

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

ENGLISH 116W: FALL 2012

INSTRUCTOR: Dr. Sarah E. Kersh

TIMES: ENGL 116-08 TR 9:35-10:50 Calhoun 320
ENGL 116-09 TR 2:35-3:50 Calhoun 219
ENGL 116-10 TR 4:00-5:15 Calhoun 117

EMAIL: sarah.kersh@vanderbilt.edu

OFFICE: Benson 421

OFFICE HOURS: Tues & Thurs 1:00-2:30 and by appointment

REQUIRED TEXTS

Available in the Bookstore or online:

- *Poetic Designs: an Introduction to Meters, Verse Forms, and Figures of Speech* by Stephen Adams
ISBN: 1551111292
- *How to be an Explore of the World: A Portable Life Museum* by Keri Smith
ISBN: 9780399534607

Other required texts which I will provide either in class, online, or on reserve:

- Assorted poems, articles, and essays
- Selections from *Writing Analytically* by Jill Stephen and David Rosenwasser

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

English 116 ***requires extensive reading and writing.*** Poetry is a particularly rich and rewarding genre; it is also frequently a difficult one. Over the course of the semester our objectives are to strengthen your critical thinking, reading, and writing skills. Our focus will be on the analysis, appreciation, and craft of poetry through the study of a variety of poetic forms. While our focus will be on poems in English, we will read poems from a wide range of periods, places, and genres. Utilizing a number of learning strategies we will develop a vocabulary for the understanding of poetry and effective tools for the verbal and written analysis of it. To succeed in this course, students must be willing to think openly about how they interact with language and the world around them, as well as seriously pursue the questions: What is poetry? Where do we find poetry? And why should we study poetry at all?

GRADING DISTRIBUTION:

Participation and Presentation	15%
Short Assignments and Portfolio	20%
Paper #1	15%
Paper #2	25%
Paper #3	25%

“How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” – E.M. Forster

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

ATTENDANCE:

This class is a workshop/seminar and therefore depends on the participation of its members. Failure to attend undermines the class as a whole. Attendance, therefore, will be a substantial part of your participation grade. You may miss *up to two* class periods without penalty. Save these misses for when you really need them (e.g. illness or family emergency). If you miss the class for any reason, you are responsible for what went on in the class, including changes of assignments. I will not answer emails asking me to describe what went on in class. You are responsible for contacting one of your classmates to find out what went on, including changes of any assignments. **If you miss more than three classes, for whatever reason, your overall course grade will decrease by ten percent per missed class. If you miss six or more classes, you will automatically fail the course.** If you have a school sanctioned absence (for sickness or special academic opportunities), please contact me as soon as possible.

PEER REVIEW AND CONFERENCES:

Students will meet with me twice during the semester to discuss writing. Failure to meet with me **counts as one absence**. Students will also participate in Peer Review in class. **You must have peer reviews to receive full credit for your final paper.** Further details TBA.

LATENESS, CELL PHONES, AND OTHER DISRUPTIONS:

Please make an effort to be on time. Class begins promptly and if you are more than ten minutes late, I will record you as absent. If you have a reason that may cause you to be late from time to time, please let me know. Please remember to turn OFF all cell phones unless otherwise directed. If you are a student athlete or member of a student group which requires you to miss class for a university-sanctioned event, please let me know as soon as possible.

ELECTRONICS:

Since thoughtful listening and responding will be instrumental to the success of our course, I prefer students not rely on electronic instruments in class. **In other words, I do not like for students to use laptops for general note taking in class.** If we do in-class writing assignments you may use a laptop. (For these assignments, I will give advance notice.) If this presents a problem, please see me.

IN-CLASS WRITING, SHORT WRITING ASSIGNMENTS, & WRITING REFLECTION:

There will be a number of 1-2 page (250-500 words, double-spaced) in-class writings and weekly reading responses. These should follow the prompt given and are due **in class**. I'll collect, read these, and briefly respond to them. These are a way for you to show me you are actively engaging with the texts as well as give me a way to give you feedback on your writing and analytic skills. Your responses will also serve as a basis for our class discussion and often the basis for your papers. If you're having trouble participating in class discussion, this is a way to work out your thoughts on paper so that you can jump into the conversation.

Writing is a process and not an end product. At the end of the semester, you will hand in a written reflection about your writing throughout the course of the semester, so make sure to keep all returned in-class writings and short assignments as well as formal papers.

