

Fall/Winter 2020-2021

AP/EN 2100 6.0A (Y)	Introduction to Poetry
Course Director:	Prof. Lesley Higgins Atkinson 544 Ext. 22344 e-mail: 19higgins55@gmail.com Zoom “office” time: Wednesdays, 1 to 2:30 pm
Time:	Lectures will be posted on Monday each week; there will be weekly voluntary discussion groups with the instructor on Wednesday afternoons.
Delivery Format:	Remote – (asynchronous delivery) – There is no set course meeting time. Students may engage with course content/materials 24/7.
Description:	<p>From “one fish, two fish” to the latest hit song that you <i>can’t</i> get out of your mind, poetry is words in action, words that go beyond the printed text. Poems sing on the page; they storm; they sigh; they provoke. Poems can move us to tears, to laughter, and to protest. They demand aesthetic but also ethical engagement. Developing students’ ability to read poetry with discernment and pleasure, and to understand the cultural and historical possibilities of poetry, are the main goals of the course. Students will encounter a broad range of texts from different time periods, focusing on generic and thematic connections. We will concentrate on poetry as a social discourse—as cultural practice rather than the personal expression of the author.</p> <p>Among the questions we will address throughout the year: what makes poetry <i>poetry</i>? How do the poem’s genre, form, and structure contribute to or determine how we understand the work’s content? Why has poetry emerged as such an important mode of artistic expression? How can a poem be “a field of action”? How can Percy Bysshe Shelley declare that poets are the “unacknowledged legislators of the world” (<i>Defense of Poetry</i>) but W. H. Auden regretfully state that “poetry makes nothing happen” (“In Memory of W. B. Yeats”)?</p> <p>The course is informed by two basic learning objectives: developing students’ close reading skills based on the technical/formal fundamentals of poetry, and refining students’ writing skills.</p> <p>How will the course be taught? Due to COVID-19 precautions, the core of the course will be pre-recorded (asynchronous) 80-minute weekly lectures (with PowerPoint illustrations). The lectures will provide most of the theoretical, contextual, and historical materials, as well as close reading guides. Instead of attending a weekly tutorial, students</p>

	<p>will be responsible for writing 15 short (250 word) responses during the year, and will be welcome to participate in a live, 60-minute discussion group focusing on the week's assigned texts. Given the exceptional circumstances this year, we will need to be very organized. Students should know in advance that late assignments, whether the essays or the responses, will not be accepted.</p> <p>Instructional priorities The course will focus on a broad range of poetic genres and forms from various historical periods and cultures. Our specific priorities and objectives include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understanding the basic formal elements of poetry (rhythm, meter, rhyme, lineation, alliteration, etc.) and how they shape the way in which the poem makes meaning; • appreciating the different ways in which poets view and seek to explain the world; • developing a knowledge of the different forms, styles, and techniques of poetry written in English; • learning how to enjoy poetry; and • refining students' critical, verbal, and writing skills.
Category:	B
Historical Requirement:	N/A
Requirements:	Fall term: 7 short responses, 250 words each (7%); 1 close reading exercise, 600 words (10%); 1 essay, 1500 words (20%); mid-year test (20%). Winter term: 8 short responses, 250 words each (8%); 1 critical reading exercise, 600 words (10%); 1 essay, 2000 words (25%).
Reading List:	<i>Beowulf</i> , trans. Seamus Heaney (Norton critical edition); Langston Hughes, <i>Selected Poems</i> (Vintage); <i>Norton Anthology of Poetry</i> (6th ed.), ed. Ferguson, Salter, and Stallworthy (Norton, 2005). Other texts will be posted on the course Moodle site.
Open To:	Year 2, 3