

English 106  
MWF 12-12:50pm  
307 VOL  
CRN 32865

Prof. Crosswhite  
jcross@uoregon.edu  
Office: 258 PLC  
Hours: M 3-5, Th 4-5

## Introduction to Poetry

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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What is poetry, and what is it for? How do its special uses of language—its imagery, genre and form, line and meter, voice and diction, metaphors, and other tropes and figures—help it to do its work? In this course, we will explore and engage with these questions as a way of deepening and intensifying our experience of poetry. You will gain a knowledge of some major and minor works of poetry and of some of the energies and forms that allow them to work the way they do. You will also gain skill in interpreting and discussing and writing about poetry.

### **STARTING POINTS**

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Life is energy and energy is creativity. And even when individuals pass on, the energy is retained in the work of art, locked in it and awaiting release if only someone will take the time and the care to unlock it. Marianne Moore

If our language is inadequate, our vision remains formless, our thinking and feeling are still running in the old cycles, our process may be 'revolutionary' but not transformative. Adrienne Rich

My silences have not protected me.  
Your silence will not protect you.  
Audre Lorde

Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. Percy Bysshe Shelley

Poets are the legislators of the unacknowledged world. George Oppen

Poetry is a way of taking life by the throat. Robert Frost.

... not the assertion that something is true, but the making of that truth more fully real to us. T.S. Eliot

A poet's work is to name the unnameable, to point at frauds, to take sides, start arguments, shape the world, and stop it going to sleep. Salman Rushdie

You can tear a poem apart to see what makes it tick... You're back with the mystery of having been moved by words. The best craftsmanship always leaves holes and gaps... so that something that is *not* in the poem can creep, crawl, flash or thunder in. Dylan Thomas

## REQUIRED TEXTS

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*Poetry: A Pocket Anthology*. Seventh edition. By R.S. Gwynn.  
*Heavenly Questions*. Gjertrude Schnackenberg.  
 Additional readings available on Blackboard.

### Useful Websites

A Glossary of Terms (poetry):

<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/glossaryIndex.do>

A Glossary of Rhetorical Terms:

<http://mcl.as.uky.edu/glossary-rhetorical-terms>

The Forest of Rhetoric

<http://humanities.byu.edu/rhetoric/silva.htm>

## REQUIRED TIME

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From UO Catalog: "In planning a term's studies, students should anticipate that each credit requires at least three hours a week for class meetings or homework." This is a 4 credit course, so plan for 12 hours a week. That's three in class and nine outside of class.

## ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

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### Writing

**For each week of class**, beginning April 8 and ending May 31, **there will be two written assignments** due on Blackboard that must be posted *before* class begins. During the last week of classes, there will be only one of these assignments due. Last names A-L submit assignments on Monday and Friday. Last names M-Z submit on Wednesday and Friday. Choose any of the poems assigned for that day and answer the following questions: (1) What is the poem about (or what is it trying to accomplish)? What kind of truth or energy or feeling or experience is it trying to make real for us? You should be able to answer this in no more than about three sentences. (2) Explain two ways the poem works as a poem. Use the vocabulary and ideas discussed in the Introduction to our book, *Poetry: A Pocket Anthology* by R.S. Gwynn. (3) What is the main question you still have about the poem? These short papers should be about the size of this paragraph—between 100 and 200 words.

**Two essays.** I will provide instructions and grading rubrics for each of these assignments. One will be a close reading of a poem (800-1000 words). One will be a report on a poet that you will select on your own from sources I provide (1000-1500 words).

**Participation**

We will have reading each day of class that must be completed before class begins. Each day you come to class, come prepared to participate. You should have read all the poems before class begins. Bring your book to class each day.

