Course Description: ENG 106 is an introduction to poetry, one of the major genres in literary studies. Through careful analysis of poems by major writers, you will be challenged to explain not only what a given poem might mean to its readers, but also how a poem communicates meaning differently than a work of fiction, drama, or some other mode of literary expression. ENG 106 is not a comprehensive introduction to the traditions of English and American poetry; it is, rather, a series of intensive exercises designed to equip you with the analytical tools needed to read, discuss, and write about poetry effectively. Weekly readings are relatively short but demanding, and students will do a substantial amount of critical writing, including formal essays totaling at least 8-10 pages. As a basic introduction to a major genre in the field of literary studies, this course satisfies the university's Group Requirement in the Arts and Letters category. It is not recommended for English Majors, who are encouraged to enroll in the department's more historically oriented and comprehensive Introduction to the English Major sequence, ENG 220-222.

Required Texts:
R.S. Gwynn, ed. Poetry: A Pocket Anthology (7th edition)
Keetje Kuipers, Beautiful in the Mouth

Recommended: A good dictionary and a guide to MLA format. Active reading will require marking significant passages. Plan to access texts accordingly.

Attendance and Participation: Punctual, regular attendance is a requirement for this class. You are allowed three absences; every subsequent absence lowers your final grade by 1 step (A to A-, B+ to B, C to C-, etc.). You must be prepared to discuss the reading assignment on the day that it is due, and to participate in a respectful and lively discussion. Be prepared to read assigned texts closely, share your ideas, and ask questions of your peers and your instructor.

Assignments: All readings are due by the beginning of the class time indicated on the assignment schedule attached to this syllabus. Although the number of words and pages we will consider is somewhat less than in a fiction course, the amount of time spent reading will be roughly equivalent because you will need to read each poem at least twice and consider it carefully in order to be adequately prepared. Most of the assigned reading is from the Gwynn collection, but you will access a few supplementary poems on Blackboard.

Writing Assignments: The writing assignments involve mechanical exercises and short essays. All writing assignments are due at my office by 5:00 on the due dates (Fridays). No secondary reading is required or encouraged, but if you do choose to use sources, they must be properly documented. I am happy to help you in advance of the due date on any assignment. Please review the University policy regarding academic honesty (in Schedule of Classes), which will be strictly enforced in this class. If you plagiarize or cheat, you will automatically fail the course. All written work will be graded for form as well as content, so be sure to get help on writing and essay form (including grammar) in plenty of time if you need it. Refer to the “Essay Checklist” at the end of this document for formatting guidelines.

Reading Quizzes: An unspecified number of quizzes will be given throughout the term. These quizzes will ask questions specific to the reading assignments and literary terms for the day or previous days. All quizzes are “take-home” and will be due the following class period. There are no make-ups; late quizzes will not be accepted.
Poem Memorization and Recitation: Your task for this assignment is to choose a poem from the course’s reading list that is at least 12 lines long, to memorize it, and to recite it to me during office hours. Recitations must occur during the week the poem is assigned. A sign-up sheet will be circulated during the first week of class. More guidelines and suggestions are posted on Blackboard (“Preparing Recitations”).

Examinations: There will be two in-class examinations, a midterm and a final, to test reading comprehension, vocabulary, and the information and ideas discussed in class.

Grading:

- Attendance and Participation 10%
- Recitation 5%
- Quizzes 10%
- Writing Assignment #1 10%
- Writing Assignment #2 10%
- Writing Assignment #3 15%
- Midterm Examination 20%
- Final Examination 20%

No late assignments or recitations will be accepted (unless you’ve made arrangements with me well in advance of the due date), and, again, there are no make-up times for exams. Incompletes will be given for documented medical emergencies only.

Accommodation: If you have a documented disability and anticipate needing accommodations in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon, and request that the Counselor for Students with Disabilities send a letter verifying your disability.

What is poetry? Some definitions: Poetry is . . .

. . . the art of uniting pleasure with truth by calling imagination to the help of reason.—Samuel Johnson

. . . the best words in the best order.—Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

. . . musical thought.—Thomas Carlyle.

. . . emotion put into measure.—Thomas Hardy

. . . If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.—Emily Dickinson.

. . . poems are bullshit unless they are / teeth or trees or lemons piled / on a step.—Amiri Baraka.

. . . Poetry provides the one permissible way of saying one thing and meaning another.—Robert Frost.