CLASS PARTICIPATION:

Class participation is a mandatory part of this course. I expect all students to be prepared for class. Please make sure you have the text we are discussing with you as well as whatever you need to take good notes. It is your responsibility to have the reading completed and be ready to discuss it. Remember, reading is not a passive activity. I suggest you take reading notes. **If you are not ready to speak, listen, and discuss when you come to class on any given day, then you are not prepared for class.** The success of the class depends on the enthusiastic participation of each and every member. Your contributions—based on your unique viewpoints and experiences—make a vast difference in the way we all come to understand issues and texts. *Coming to class regularly, in and of itself, will earn only a C at best.*

PRESENTATIONS:

All students will present at least once during the semester. Further details TBA.

DEADLINES:

Papers must be handed **in class on the day that they are due.** Unless you have asked for and received prior permission to extend the deadline or you have a signed medical excuse, late papers will lose one grade increment per day late. I cannot accept assignments more than one week late.

PAPER REQUIREMENTS:

Papers should be word-processed (i.e. not handwritten) in 12 point, Times New Roman font with one inch margins. Please use the MLA guidelines for in text citations and works cited. I don't expect you to draw on secondary sources for most assignments, but if you do, they must be cited. We will go over citation guidelines in class, but also know the web has many resources such as Vanderbilt's Writing Studio Website: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/resources/style%20&%20citation.php>

PLAGIARISM:

Presenting someone else's work as your own, not citing sources of information and ideas that you use in your papers, is plagiarizing, and plagiarized papers automatically fail. *Even when you use your own wording for someone else's ideas (e.g. a paraphrase or summary), you need to cite the source.* Always acknowledge your source for any idea that is not your own. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, consult your student handbook or ask me.

http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/the-honor-system

THE WRITING STUDIO:

For extra help with your writing, consider visiting the Writing Studio in room 007 of Calhoun Hall or in the Commons. The studio can help you improve your work at any stage in the writing process. Call 615-343-2225, stop by, or fill out an online form to schedule a half-hour long, one-on-one appointment. I **strongly** encourage everyone to do this at least once during the semester.

For times and more information, see their website at: <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/writing/index.php>

GRADE CALCULATIONS:

I use an excel worksheet to calculate my grades. If you would like to discuss graded work, please take at least two days to review my comments, along with the grading criteria for the assignment. While I don't negotiate grades, I am happy to discuss strategies for improving your writing.

EXTRA CREDIT:

If you attend any Vanderbilt University workshop or lecture and write a 1-2 page reflection stating what the event was, how it related to this class and what was interesting about it for you, I will award 1 point extra

credit. You may complete up to 5 extra credit reflections. I will reject any reflection I feel is insufficient or unsuitable. ****It is STRONGLY encouraged that you attend one poetry reading this semester****

OTHER NEEDS AND A NOTE ON COMMUNITY:

If you have a concern or issue regarding this class, your ability to participate in it or the material we are covering, please stop by my office hours or email me to set up an appointment. The sooner we can talk about your concerns, the better I will be able to help you negotiate a solution. I am committed to providing equal educational opportunity to all students.

All members of the Vanderbilt community have the responsibility to demonstrate basic respect for all individuals. We communicate this respect in all aspects of behavior, including our expressed ideas, our associations with others in social groups and organizations, and our interactions with others in the classroom environment. We aim to increase contact with and understanding of individuals who are different from ourselves, and we seek out exposure to ideas that challenge our preconceptions.

You as members of the Vanderbilt University community have a responsibility to promote and a right to expect scholarship, honesty, civility, accountability, caring, discovery, and celebration as described in the Vanderbilt Community Creed. See: http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/

CLASS CONTACTS:

If you miss class for ANY reason it is YOUR responsibility to contact another member of the class to see what you may have missed. Please make sure you have at least three contacts:

1. name: _____ cell: _____

2. name: _____ cell: _____

3. name: _____ cell: _____

NOTE: The policies, procedures, schedules, and requirements in this syllabus are subject to change—should any occur I will make every effort to give you plenty of notice.

Course Calendar: Introduction to Poetry

SPECIAL ACCOMMODATIONS

Please know that I am fully committed to insuring a productive educational environment for all students. If you have any physical or learning needs that may affect your work in this or any class, please let me know and contact the Opportunity Development Center (322-4705) as soon as possible so that we can discuss appropriate accommodations.