Attendance is required. I take attendance each day. Be sure that I call your name each day, and shout out if I do not. If you are late, and miss my taking attendance, it is your responsibility to notify me, at the end of class, that you have attended. I cannot fairly accommodate requests to correct my records for past class meetings. To cover illness or other events that make it impossible for you to attend, you are allowed three absences (one week of class). I recommend saving those absences for illness, athletic events, or unforeseen demands on your time. If you get sick with something contagious, do not come to class as long as you are contagious. If the illness lasts for longer than a week, or if a situation beyond your control causes you to miss more than three classes, be sure to contact me, before the absences have accumulated, so that we can agree on a course of action. Essays may be submitted electronically only if you are sick or in a case of emergency.

Being on time at 12pm is also required. Lateness counts in considering your participation.

**Grades**

Essay #1 – 35% of final grade

Essay #2 – 40% of final grade

Daily Assignments – 25% of final grade

Participation counts and may raise or lower your total.

Please, no late work. No credit for late daily assignments. If you turn the first essay in late, you will lose one grade for each day it is late. The final paper is due any time before 10:15am on Friday, June 14. Do not email your final paper. It should be slipped under my office door at 258 PLC. Note: I cannot accept a late final paper.

Three absences, *for whatever reason*, count as absences, but have no penalty. Beyond three absences, for each of the next three absences, three percentage points will be deducted from your total. After six absences (two weeks), each absence will cost five percentage points.

If an emergency arises or a situation out of your control temporarily prevents you completing work on time, contact me immediately so that we can agree on a plan—before the work is due if that is at all possible, but as soon as possible in any case. Email is the best way of reaching me.

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## **COMPLETION OF ASSIGNMENTS**

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Please include your name, the date you are submitting the work, the course number or name, and my name on your written work.

Please give your written work a title.

You should staple papers that have multiple pages.

Papers should be double spaced, with one inch margins.

Please use a 12 or 14 point font.

There are computers available for you to use in the Knight Library and in other locations on campus.

Written work may be submitted in class or under my door at PLC 258.

I accept electronic written work only in cases of illness or emergency.

## **RESPECT, CONSIDERATION, AND PARTICIPATION**

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The course requires your active involvement. Active and respectful participation is inconsistent with cell phone use, texting, internet surfing, side conversations, arriving late, leaving early, sleeping, distracting other people, and coming to class unprepared. Please close and put away all laptops and electronic devices. If you do not give your full attention, you will not receive what the course has to offer. Listen to others respectfully, and expect the same of them. And feel free to speak up. What you have to say is important and unique. It will take effort and the best kind of cooperation to unlock the energies in the poems we will read. This will require respectful attention to each other, and probably some kindness toward one another, too.

## **A LITTLE MORE**

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If you have a disability that may affect your ability to participate in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can make arrangements for your full access. If you require the use of electronic devices because of a disability, please speak with me.

Please be aware also that the Teaching and Learning Center (68 PLC; phone: 346-3226) provides support for all students. The Center offers tutors to help you with your writing assignments and provides other kinds of academic help. Look into it. Your fees help to pay for this.

An “Incomplete” can be given only in cases when some minor but essential aspect of the course cannot be completed because of unforeseen circumstances beyond a student’s control.

All work submitted for this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this course. If you plagiarize or cheat, the penalty may be an “F” in the course.

The use of sources (for example, other people’s language or paraphrases of their language or ideas) must be properly documented. Please see me if you have any

questions about your use of sources.

### Schedule

In the schedule, all page numbers or simple numbers in parentheses, e.g. (32), refer to pages in our book, *Poetry: A Pocket Anthology*. Numbers preceded by “#” (as in BB#3) refer to the number in the Blackboard packet.

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#### **Week 1**

M 4/1 Introductions

W 4/3 Read Pages 1-24 of introduction. Read: Charles Simic, “To the One Upstairs” (BB#1). Joanne Limburg, “Seder night with My Ancestors” (BB#2). Ruth Pitter, “The Task” (BB#3). Mark Jarman, “If I Were Paul” (BB#4).

