

ENGLIT 0316: Reading Poetry

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TTh 11-11:20

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### **Introduction / Rationale**

This section of Reading Poetry is designed to increase students' understanding and appreciation of various types of poetry. Underlying all that we will do this semester is the basic, fundamental assumption (or, in my case, belief) that reading poetry can be an exceedingly rewarding and personally enriching endeavor. We will examine the ways in which every single word of a poem matters, and we'll examine the ways in which words matter in our own lives. We'll study and attempt to understand poetic form in order to better appreciate the ways in which some poets begin with advanced, deep, and complicated thoughts, perspectives, and feelings and "squeeze" those things into tight, verbal constraints. Furthermore, we'll study the complex and intricate relationship between form and content. We'll also discuss the significance of the absence of a strict form to understand what that approach to composing poetry offers us. We'll repeatedly ask the questions "what *is* poetry, *really*?" and "is *this* (song, billboard, discarded love note, series of emotive guttural noises, etc) poetic?"

Ultimately, I believe that this can be a fun class, and one from which you might draw materials that may very well give you the words to understand some of your life's most significant moments – from a calm, quiet moment that only you might experience through shared periods of both love and loss and, ultimately, to retrospectively appreciate the value of a life well lived. I realize that this may sound a bit idealistic, but I do truly believe that, if you approach poetry with intrigue, curiosity, and openness, you might very well come away a better person.

### **Course Objectives**

1. To help students build a basic appreciation for various types and forms of poetry from different historical periods and nationalities.
2. To help students recognize and understand some of the most common poetic forms.
3. To give students opportunities to further their appreciation for poetic forms by composing poems themselves.
4. To give students opportunities to practice public speaking by reading poems aloud in class.
5. To help students find and create meaning from poetry through very close readings and explications of several poems.
6. To urge students to ask "big" questions about life, love, loss and everything else; and to help them see the ways in which other people have tried to answer those questions through poetry.
7. To offer a collection of material that could become a wellspring of thought, emotion, empathy, and perspective from which students can continue to draw well beyond the scope of one semester in this one course.

### **Required Text:**

- ❖ Meyer, Michael. *Poetry: An Introduction*. 7<sup>th</sup> edition. 2013.

## Assignments and Grading:

**Daily Quizzes** = 10% of final grade

- ❖ On *most* days there will be a quiz on the assigned reading. On most days I will collect the quizzes, but on some days I won't. **These quizzes may not be made up if you are absent.**

**First Exam** = 25% of final grade

**Second Exam** = 25% of final grade

- ❖ These in-class exams will consist of several multiple-choice and short answer questions as well as two or three essay questions. Unless I stipulate otherwise, you may not use our assigned readings, notes, or materials other than the exams themselves during the exams.

**Compose Two Poems** = 15% each (for a **total of 30%** of your final grade)

- ❖ During the first half of the semester, you'll write a sonnet to help you gain a better appreciation for that particular poetic form. Don't let this intimidate you: You'll get lots of feedback from your classmates before you turn it in for a grade, and I'll pay closest attention to your adherence to the form itself. In the second half of the semester, you'll write a villanelle. Same deal as with the sonnet: lots of feedback, graded primarily for adherence to the conventions of the form.

**A "Dramatic" Reading** = 5% of final grade

- ❖ At one point during the semester, you'll read a poem to the rest of the class. The poem must come from our textbook (unless you find another poem and can make a compelling case as for why it should be read to the class). I'll encourage you to memorize as much as the poem as possible and to practice your reading several times before your big day. The best readings will be ones wherein the reader engages the class. It's hard to do this if you're just reading the thing aloud for your second (or so) time.

**Found Poem** = 5% of final grade

- ❖ Find a poem. Share it with the class. Note: This does *not* mean finding a poem in our book (or other such collection) or online and bringing it to class. It *does* mean finding something that may not be immediately recognizable (or officially designated) as poetry. This is your chance to be both creative and critical. Creative in that you'll express something unique about your subjective perspective; critical in that you will be pressed to describe or explain exactly what it is that is "poetic" about what you've discovered.

## Grading Scale:

A+: 100-98	A: 97-94	A-: 93-90
B+: 89-88	B: 87-84	B-: 83-80
C+: 79-78	C: 77-74	C-: 73-70
D+: 69-68	D: 67-64	D-: 63-60
F: 59 and below		

**Course Policies:**

1. **If you fail to fulfill any of the course requirements, you will fail the course.**

2. **Social Justice:** UPJ is committed to social justice. I wholeheartedly adhere to that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect and nondiscrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

3. If your writing suffers from serious structural or grammatical errors, the best grade I will be able to give to you for the argumentative essay is a “C.” If you would like help with grammar or with your writing in general, or if you want to build on your strengths, please visit the **UPJ tutoring center**

- Please note that for your course paper you are also required to follow the format guidelines outlined both above and in the assignment sheet.

4. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism involves “representing the words or ideas of someone else as one's own in any academic exercise.” Thus, all writing you do for this course must be your own and must be exclusively for this course, unless the instructor stipulates differently. Please pay special attention to the quotes, paraphrases, and documentation practices you use in your papers. If you have any questions about plagiarism, please ask your instructor. If you plagiarize, your instructor reserves the right to grant you a failure for the course.

