SYLLABUS

ENGLISH 262 (18579)  Approaches to Poetry, Fall 2006

Mondays 7:30-10:00 -- Auerbach, Room 324

Instructor:
Humphrey Tonkin, Professor of Humanities (tonkin@hartford.edu)
Website: http://uhaweb.hartford.edu/TONKIN/intro.html.
Office: Mortensen Library, Room 307.  Office telephone: 768-4448
Office hours: Tuesdays 1:30-2:30 or by appointment.
Home telephone: 561-2669   Home fax: 561-5219
Admin. Asst. Judy Kacmarcik, Mortensen Library, 2nd Flr., 768-4269

Course Description:
How might we gain an understanding of the scope and variety of poetry in the English language? How might we learn to read poetry to best advantage? These are the questions that this course is intended to answer. We will concentrate on close readings of fourteen well-known short poems from a number of periods of English and American literature, examining them also in their cultural and political contexts. We will also read other works by the same authors and examine material relevant to their political and intellectual setting. Students will write two short papers and a final paper and there will also be a final exam. Poets to be read include William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Keats, Emily Dickinson, Wallace Stevens, and Amy Clampitt.

Course Objective:
To provide students with a good understanding of the history and variety of British and American poetry, of poetic form and function, and of the cultural context in which poems are written.

Course Goals:
By the end of the semester, students should
(a) have a good understanding of the technical aspects of poetry – versification, poetic forms, and poetic language;
(b) be able to analyze and discuss poetry;
(c) be capable of setting poems in their historical and cultural context.

Required Text:
The only required text is The Longman Anthology of Poetry (available from the University Bookstore). Additional readings will be assigned as needed.

Class Sessions:  Class sessions will involve a variety of discussion and group work, plus close analysis of texts and some lecturing. We will break the sessions up into shorter segments.
Attendance: Since the class meets only once a week, students are expected to attend all sessions, unless they have notified the instructor in advance and made arrangements to cover the material missed. They should bring their texts to all sessions.

Assignments:

1. There will be assigned readings each week, but students will be encouraged to read widely in the anthology and beyond. The readings will be mostly from the poets whose poems we will analyze in detail, but additional readings will be assigned as well – including background information on the context of the poems.

2. There will be occasional short written assignments, quizzes etc.

3. Students will be expected to keep journals, in which they should record their readings and provide comments on them. The instructor will review these journals from time to time during the semester and offer his response. Journals should be kept in electronic form and should be printed out in their entirety when the instructor asks for them.

4. There will be three papers, with the third of the three somewhat longer and more elaborate than the other two.

5. There will be a final exam, possibly in take-home form.

Grading:

Class participation will count for 20% of the grade; short papers, journals and other assignments for 30%, the final paper for 25% and the final exam for 25%. All work must be completed before a semester grade is awarded. Papers must be handed in on time: for late papers the grade will be reduced.

A Reminder:

Academic Honesty. All the work you submit in this course should be your own, and any sources of information consulted in the completion of that work – including but not limited to friends, other instructors, books, articles, and internet sources – must be acknowledged in the conventional manner (quotation marks, footnotes, bibliography, etc.). Any breach of the Academic Honesty Policy set forth in The Source and in the Manual of Academic Policies and Procedures will result in failure on the relevant assignment (with no possibility of revision and/or resubmission) and may be grounds for failure in the course. In extreme cases, academic dishonesty may result in suspension or dismissal from the university.

HT, 27 August 2006
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PROVISIONAL SCHEDULE (Sept. 10, 2006)  
[Subject to change as the semester progresses. Texts for final weeks to be assigned later in the semester. Assignments should be read in advance of the date specified]

September 11  
Introduction

September 18  
Read intro to the 16th century, pp. 89-101  
Shakespeare: Sonnets 55, 60, 97 + 18, 30, 116, 130  
Paper 1 assigned

September 25  
Read intro to the 17th century, pp. 205-218  
Donne: A Valediction Forbidding Mourning  
The Sun Rising  
Journals due

October 2  
Herbert: The Forerunners  
Marvell: The Garden  
To His Coy Mistress  
Paper 1 due

October 9  
Milton: On the Morning of Christ’s Nativity  
Journals due

October 16  
Read intro to the 18th century, pp. 383-396  
Gray: Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard  
Collins: Ode to Evening

October 23  
Read intro to the 19th century, pp. 621-639  
Wordsworth: Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey  
Nutting  
Paper 2 assigned

October 30  
Coleridge: Frost at Midnight  
Keats: On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer  
To Autumn
Journals due

November 6
Tennyson: Ulysses
Arnold: Dover Beach

Paper 2 due

November 13
Hopkins: The Windhover
    Spring and Fall

November 20
Dickinson
Read intro to early 20th century, pp. 937-947
Yeats

Paper 3 assigned

November 27
Stevens
Read intro to post-WW II, pp. 1207-21
Plath

December 4
Larkin
Clampitt
Heaney

December 11
Conclusion

Paper 3 due

Journals due