

ENG 240 H

Honors Introduction to Poetry

Fall 2008

T, Th 1pm
Prof. Stella Singer

[location TBA]

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Office Hours: TBA and by appointment

Rhodes Tower 1814

Course Description

This course is an introduction to the analysis of poetry and aims to equip English majors with the critical techniques necessary for the baccalaureate study of literature. Our goal will be to develop a critical vocabulary with which to effectively analyze, discuss, and write about poetry. We will gain new insights into the ways in which poems function by attending to the formal elements of poetry and discovering how poetic form relates to meaning. The class will consider a variety of poetic traditions and explore how particular genres or forms (e.g. the sonnet, the haiku, the alliterative line) have been reinvented within and across various literary cultures. Moreover, as we refine our own ability to consider and write about poetry, we will also examine the ways in which the writers we study have interrogated their own poetic practices.

Please note: this is a preliminary syllabus, open to revision. Some assignments may be made optional as other readings are prioritized for discussion.

Pre-requisites for this class: ENG 101, ENG 102

Required Texts

The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 5th Edition. Edited by Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy. (W.W. Norton & Co., 2004)

The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics, 3rd Edition. Edited by Alex Preminger, Terry V. F. Brogan, and Frank J. Warnke. (Princeton UP, 1993)

In addition to these two required texts, I will distribute miscellaneous readings throughout the semester.

Requirements and Grading

1. Preparation & Participation (30%)

Please note that students enrolled in ENG 240 H are expected to take more responsibility for class discussion than students enrolled in standard ENG 240. Your assessment for this portion of your grade is determined by the following: a). active and regular participation in class discussion, b). biweekly written responses, c). two scheduled oral presentations, and d). performance on any quizzes administered.

a). You should read all assigned poems before the corresponding class and **arrive prepared to participate**. Students are expected not only to *read* the assigned poems but also to *think* about them carefully and to make informed contributions to class discussion. In order to do so, *you must bring the appropriate texts to class*.

b). Students will write biweekly written responses to class materials. These are not formal written essays; they are intended, rather, to encourage engagement with readings, and to prompt classroom discussion. They will also present a useful opportunity for pre-writing activity.

c). Each student will be responsible for making **two** presentations during the semester. Students will select two poems from the syllabus and secure my approval within the first two weeks of class. I will then generate a schedule of student presentations and integrate it into our schedule. Each presentation will consist of a 15-minute close reading and analysis of a poem. One component of the analytical portion of the presentation is to incorporate other media and/or forms of creative expression in order to enhance that analysis. The creative component might be a work of the student's own creation or the work of another entity; in each case, however, it will be **accompanied by a cogent explanation of how it illuminates (and complements) the poem.*** In other words, creation will not be substituted for analysis!

d). I will administer quizzes as appropriate—that is, when I notice signs of weak preparation and participation.*

*Please note: if you miss a quiz, it is *your responsibility* to make it up as soon as possible. Failure to do so will result in a grade of zero for the missed assignment.

2. Written Work (70%)

Formal written work, which consists of four essays, will determine a total of 70% of your final grade.

* Please note that you do not have to identify yourself as an artist to excel in this course; discussing a famous sculpture or musical composition is also a potentially successful approach to this assignment. You will, however, have to present these things—a slide projection of a piece of sculpture, for example, or recording of a piece of music.

The first assignment will be approximately 3 pages in length and will determine 10% of your final grade. This assignment will be a close-reading (including paraphrase) of one of two poems selected by the professor. This analysis does not require a thesis or argument; nevertheless, it must be deliberately organized into cogent and coherent paragraphs.

The second assignment will be approximately 5 pages in length and will determine 15% of your final grade. This assignment will require that you develop a thesis based on one of three poems selected by the professor. Your argument in support of that thesis will be based on textual evidence; this textual evidence will consist of your analysis of the poem. In other words, it will be an argument-driven essay based on your close-reading of the selected poem.

The third assignment will be approximately 6 pages in length and will determine 20 % of your final grade. This assignment will require that you develop a thesis based on TWO poems by a single author. At least one of these poems must appear on the syllabus; moreover, *your choice of author is subject to approval by the professor*. Your argument in support of the thesis you develop will be based on textual evidence (consisting of your close readings) AND your compare-and-contrast analysis of the two poems. In other words, it will be an argument-driven essay; the thesis your paper supports must incorporate a). your close-readings of the poems and b). your analysis of the relationship between the two poems.

The fourth and final essay will be a thorough revision of the previous (third) essay. It will involve developing the initial thesis in order to be more thorough and expansive—i.e. to incorporate critical analysis of further poetic work. It will also feature a *mandatory research component*: you will have to a). produce an **annotated bibliography** and b). incorporate your research into your final revision of the paper. The final paper will be approximately 10 pages in length (not including the annotated bibliography), and it will be worth 20% of your final grade. The annotated bibliography will be graded separately and will be worth 5% of your final grade. Assignment #4 therefore determines 25% of your final grade.

