

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

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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

Journals due

December 4

Larkin

Clampitt

Heaney

December 11

Conclusion

Paper 3 due

Journals due