		Topics for Class Discussion	Reading & Writing Due IN CLASS
WEEK 1			
Aug. 23	Thurs.	Introduction to Course	
WEEK 2			
Aug. 28	Tues.	Syllabus and Expectations Introduction to Close Reading	Writer's Memo <i>Read:</i> - Elizabeth Bishop 's "One Art" (handout)
Aug. 30	Thurs.	What is poetry? What is Close Reading? In-class Close Reading Exercise	<i>Read:</i> - Smith pp 2-17 (*esp. p7) - excerpt from <i>Sound and Sense</i> (handout) - Online article from <i>Utne Reader</i> : http://www.utne.com/1999-05-01/how-to-read-a-poem.aspx
WEEK 3			
Sept. 4	Tues.	Stanza and Form: the sonnet and other forms	<i>Read:</i> - Adams pp71-76, 88-92 - Smith pp18-29 <i>Prepare:</i> a list of words from Adams that we need to define; Complete activity on Smith p29
Sept. 6	Thurs.	Stanza and Form	Reaction Paper Due: 1 page Close Reading of a poem from below <i>Read:</i> -Sonnet handout Parts I & II Poems Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ John Keats, "On the Sonnet" ▪ Petrarch, "Qual Donna Attende A Gloriosa Fama" ▪ William Wordsworth, "Nuns Fret Not..." ▪ Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Sonnet 43" ▪ Alicia Ostriker, "Sonnet. to Tell the Truth" ▪ Moirá Egan, "Bar Napkin Sonnet #11" ▪ Marilyn Hacker, "Lacoste IV" & "Runaways Café I"
WEEK 4			
Sept. 11	Tues.	Sonnets	<i>Read:</i> - Mary Oliver 's <i>A Poetry Handbook</i> (handout) -Sonnet handout Part III Poems Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ William Shakespeare, "My mistress' eyes..." and "When I consider every thing..." ▪ Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias" ▪ Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Only until this cigarette is ended"
Sept. 13*	Thurs.	Come prepared to talk about any of the sonnets we have read but not yet discussed	Reaction Paper Due: Compose your own Sonnet about Space (feel free to use an exercise from Smith to help you begin to write. Try: 64-65, 70-71, 140-141) <i>Read:</i> - excerpt from <i>Head Off and Split</i> by Nikky Finney (handout) (poet reading on campus <u>tonight @7:00</u>)
WEEK 5			
Sept. 18	Tues.	Lyric Poems	<i>Read:</i> - Lyric Poems Handout I - Adams pp131-147 Poems Include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott"

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill, “Daphne and Apollo,” Persephone Suffering from SAD” ▪ Jennifer Grotz, selections from <i>The Needle</i> (poet reading on campus 9/20 @ 7:00)
Sept. 20*	Thurs.	In-Class Peer Review: bring 2 copies of your rough draft to class.	Essay #1 Draft Due: 3 page reading of your own sonnet and connection to the sonnets we have read (feel free to revise the sonnet to hand in with the paper)
WEEK 6			
Sept. 25	Tues.	Poetic Structure and Free Verse	<p><i>Read:</i> -Lyric & Free Verse Poems Handout II -Smith pp 132</p> <p>Poems Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natasha Trethewey, “ Letter Home,” “Providence” ▪ William Carlos Williams, “This is Just to Say,” “so much depends” ▪ Marge Piercy, “What’s that smell in the kitchen?” ▪ Walt Whitman, “Whoever you are holding me now in hand,” “O Captain! My Captain!” ▪ Adrienne Rich, “Diving into the Wreck,” “Cartographies of Silence,” “Peeling Onions” ▪ Carl Sandburg, “Chicago,” “Masses,” “The Harbor”
Sept. 27	Thurs.	Free Verse and Sound (Please bring Smith book to class)	Essay #1 Due
WEEK 7			
Oct. 2	Tues.	NO CLASS	(I’m away at a conference)
Oct. 4	Thurs.	NO CLASS	Fall Break
WEEK 8			
Oct. 9	Tues.		<p><i>Read:</i> - Fall Break poems (handout)</p> <p>Poems Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), “Sheltered Garden,” “Sea Gods,” “Oread” ▪ Wallace Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” ▪ Allen Ginsberg, “A Supermarket in California” ▪ Philip Levine, “You Can Have It” ▪ Derek Walcott, “Midsummer” ▪ Sylvia Plath, “Tulips” ▪ Yusef Komunyakaa, “Facing It” ▪ Audre Lorde, “Coal,” “From the House of Yemanjá” ▪ Louise Erdrich, “I Was Sleeping Where the Black Oaks Move” ▪ Nikky Finney, “Left”
Oct. 11	Thurs.	NO CLASS	
WEEK 9			
Oct. 16	Tues.		<p>Reaction Paper Due: one page Short Close Reading (see prompt on Fall Break Poems)</p> <p><i>Read :</i> - Adams pp 149-152 “Form in Free Verse” and handout:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Walt Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” ▪ Billy Collins “The Biography of a Cloud,” “Consolation,” “Directions”
Oct. 18	Thurs.	NO CLASS	Required Individual Conferences: <i>Bring ideas about paper #2 or a draft as well as questions about paper #1</i>