Please note:

You must retain every draft of each assignment submitted to the instructor—this includes drafts submitted for revision as well as drafts submitted for grades. I provide extensive comments on both the form and the content of students' essays. My comments on your essays are intended to guide you in producing more vivid and persuasive written assignments. *You should take my earlier observations into account when writing subsequent essays.*

Regarding late work: unless you have obtained an extension *in advance*, late work will be penalized one third of a letter grade (dropping a B+ to a B, or a B to a B-, for example) per day. Work more than one week late will not be accepted.

Attendance Policy and Etiquette Expectations

Students are expected to come to class on time and remain for the duration of the class. You may miss **three** class meetings without penalty, but attendance is required at all other meetings. *More than three absences will adversely affect your grade* thus: each additional absence will result in the deduction of one third of a letter grade from your final grade. If unforeseen circumstances require you to miss several classes after the deadline for dropping a class, **contact me as soon as possible. More than 8 absences will result in automatic failure.**

Habitual tardiness will not be tolerated, and if you are more than ten minutes late, this will count as an absence.

Do not distract or disrespect your classmates or the instructor with talking, whispering, or leaving your cell-phone ringer on.

On plagiarism: plagiarism is the use of the ideas, data, or language of an entity other than yourself without specific or proper attribution to the source. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism or how to avoid it, please do not hesitate to ask me. If you do not request timely assistance, you must bear the full consequences of any plagiarism. Plagiarism will receive the maximum punishment CSU allows.

Goals for English Majors

If you have made the wise choice to major in English, you should know that the English department has defined the following three goals for majors. Our program should:

- A. provide graduates with a high level of competence in the written and spoken language
- B. provide graduates with excellent analytical and problem solving skills
- C. provide students with an understanding of basic methods of research and of effective and ethical use of different kinds of evidence in constructing an argument.

This course is designed to develop each of these goals.

A course approved for the **Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)** requirement must meet all of the following criteria:

1. Require students to write between 3,000 and 5,000 words (10-20 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1" margins) in writing assignments (which may include drafts).¹

¹ The word count may only include one preliminary draft for each final draft.

2. Final versions of at least one assignment should total at least 2,000 words (eight pages).²
3. Teach students writing-to-learn strategies that foster students' experiences in learning and writing-to-communicate strategies that foster students' respect of readers' experiences.³ Whenever possible, planning assignments (e.g. reading logs, pre-writing strategies) and peer reviews should be included.
4. Assign writing complex enough to require substantive revision for most students. The instructor should give feedback to assist students in preparing subsequent papers or drafts of papers. This feedback should not consist entirely of mechanical correction of punctuation and grammar.
5. Provide instruction in discipline-appropriate forms of texts, arguments, evidence, style, audience, and citation.
6. Assign writing throughout the semester.
7. Where appropriate, address the needs of students regarding library competency.
8. Assign writing in English unless the course is specifically geared to improving writing at the 300-level in another language.

Additional criteria

9. In order to receive a C or better in the course, students must write at a satisfactory skill level (C or better). If the student's writing is weak, but shows understanding of the course material, the student may be assigned a D, in which case WAC credit will not be received for the course.
10. Maximum enrollment for this course is 35 or 45 with a graduate assistant.

Criteria for Arts and Humanities courses adhering to the new General Education Requirements:

1. Courses must be offered at the 100/200 level in an arts and humanities discipline including but not limited to English, History, Philosophy, Art History, Music History, Religious Studies, or Modern Languages. Courses offered in other disciplines may be approved if they meet the other conditions indicated below.
2. Courses must provide students with background knowledge and analytical skills that will allow them to:
 - a. Demonstrate understanding of how human beings interpret, translate, and represent diverse experiences of the world through language, literature, the historical record, philosophical systems, images, sounds, and performances.

² Exceptions to this criterion may be granted in disciplines or courses where students do a substantial amount of writing, but the course structure and/or content does not create opportunities for an assignment of this length.

³ Writing-to-learn helps students use writing to explore many aspects of the course as well as their own reflections; these activities should foster learning at deeper levels than memorization or recitation. Writing-to-communicate emphasizes aspects of writing (style, grammatical correctness, coherence, focus) that allow a reader to navigate the writing as he or she wishes.

- b. Apply that understanding to the study of the human condition, cultural heritage, cultural artifacts, creativity, and history.

**Additional criterion for courses NOT specifically focused on Asia, Latin America, Africa or the Middle East:

Courses must be survey courses that provide an overview of a broad topic or field of knowledge.

The **Skill Areas** specifically promoted by this course are **Writing** and **Critical Thinking**.

In order for a course to qualify in the **skill area** of **writing**, it must comply with the following criteria:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of writing.
2. Include writing assignments that directly relate to the course goals.
3. Include instruction in writing-to-learn and/or writing-to-communicate. While writing-to-learn emphasizes the student's experience, writing-to-communicate highlights the reader's experience. Both are necessary to produce a thoughtful text that observes academic writing's conventions.⁴
4. Require that students write a total of 2,000 words (8 pages, double-spaced, in 12-point font, with 1" margins) in multiple assignments.
5. Assign writing throughout the semester.

