

ENGLISH 106.6: INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

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Class time: Tuesday & Thursday, 3:30–4:45, MHRA 2211

Office hours: Tuesday & Thursday, 12:00–1:30, McIver 213

WHAT IS THIS THING?

This is a course designed for undergraduates interested in the form and function of poetry. We will study American and British poetry from a variety of time periods, giving particular attention to how the experience of each poem is rooted in sound: diction, tone, rhythm.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Many of the poems we will read are available in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Ferguson, Margaret, et. al., eds. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2005; ISBN 0-393-97920-2). I will periodically assign readings from handouts distributed in class and made available online. Please bring both *The Norton Anthology* and all assigned handouts to each class unless otherwise directed. Although not a “required text,” a collegiate dictionary like *The Random House-Webster’s* or *The Merriam-Webster* might prove useful.

ASSIGNMENTS

Readings. I will assign between eight and twelve poems a week. Please read each poem closely in preparation for class. We will not have time to discuss every poem, but you will be responsible for all assigned poems on each test.

Written assignments. At the beginning of the semester I ask everyone to introduce themselves to me with a letter of introduction. During the semester I will occasionally assign brief, one-page response papers to poems and essays from our readings. A 3-5 page essay is due at the end of class. There will be two poetry writing assignments, as noted on the schedule.

Poetry recitation. In the final week of class, you will recite a poem from *The Norton Anthology* you have committed to memory.

Exams. I will ask you to identify and discuss poems, poets and features of poetry. Both exams will include brief essay questions.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

I expect everyone to adhere to UNCG’s Academic Integrity Policy, available online at <http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu>.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

Preparation. Come to class prepared to take part in our discussion. Bring essays to class the day we are scheduled to discuss them—you may find them useful to reference during class. Please ask questions and share your observations, and be respectful to your colleagues as they do the same. There is no attendance policy, but without evidence to the contrary I must assume that if I do not see you in class you are not participating.

Technology in the classroom. Cellular telephones should be off. Laptops may be used in class only by those with special needs. Those who do have special needs should make a specific arrangement with me to use a laptop in class. No one may use a laptop in class without a prior arrangement with me.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Those of you with any sort of disability that could affect class performance or for which you need accommodation should contact me (see above) or the Office of Disability services (336.334.5440, ods@uncg.edu).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, we will be able to identify and discuss various structures for organizing sound within poems, such as meters, rhyme schemes, and poetic forms; to apply understanding of these structures to the literary analysis of poems; to read more closely and write clearer literary analyses of poems; and demonstrate understanding of how the poems studied fit into larger historical, social, and literary contexts.

EVALUATION

Poetry writing assignments, 5%
Brief written responses, 25%
Class participation, 25%
Poetry recitation, 5%
3-5 page paper, 15%
Examinations, 25%

SCHEDULE (SUBJECT TO CHANGE AS NECESSARY)