. . . prose bewitched.—Mina Loy.

. . . hundreds of things coming together at the right moment.—Elizabeth Bishop.

. . . Poetry is life distilled.—Gwendolyn Brooks.

Course Schedule:

Note: All writing and reading assignments are due on the day listed. This schedule is subject to change.

Week 1
W 3/30  Read: “Literary History and Poetic Conventions” (41-44), “Lyric, Narrative, Dramatic” (9-11)

F 4/1  Read: “Speaker, Listener, and Context” (2-9), “Tone of Voice” (25-27)

Week 2
M 4/4  Read: “The Language of Poetry” (11-18)
Terms: diction, concrete, abstract

(158-59), “Bright Star, Would I Were Stedfast as Thou Art” (121)
Terms: poetic diction, level of diction

F 4/8  Poems: “Southeast Corner” (Blackboard), “Those Winter Sundays” (243),
“Spring and All” (201)
Terms: denotation, connotation

Week 3
Rose” (206)
Terms: imagery, imagism

W 4/13  Read: “About Haiku” (Blackboard)
Poems: “Selections of Haiku” (Blackboard), “Haiku from Japanese Internment Camps”
(Blackboard) “Contemporary Haiku” (Blackboard), “A Selection of Hokku”
(Blackboard).

F 4/15  Read: “Figurative Language” (18-22)
Terms: figures of speech, metaphor, implied metaphor, allusion

Week 4
(100), “Sonnet: To Science” (135), “Neutral Tones” (168)
Terms: personification, apostrophe, hyperbole, understatement, metonymy, paradox, pun, simile

W 4/20  Read: “Repetition: Sounds And Schemes” (27-29)
Poems: “Bereft” (Blackboard), “Eight O’Clock” (172), “wishes for sons” (317)
Terms: euphony, cacophony, onomatopoeia, alliteration, assonance, anaphora

F 4/22  Poems: “Monologue for an Onion” (Blackboard), “from An Essay on Criticism” (90)
Due: Writing Assignment #1

Week 5
Will Be Sorry for That Word” (220-21) “My Papa’s Waltz” (238)
Terms: rhyme, exact rhyme, slant rhyme, end rhyme, internal rhyme, masculine and feminine
rhyme, rhyme scheme

W 4/27  Read: “Meter and Rhythm” (29-34)
Poems: “Astrophel and Stella: Sonnet 1” (63-63), “We Real Cool” (252), “This Be The
Verse” (261)
Terms: rhythm, stress, end-stopped, run-on line, meter, iambic pentameter, pentameter
MIDTERM EXAMINATION (Bring a bluebook)

Week 6
M 5/2  Read: “Free Verse, Open Form, and Closed Form” (35-36), “Stanza Forms” (37-38)
Poems: “A Poison Tree” (98), “Frost at Midnight” (111), “[Tell All the Truth, But Tell It Slant]” (163), “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” (102-03), “Song” (BB)
Terms: stanza, closed form, blank verse, quatrain, couplet, tercet, fixed form, nonce form

Terms: open form, free verse, prose poems

F 5/6  Read: “Fixed Forms” (38-41)
Poems: “Amoretti: Sonnet 75” (61-62), “Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?” (65), “What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why” (221)
Terms: traditional form, sonnet, Italian sonnet, sestet, octave, English sonnet, Spenserian sonnet, quatrains

Week 7
M 5/9  Poems: “pity this busy monster, manunkind” (223), “Acquainted with the Night” (184), “Sonnets from the Portuguese, 43” (127), “looking” (BB)

Terms: villanelle, rondeau

Due: Writing Assignment #2
Terms: sestina

Week 8
Terms: stanza, verse, refrain, ballad, ballad stanza, common meter

W 5/18  Read: “Allegory and Symbol” (22-24)
Terms: symbol, traditional symbols

Terms: myth, archetype

Week 9

W 5/25  Read: Beautiful in the Mouth: Foreword (9-10), About the Author (91), 15-38.

F 5/27  Read: Beautiful in the Mouth: 41-55.
Week 10

M  5/30  *MEMORIAL DAY. NO CLASS.*

W  6/1  **Read:** Beautiful in the Mouth: 59-87.

F  6/3  **Free reading.**
      **DUE:** Writing Assignment #3

Finals Week

M  6/6  3:15 in 248 Gerlinger Hall