In order for a course to qualify in the **skill area** of **critical thinking**, it must comply with the following criteria:

1. Designate that at least 15% of the student's grade in the course is based on an evaluation of critical thinking.
2. Require students to attain skills beyond lower-level knowledge, thereby requiring:
 - a. higher-order thinking (analysis, synthesis, evaluation); **OR**
 - b. skills that involve the use of content knowledge (e.g. finding information to solve a problem); **OR**
 - c. the recognition of the importance and usefulness of knowledge and skills gained in the course (e.g. recognize the ability to and importance of working with others to solve intellectual problems).

CALENDAR

⁴ Writing-to-learn helps students use writing to explore many aspects of the course as well as their own reflections; these activities should foster learning at deeper levels than memorization or recitation. Writing-to-communicate emphasizes aspects of writing (style, grammatical correctness, coherence, focus) that allow a reader to navigate the writing as he or she wishes.

WEEK 1 What is Poetry? Introduction to Poetry and Poetics
Reading Poetry [Responsibly]: Types of Ambiguity

Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica"; Marianne Moore, "Poetry"; Frank O'Hara, "Why I Am Not a Painter"; Charles Bernstein, "Autonomy is Jeopardy"

WEEK 2 Close Reading. Rhythm

Scansion

Anonymous, poetry from the manuscript British Library Cotton Nero A.x.; Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Hurrahing in Harvest," "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," "No Worst, There Is None"; Emily Dickinson, #124 (1859 and 1861 versions), #445, #448, #519, #591, #598, #764, #1263

Blues rhythm

WEEK 3 Close Reading. Rhyme

Ben Jonson, "A Fit of Rhyme"; Sir Phillip Sidney, "What Length of Verse?"

Rhyme's Reason: Types of Rhyme

Rhyme Royal

Heroic Couplets

Off Rhyme

WEEK 4 Closer Reading. Rhetorical Figures and Devices
Pre-writing Strategies

Assignment #1 due

WEEK 5 Closer Reading. Diction
Paragraphs

Language poetry

Harryette Mullen, excerpts from *Muse & Drudge* and *Sleeping with the Dictionary*

WEEK 6 Closest Reading. Tone
Thesis Construction

Geoffrey Chaucer, "To Rosemunde"; Countee Cullen, "Yet Do I Marvel"; Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B," "Dinner Guest: Me"; Robert Frost, selections

Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love" and responses (Sir Walter Raleigh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"; Cecil Day Lewis, "Two Songs")

WEEK 7 Poetic Purposes: Occasional Poetry and Otherwise

Elegiac Anglo-Saxon lyrics; Geoffrey Chaucer, "Chaucer's Wordes unto Adam, His Owne Scriveyn," "Truth," "The Complaint of Chaucer to His Purse"; John Donne, "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning," "Elegy XIX. To His Mistress Going to Bed"; Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"; Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book"; prefatory material to Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*

Assignment #2 due

WEEK 8 Inspirations I. Subjects and Sonnets.

Petrarch, *Rime* 140, 189, 190; Thomas Wyatt, "The Long Love that in My Thought Doth Harbor," "My Galley," "Whoso List to Hunt"; Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, "Love that Doth Reign Within my Thought"; John Milton, "How Soon Hath Time," "When I Consider How My Light is Spent"; William Wordsworth, "London, 1802," "Nuns Fret Not at Their Convent's Narrow Room," "Scorn Not the Sonnet"; John Keats, "When I Have Fears That I May Cease to Be," "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," "On the Sonnet"; Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias"; Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," "[Carrion Comfort]"; Gwendolyn Brooks, selections; Robert Frost, selections

WEEK 9 Inspirations II. Objects and Odes

John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"; Gertrude Stein, selections from *Tender Buttons*; Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar"; William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow"; Thomas Gray, "Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat, Drowned in a Tub of Goldfishes"; William Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey"

WEEK 10 Sequence and Series Outlines

Sir Philip Sidney, selected from *Astrophil and Stella*; John Donne, selected from *Holy Sonnets*; Elizabeth Barrett Browning, selected from *Sonnets from the Portuguese*
Haiku sequences
William Blake, selections from *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*
[www.blakearchive.org]

WEEK 11 The Epic and the Almost (its implications)

John Milton, selections from *Paradise Lost*; Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan"
George Gordon, Lord Byron, selections from *Don Juan*

Assignment #3 due

**WEEK 12 Poetic Personae I. (Im)Posture
Approaching Research**

Romantic poetry
Robert Browning, from *Dramatis Personae*
Ezra Pound, "Portrait d'une Femme," "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter," selections
from *Personae*

WEEK 13 Poetic Personae II. Voice

Walt Whitman, selections from *Song of Myself*
Gwendolyn Brooks, selections
Confessional poetry

**WEEK 14 Making it New
Modernisms**

Stein, Eliot, et al.
Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"; John Ashbery, "The
Instruction Manual"; W.D. Snodgrass, "April Inventory"; Craig Raine, "A Martian Sends
a Postcard Home"; Seamus Heaney, "Digging," "Bogland," "The Skunk"

**WEEK 15 Making it New Again
Contemporary Poetry and Poetics**

Assignment #4 due