- 26 AUG Introduction of course. *Assignment: letter of introduction.*
- 28 AUG Engines of invention: the speaker of a poem.
 “Often I am permitted to return to a meadow,” Robert Duncan (handout);
 “Medusa,” Louise Bogan (1406); “Casabianca,” Elizabeth Bishop (1515);
 “Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff...,” A.E. Housman (1177); “They Flee from
 Me,” Thomas Wyatt (127); “My Last Duchess,” Robert Browning (1012).
- 2 SEP Engines of invention: imagery. *Letter of introduction due.*
 “My Story in a Late Style of Fire,” Larry Levis (handout); “90 North,”
 Randall Jarrell (1552); “The Tyger,” William Blake (743); “In a Station of
 the Metro,” Ezra Pound (1297); “The Fish,” Elizabeth Bishop (1516).
- 4 SEP Engines of invention: metaphor and simile.
 “383” (1117), Emily Dickinson; “The Sick Rose,” William Blake (742);
 “Lady Lazarus,” Sylvia Plath (1843).
- 9 SEP Engines of invention: situation.
 “Skunk Hour,” Robert Lowell (1601); “The River-Merchant’s Wife: a
 Letter,” Ezra Pound (1297); “In the Waiting Room,” Elizabeth Bishop
 (1521); “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” Wallace Stevens
 (1260); “A Hill,” Anthony Hecht (1667).
- 11 SEP Tone: diction and voice. *Assignment: first poem.*
 “Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*,” William Wordsworth (handout); “Speak,”
 James Wright (1750); “To John Donne,” Ben Jonson (326); “This Be The
 Verse,” Philip Larkin (1657); “I Know A Man,” Robert Creeley (1705).
- 16 SEP Tone: syntax. *In-class freewriting activity.*
 “Dream Song 1,” “Dream Song 4,” “Dream Song 14,” “Dream Song 29,”
 John Berryman (1548-1549); “Dover Beach,” Matthew Arnold (1101).
- 18 SEP Meter: the units.
 “Oh Who Is That Young Sinner,” A.E. Housman (handout); “God’s
 Grandeur” (1166), “Pied Beauty” (1167), “[Carrion Comfort]” (1169),
 Gerard Manley Hopkins.
- 23 SEP Meter: voice and syntax. *Assignment: essay.*
 “The Lamb,” William Blake (handout); “Had I The Choice,” Walt
 Whitman (handout); “Ode to a Nightingale,” John Keats (935).
- 25 SEP Rime: sound and pattern. *First poem due.*
 “If Everything Happens That Can’t Be Done,” e.e. cummings (handout);
 “Those Winter Sundays,” Robert Hayden (1533); “The Death of the Ball
 Turret Gunner,” Randall Jarrell (1553); “Kubla Kahn,” Coleridge (809).
- 30 SEP Music: patterns of patterns.
 “The Hollow Men,” T.S. Eliot (handout); “Lord Randal,” Anonymous
 (100); “Introduction” (733), “Introduction” (740), William Blake; “We
 Real Cool,” Gwendolyn Brooks (1588).
- 2 OCT Review for exam.
- 7 OCT Exam.
- 9 OCT Forms: Blank verse and syllabic verse. *Assignment: poem in form.*
 “What Work Is,” Philip Levine (handout); “The World Is Too Much
 With Us,” William Wordsworth (handout); “Frost at Midnight,” Samuel
 Taylor Coleridge (810); “To a Steam Roller,” “The Fish,” Marianne Moore
 (1328), “Directive,” Robert Frost (1244).
- 14 OCT Forms: Sonnets.
 “3” (258), “29” (260), “35” (261), “60” (262), “130” (267), William Shakes-
 peare; “My Galley,” Thomas Wyatt (127); “When I Consider How My
 Light Is Spent,” John Milton (418); “The Forge,” Seamus Heaney (1900).
- 16 OCT Forms: Pantoums and sestinas. *First draft of essay due.*
 “Parent’s Pantoum,” Carolyn Kizer (handout); “The Painter,” John
 Ashbery (1736); “Pantoum of the Great Depression,” Donald Justice
 (1687); “Sestina,” Elizabeth Bishop (1520).
- 21 OCT Autumn break. No class, but the leaves may be falling.
- 23 OCT Forms: “Free” verse.
 Selections from “Song of Myself,” Walt Whitman (1060); “The Love
 Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” T.S. Eliot (1340); “Why I Am Not a Painter,”
 Frank O’Hara (1730); “An Agony. As Now,” Amiri Baraka (1857).
- 28 OCT Conferences. *Poem in form due.*
- 30 OCT Conferences.
- 4 NOV Spotlight: Emily Dickinson.
 “340” (1115), “445” (1119), “479” (1119), “591” (1121), “764” (1122), “905”
 (1124), “935” (1125), “1263” (1126), “1793” (1127).
- 6 NOV Spotlight: W.B. Yeats.
 “He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven” (handout), “Adam’s Curse” (1190),
 “Sailing To Byzantium” (1199), “The Second Coming” (1196), “The Circus
 Animals’ Desertion” (1207), “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” (1190).
- 11 NOV Spotlight: Wallace Stevens.
 “Disillusionment of Ten O’Clock” (handout), “The Snow Man” (1256),
 “The Emperor of Ice-Cream” (1256), “Anecdote of the Jar” (1260).
- 13 NOV Contemporary poetry. Readings to be announced.
- 18 NOV Contemporary poetry. Readings to be announced.
- 20 NOV Review for exam. *3-5 page essay due.*
- 25 NOV Exam.
- 27 NOV Thanksgiving break. No class. Enjoy the freshness of the air.
- 2 DEC Poem recitations.
- 4 DEC Poem recitations.
- 11 DEC Poem recitations. (12:00 to approximately 1:00)