

English 106-32005
Introduction to Literature: Poetry
Spring 2015

Professor: Veronica Alfano
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Schedule: MWF 12-12:50
Room: 360 CON
Office Hours: W 4:30-7:30, 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. Learning how to read poems (as well as learning how to write about them!) will make you a better reader of novels, movies, newspapers, ads, political speeches, and even people.

Required Texts

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

Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading

In English 106, you will write two formal, thesis-driven essays (due on April 27 and June 5), compose short weekly responses, and take a final exam (June 9). Additionally, in lieu of a midterm exam, every student will be required to recite a memorized poem of his or her choosing in class on May 1. 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. At some point during the term, you will visit my office hours for a paper consultation (more on this soon).

Here is the grading breakdown:

Paper 1:	15%
Paper 2:	30%
Weekly Responses:	10%
Recitation:	5%
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 (though note that your first response is due by 10 pm on Tuesday March 31). Tell me which of the week’s 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 texts. 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 5 pm 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 an afternoon? 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. Active and respectful participation is inconsistent with texting, facebooking, napping, and side conversations.

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 Monday, and concentrate on re-reading for Wednesday and Friday.

Week 1

March 30: Introduction

Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica" (1381)
Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz" (1494)

April 1 & April 3: Ballad Forms and the 4X4

Anonymous, "Western Wind" (84)
Anonymous, "The Unquiet Grave" (104)
William Blake, "The Tyger" (743)
William Wordsworth, "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" (790)
Emily Dickinson, 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

April 6, April 8, & April 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

April 13, April 15, & April 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)
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

April 20, April 22, & April 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)
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

April 27 & April 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)

April 27: Paper 1 due in class (3-4 pages)

May 1

Poetry recitations (in class)

Week 6

May 4, May 6, & May 8: Voices and Speakers

William Wordsworth, "The Solitary Reaper" (803)
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

May 11, May 13, & May 15: 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 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

May 18, May 20, & May 22: Repetition and Sound

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

May 25

Memorial Day holiday – NO CLASS

May 27 & May 29: Repression and Rage

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "A Musical Instrument" (950)
Christina Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio" (1129), "Goblin Market"*
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, "Daddy" (1840)
Louise Glück, "Gretel in Darkness" (1931)

Week 10

June 1, June 3, & June 5: Elegy

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)
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)
Etheridge Knight, "For Malcolm, A Year After"*

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

June 9: Final exam (10:15 AM in our regular classroom)