F 4/5 Read: pages 25-44 of introduction. Read: John Donne, “The Flea” (71), “The Sun Rising” (72). “A Hymn to God the Father,” (BB#5).

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#### **Week 2**

M 4/8 Read pages 45-54. Read: Patti Ann Rogers, “Foreplay” (331). Denise Levertov, “The Ache of Marriage” (BB#6). Richard Wilbur, “For C.” (20).

W 4/10 Read: Andrew Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress” (85). Anne Finch, “Coy Mistress” (394). Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “Sonnets from the Portuguese 43” (127). Robert Browning, “Porphyria’s Lover” (146).

F 4/12 Read: Billy Collins, “Litany” (333). Diane Lockward, “My Husband Discovers Poetry,” (347). Clive James, “After the Storm,” (BB#7).

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#### **Week 3**

M 4/15. Read: William Wordsworth, “Ode” (104). Percy Shelley, “Ozymandias” (120).

W 4/17 Read: Gwendolyn Brooks, “the mother” (251). Robert Frost, “Home Burial” (186).

F 4/19 Read: Wordsworth, “A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal” (BB#8). John Keats, “When I Have Fears” (BB#9). W.S. Merwin, “For the Anniversary of My Death” (284).

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**Week 4**

M 4/22 Read: Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" (241). Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" (246). John Donne, "Hymn to my God, in My Sickness" (BB#10).

W 4/24 Read: "Introduction to the Villanelle" (BB#11). Marilyn Hacker, "Villanelle" (BB#12). Theodore Roethke, "The Waking" (BB#13). Jacqueline Osherow, "Villanelle for the Middle of the Night" (BB#14).

F 4/26 Read: John Donne, "Holy Sonnet 14" (72). George Herbert, "The Pulley" (79) and "Love III" (BB#15). Seamus Heaney, Untitled (BB#16).

**Week 5**

M 4/29 Read: Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur" (169) and "Pied Beauty" (170). Mark Doty, "Messiah" (BB#17).

W 5/1 Read : Mary Oliver, "The Summer Day,"(BB#18) and "Wild Geese" (BB#19). Les Murray, "Poetry and Religion," (BB#20) and "One Kneeling, One Looking Down" (BB#21).

F 5/3 Read: Robert Frost, "The Road not Taken" (190). Louise MacNeice, "Entirely" (BB#22).

**Week 6**

M 5/6 Alice Oswald, "Sonnet" (BB#23). Brendan Kennelly, "Begin" (BB#24). Louise Bogan, "A Tale" (BB#25).

W 5/8 Read: Elizabeth Bishop, "The Fish" (239). Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz" and "Root Cellar" (238).

F 5/10 W.B. Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (175). "The Second Coming" (178).  
**First paper due in class or by 4pm at 258 PLC.**

**Week 7**

M 5/13 Walt Whitman (148-151)

W 5/15 Walt Whitman (151-156)

F 5/17 *Heavenly Questions* (Gjertrude Schnackenberg): 3-24.

**Week 8**

M 5/20 *Heavenly Questions* (Gjertrude Schnackenberg): 25-42.

W 5/22 *Heavenly Questions* (Gjertrude Schnackenberg): 43-64.

F 5/24 TBA

**Week 9**

M 5/27 Memorial Day. No Class.

W 5/29 Emily Dickinson (158-164).

F 5/31 Constantine Cavafy, "Ithaka" (BB#26). Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask" (183). Yusef Komunyakaa, "Facing It" (362).

**Week 10**

M 6/3 John Keats: "Bright Star, Would I Were Stedfast as Thou Art," (121). Robert Frost, "Take Something Like a Star," (BB#27).

W 6/5 Mary Oliver (BB#28 – all). Conclusions.

F 6/7 No Class. Special Office Hours.

**Final paper**

**You may turn your paper in any day or time before 10:15am, Friday, June 14, under door at PLC 258.**