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WEEK 10			
Oct. 23	Tues.		<p><i>Read:</i> - Travel & Nature Poems by Robert Wrigley and Mary Oliver (handout)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Smith pp 148-149 - Adams pp 1-10 “Meter and Rhythm” (as review) <p>(Wrigley reading 10/25 @7:00)</p>
Oct. 25*	Thurs.	In-class Peer Review	<p>Essay #2 Draft Due: choose a poem from class to close read. This paper will be 5-7 pages in length and should offer an argument about the poem supported by evidence from the text.</p> <p>**bring 2 copies of your draft to share with group members**</p>
WEEK 11			
Oct. 30	Tues.		<p><i>Read:</i> - Smith pp 118-119, 141</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confessional Poems and Identity (handout) includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elizabeth Bishop, “The Moose,” “Sestina,” ▪ Gwendolyn Brooks, “kitchenette building,” “the birth in a narrow room” ▪ Philip Larkin, “Talking in Bed,” “This Be The Verse” ▪ Theodore Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz” ▪ E.E. Cummings, “since feeling is first,” “anyone lived in a pretty how town” ▪ Sharon Olds, “I Go Back to May 1937” ▪ Adam Zagajewski selections from <i>Unseen Hand</i> (Zagajewski reading 11/1 @ 7:00)
Nov. 1*	Thurs.	(bring Smith to class with you)	Essay #2 Due
WEEK 12			
Nov. 6	Tues.	Pushing the Genre of Poetry	<p><i>Read:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adams pp188-198 “The Margins of Genre” - Other Poetic Forms (handout) includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Robert Herrick, “The Pillar of Fame” ▪ George Herbert, “The Altar,” “Easter Wings” ▪ Thomas Hardy, “The Convergence of the Twain” ▪ Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Pied Beauty,” “As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Dragonflies Draw Flame” ▪ Langston Hughes, “The Weary Blues,” “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” ▪ May Swenson, “Cardinal Ideograms” ▪ John Hollander, “Swan and Shadow” ▪ Derek Mahon, “The Window” ▪ Alfred Corn, “A Conch from Sicily”
Nov. 8	Thurs.		<p>Reaction Paper: compose a poem of your own based on a poem we have read in class (details TBA)</p> <p>Read/ Watch Spoken Word Poets (links to YouTube):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anis Mojgani, “Shake the Dust” ▪ Shane Koyczan, “This is My Voice” ▪ Alix Olson, “Subtle Sister” (mp3 on OAK) <p>Plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Paul Muldoon, “As” ▪ Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” ▪ Anthony Hecht, “The Book of Yolek”
WEEK 13			
Nov. 13	Tues.	Poetry and the Modern Lyric	<p>Come prepared to talk about the lyrics from a song of your choice. Please bring 2 copies of the lyrics with you to class</p>

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			<i>Read:</i> -Adams pp105-131 “Figures of Speech” (the schemes #1-5)
Nov. 15	Thurs.		Reaction Paper Due: one page close reading of a song of your choice. You must identify and talk about one figure of speech mentioned in the Adams reading from 11/13 (please include a copy of the lyrics with your paper)
Nov. 20/22	Tues./ Thurs.	NO CLASS	Thanksgiving
WEEK 14			
Nov. 27	Tues.	Poets on Poetry	<i>Read:</i> - Poets on Poetry (handout) includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adrienne Rich’s essay “Poetry and the Public Sphere” ▪ Seamus Heaney, “Digging” ▪ Emily Dickinson, “There is no Frigate like a Book” - Also read selections from Chase Twichell’s “Horses Where the Answers Should Have Been” and find one poem that is about writing poetry (Twichell reading 11/29 @ 7:00)
Nov. 29*	Thurs.	NO CLASS	Required Individual Conferences
WEEK 15			
Dec. 4	Tues.	<i>In-Class Peer Review</i>	Essay #3 Draft Due: see prompt **bring 2 copies of your draft to share with group members**
Dec. 6	Thurs.	Concluding remarks	
Dec. 10	Mon.	Essay #3 Due	

* Vanderbilt’s Visiting Writers Series Reading. All readings at 7:00PM in Buttrick 101. See OAK for details.

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