5. **Office Hours:** My office hours, posted at the top-right corner of the first page of this syllabus, are times for us to meet one on one. You may drop in during these times or make an appointment with me to talk about any questions or comments you have about your progress in the course.

6. **Communication:** If you need to email me, you may. However, do not email me drafts or attachments unless I ask you to do so. I will usually reply to emails Monday through Friday within 48 hours of receiving your message.

Note: The **Course Calendar** is subject to revision as needed. In the event of a cancelled or missed class, stick with the schedule below unless otherwise advised.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>In Class</b>	<b>To Do for Today</b>
<b>1</b>	T, Aug. 30	<b>Introductions</b> What is Poetry? What's the point?	Buy Books, read syllabus  <b>Read:</b> Introduction, pgs 1-16. Also, check out the websites mentioned in the Intro.
	Th, Sept. 1	<b>Reading Poetry</b>	<b>Read:</b> “Reading Poetry,” pgs. 19-43 <b>Recommended:</b> “The Raven,” Edgar Allen Poe pg. 53
<b>2</b>	T, Sept. 6	<b>Word Choice, Word Order, and Tone</b>	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 3, pgs. 65-98 <b>Recommended:</b> “Ode to a Grecian Urn,” John Keats, pg 90-92

	Th, Sept. 8	<b>Explicating Poetry</b>	<b>Read:</b> Selected poems (announced in class) on pgs 92-104
<b>3</b>	T, Sept. 13	<b>Images</b>	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 4, pgs 105-115 and 117-121
	Th, Sept. 15	<b>The Difference between Poetry and Prose</b>	<b>Read:</b> “Paperboy” and “On the Difference between...”; pg 127-129. “Because you Asked...”; pg 210; “In a Station of the Metro,” 125.
<b>4</b>	T, Sept. 20	<b>The Sonnet</b>	<b>Read:</b> Pgs 236-247 and Shakespearean sonnets, pgs 624-625
	Th, Sept. 22	<b>On Writing Sonnets</b>	By today, you should have composed a Shakespearean sonnet.
<b>5</b>	T, Sept. 27	<b>Ursonate</b>	<b>Read / View</b> “Ursonate,” Kurt Schwitters
	Th, Sept. 29	<b>“Somewhere I have never traveled,”</b> and on being nobody-but-yourself	<b>Read:</b> poems announced in class; additional materials to be distributed
<b>6</b>	T, Oct. 4	<b>A Study of Emily Dickinson</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs 301-348
	Th, Oct. 6	<b>A Study of Emily Dickinson</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs 301-348
<b>7</b>	T, Oct. 11	<b>Love and Longing</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs 497-509
	Th, Oct. 13	<b>Mid-Term</b>	
<b>8</b>	T, Oct. 18	<b>No Class. Your Monday classes meet today.</b>	Consider looking ahead.
	Th, Oct. 20	<b>Figures of Speech</b>	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 5, pgs 130-152
<b>9</b>	T, Oct. 25	<b>Symbol, Allegory, and Irony</b>	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 6, pgs 153-163
	Th, Oct. 27	<b>Symbol, Allegory, and Irony</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs 163-180
<b>10</b>	T, Nov. 1	<b>Sounds</b>	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 7, pgs 181-206
	Th, Nov. 3	<b>John Giorno and Sound Poetry</b>	Listen to poems provided by Justus
<b>11</b>	T, Nov. 8	<b>Patterns of Rhythm</b> Is Music Poetry?	<b>Read:</b> Chapter 8, pgs 211-233; assorted lyrics distributed in class
	Th, Nov. 10	<b>Form Continued</b> <b>Villanelles and Sestinas</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs 247-263 as well as poems distributed in class
<b>12</b>	T, Nov. 15	<b>A Cultural Case Study of Harlem Renaissance Poets</b>	Read pgs. 462-496

	Th, Nov. 17	<b>A Cultural Case Study of Harlem Renaissance Poets</b>	Read pgs. 462-496
<b>13</b>	T, Nov. 22	<b>Poetry and Psychoanalysis</b>	<b>Read:</b> "Poetry and Psychoanalysis," Adam Philips (handout)
	Th, Nov. 24	<b>No Class Happy Thanksgiving!</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs 265-286
<b>14</b>	T, Nov. 29	<b>Open Form</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs 265-286
	Th, Dec. 1	<b>A Critical Case Study of T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"</b>	<b>Read:</b> "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": 446-450
<b>15</b>	T, Dec. 6	<b>Prufrock continued</b>	<b>Read:</b> pgs. 443-461
	Th, Dec. 8	<b>About essay exams / Review</b>	<b>Read:</b> "Writing about Poetry," 57-64
<b>16</b>	Finals Week	<b>Write the date and time of the final exam below:</b>	

**Reading Poetry Grade Sheet**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment	Grade	X Percentage of Final Grade	Total
Daily Quizzes		x 10%	
First Exam		x 25%	
Second Exam		x 25%	
Sonnet		x 15%	
Villanelle		x 15%	
Dramatic Reading		x 5%	
Found Poem		x 5%	

Quiz #	Points Earned
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	

Total: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: By submitting the form below, you are indicating that you have received, printed, and read the course syllabus and calendar.

Please Write Legibly

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Hobbies: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have a favorite poet or poem? More than one? If so, what are they?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please sign and date this document below:

\_\_\_\_\_