

EngLit 0316
MW 4:30 - 5:50 Biddle 253
Catherine S. Cox, PhD
Fall Term 2012

Course Syllabus: Reading Poetry

Objectives: EngLit 0316 is designed to offer interested students an opportunity to learn, at an introductory level, how to read and understand different kinds of poetry and poetic language. The course will emphasize close reading, critical thinking, and interpretive analysis. We will examine the texts in their historical, intellectual, and literary contexts, considering a variety of introductory critical approaches. Enrollment in EngLit 0316 is selective, and presupposes academic skills, including facility with standard written and spoken English, appropriate for lower-division college work, as well as an active and open-minded interest in reading and writing about literature. The course is SE, speaking enhanced, for Gen Ed purposes.

Format and Requirements: We will read and analyze a sequence of poems, covering a range of authors, eras, subgenres, and subject matter. For organizational purposes, the reading sequence is divided into three units; for each unit, each student will offer one ten-minute oral class presentation with Q&A. There will also be one out-of-class short interpretive paper assignment (three to five pages in length), due at the end of the course. Specific requirements for the formal assignments will be provided in writing at the time each assignment is made. The primary mode of class activity will be close readings of the literary texts in relation to contexts and ideas in connection with formal and informal student participation.

Materials Needed: The textbook *Poetry: An Introduction*, ed. Michael Meyer (Bedford, 6th edition) is the assigned text for class and assignment purposes. You should familiarize yourself with Pittcat/Zoom, and be sure to activate your Pitt email account.

Attendance Policy: Class attendance is recommended every day and required on scheduled presentation days. You are responsible for your scheduled presentations, the paper due date, and all material covered in class, regardless of individual attendance; unexcused late work will not be accepted or arranged for grade credit. Students attending are reminded that class activities are more enjoyable and productive for everyone involved when standard classroom decorum and etiquette are observed. The use of cell phones or unapproved electronic equipment (iPods, laptops, pagers, etc) is not permitted during class hour and they must be silenced, or turned off, and stored out of view during class hour; violations detected during presentations (your own or a classmate's) will result in an F grade.

University Policies: All UPJ courses, including this one, are governed by the University's published academic and campus-life policies for students and instructors, including disability and student-support services and academic-integrity guidelines, which are available online at <<http://www.bulletins.pitt.edu/johnstown/index.html>>. Students who wish to request disability accommodations are urged to contact the Office of Health & Wellness Services, G-10 Student Union Building, 814.269-7119, as early as possible in the term; for other services, contact the Academic Success Center, G-16 Owen Library, 814.269-7998. I will be glad to discuss any of these policies and services with you at your request.

Grade Information: Your final grade will be determined by the average of your four earned letter grades (three presentations and one paper), with the stipulation that a passing paper must be submitted in order for you to pass the course. UPJ uses the standard four-point scale of minimum averages, as described in the UPJ bulletin. I do not curve class grades to meet any predetermined range or offer formal extra credit assignments, but I do take into account effort, attitude, participation, and improvement on an individual basis.

Office Hours: Office hours will be held for interested students on Thursdays from 3:30 – 4:30; additional hours, by appointment, may be arranged. My office is at 227 Biddle Hall; telephone 814.269-7163; e-mail, cscocx@pitt.edu

Class Schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Class Topic/Activity</u>	<u>Assignments</u>
M 8/27	Introduction to course (syllabus)	
W 8/29	Unit #1: Basic elements of poetry (presentation sign-up)	
M 9/3	UPJ Holiday -- Labor Day	
W 9/5	Rhythm, sounds, syntax: "Scarborough Fair"	Presentations #1 begin

M 9/10 W 9/12	William Shakespeare, "Shall I Compare Thee?" Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle"	
M 9/17 W 9/19	Non-UPJ Holiday -- Rosh HaShanah Robert Frost, "Road Not Taken"	
M 9/24 W 9/26	Galway Kinnell, "Blackberry" Non-UPJ Holiday -- Yom Kippur	
M 10/1 W 10/3	Unit #2: Language & literary devices (presentation sign-up) Emily Dickinson, "Because I Could Not Stop"	Presentations #2 begin
T 10/9* W 10/10	Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods" Randall Jarrell, "Ball Turret Gunner"	
M 10/15 W 10/17	Sylvia Plath, "Mirror" Octavio Paz, "The Street"	
M 10/22 W 10/24	Optional make-up day Unit #3: Subjects & themes (presentation sign-up)	
M 10/29 W 10/31	Walt Whitman, "I Sing the Body Electric" A.E. Houseman, "Athlete Dying Young"	Presentations #3 begin
M 11/5 W 11/7	Billy Collins, "Litany" Julia Alvarez, "Sometimes the Words"	
M 11/12 W 11/14	Class will not meet today Louise Gluck, "March"	
M 11/19 W 11/21	Writing about literature (paper assigned) UPJ Holiday -- Thanksgiving	
M 11/26 W 11/28	Confer on work-in-progress (optional) Confer on work-in-progress (optional)	
M 12/3 W 12/5	Confer on work-in-progress (optional) EngLit 0316 concludes	PAPER DUE

Note: EngLit 0316 is not a difficult course. It will, however, require a commitment of time and effort on your part, and a willingness to think and to learn. If you choose to make reading, speaking, and writing a chore, then you will find the course boring and frustrating; if, on the other hand, you choose to give the course the time and effort that it deserves, then you will probably find the course interesting, challenging, and rewarding. The choice is yours.