone lived in a pretty how town” (1396)

Gwendolyn Brooks, “The Bean Eaters” (1587)

Week 2

October 8 & October 10: Sonnets and Not-Quite-Sonnets

William Shakespeare, Sonnets 18 (259), 73 (263), 130 (267)

John Donne, Holy Sonnet 14 (320)

Mary Wroth, Sonnet 77 (351)

William Wordsworth, “Nuns Fret Not at Their Convent’s Narrow Room” (796)

John Keats, “On the Sonnet” (916)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Kraken” (984)

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “A Sonnet” (1106)

William Butler Yeats, “Leda and the Swan” (1200)

Edna St. Vincent Millay, “I, Being Born a Woman and Distressed” (1383)

Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays” (1533)

Mona van Duyn, “Sonnet for Minimalists”*

Billy Collins, “Sonnet”*

Week 3

October 15 & October 17: Order and Disorder

Sir Thomas Wyatt, “They Flee from Me” (127); “The Lover Showeth How He is Forsaken”*

Ben Jonson, “Still to Be Neat” (341)

Robert Herrick, “Delight in Disorder” (355)

George Herbert, “The Altar” (367), “Denial” (374)

Andrew Marvell, “The Garden” (484)

Jonathan Swift, “The Lady’s Dressing Room” (572)

Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Pied Beauty” (1167)

Ezra Pound, “Portrait d’une Femme” (1295)

Robert Frost, “Design” (1240)

Amy Lowell, “Patterns” (1245)

Week 4

October 22 & October 24: Birdsong and Bardsong

William Blake, “Introduction” (740)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Kubla Khan” (809)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, “To a Skylark” (876)

John Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale” (935)

Robert Browning, “Memorabilia” (1019)

Walt Whitman, *from* “Song of Myself” (1060)

Christina Rossetti, "Song" (1128)
Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush" (1155), "Shelley's Skylark"*
Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Windhover" (1166)
William Butler Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium" (1199)
Stevie Smith, "Thoughts About the Person from Porlock" (1441)

Week 5

October 29: Dramatic Monologue

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Ulysses" (992)
Robert Browning, "Porphyria's Lover" (1009), "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" (1010), "My Last Duchess" (1012)
T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (1340)
Robert Hayden, "Night, Death, Mississippi" (1534)
Carol Ann Duffy, "Warming Her Pearls" (2007)

Paper 1 due in class (3-4 pages)

October 31

Poem recitations (in class)

Week 6

November 5 & November 7: Voices and Speakers

William Wordsworth, "The Solitary Reaper" (803)
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "Tears, Idle Tears" (995)
Thomas Hardy, "The Voice" (1160)
William Butler Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (1190)
Marianne Moore, "Poetry" (1329)
T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men" (1356)
Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B" (1434)
Elizabeth Bishop, "In the Waiting Room" (1521)
Philip Larkin, "Talking in Bed" (1654)
Anne Sexton, "An Obsessive Combination of Ontological Inscape, Trickery, and Love"*
Sylvia Plath, "Morning Song" (1837)
Robert Hass, "Meditation at Lagunitas" (1919)

Week 7

November 12 & November 14: Symbols and Metaphors

John Donne, "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" (306)
George Herbert, "Prayer" (371)
Robert Burns, "A Red Red Rose" (759)
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Blessed Damozel" (1102), "The Woodspurge" (1105)
William Butler Yeats, "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (1207)
Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (1260)
William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" (1274)
Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" (1297)
Ogden Nash, "Very Like a Whale"* (compare Lord Byron's "The Destruction of Sennacherib" [834])
Elizabeth Bishop, "Sandpiper" (1518)
Craig Raine, "A Martian Sends a Postcard Home" (1943)

Week 8

November 19 & November 21: Repetition and Sound

William Dunbar, "Lament for the Makaris" (86)

Christopher Smart, *from* “Jubilate Agno” (678)
Edgar Allan Poe, “The Raven” (977)
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Mariana” (982)
Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur” (1166), “As Kingfishers Catch Fire” (1167)
Robert Frost, “Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening” (1237)
E. E. Cummings, “All in green went my love riding” (1392)
Stevie Smith, “Pretty”^{*}
Elizabeth Bishop, “Sestina” (1520)
Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (1572)
Paul Celan, “Todesfuge”^{*}

Week 9

November 26: Repression and Rage

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “A Musical Instrument” (950)
Christina Rossetti, “In an Artist’s Studio” (1129), “Goblin Market,”^{*} “A Pause”^{*}
Emily Dickinson, 348 (1116), 372 (1117)
Langston Hughes, “Harlem” (1433)
Adrienne Rich, “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” (1791), “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” (1796), “Diving into the Wreck” (1797)
Sylvia Plath, “The Colossus” (1836), “Daddy” (1840)
Louise Glück, “Gretel in Darkness” (1931)

November 28

Thanksgiving holiday – NO CLASS

Week 10

December 3 & December 5: Elegy

John Donne, “A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy’s Day, Being the Shortest Day” (304)
Ben Jonson, “On my First Daughter” (323)
John Keats, “Ode on Melancholy” (937)
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam* 5, * 7 (997), 119 (1003)
Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Spring and Fall” (1168)
Thomas Hardy, “After a Journey”^{*}
Wallace Stevens, “The Emperor of Ice Cream” (1256)
W. H. Auden, “Musée des Beaux Arts” (1471), “In Memory of W. B. Yeats” (1472)
Gwendolyn Brooks, “the rites for Cousin Vit” (1587)

December 5: Paper 2 due in class (4-6 pages)

December 13: Final exam (8 AM, Volcanology 307)

Important UO Dates

Monday, September 30: Classes begin
Monday, October 7: Last day to drop classes without a “W”
Wednesday, October 9: Last day to add classes
Sunday, November 17: Last day to withdraw from classes
Thursday, November 28 & Friday, November 29: Thanksgiving holiday – **NO CLASSES**
Friday, December 6: Last day of classes