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English 213-001: Poetry
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English 213: Poetry

“I write entirely to find out what I’m thinking, what I’m looking at, what I see and what it means. What I want and what I fear.”

~Joan Didion

“One should write with a kind of meticulous abandon.” ~Charles Wright

Course Description

English 2013 is an introduction to the pleasures and challenges of reading and writing poetry, with a focus on modern and contemporary poetry. The class depends on the workshop model—the understanding that we are all craftspeople working side-by-side to hone our skills by studying the poems of more accomplished writers, developing a vocabulary with which to talk about those poems, identifying our own material for poetry, and sharing and critiquing each other’s work with generosity and vigor.

Course Goals

- Participate in a community of writers and readers through workshops and conscientious completion of all reading and writing assignments
- Employ critical writing, thinking and reading processes in responding to the work of professional authors and other writers
- Develop a process for writing poetry
- Acquire and use vocabulary to express formal and thematic aspects of poetry
- Revise poems based on workshop feedback
- Gather revised work in a coherent final portfolio
- Develop a sense of writing as a way to understand the world around us
- Consider and express the connections between writing and the other arts
- Evaluate your own work by identifying weaknesses and acknowledging and building on strengths

Evaluation

We will spend a lot of our time discussing poetry from our texts in class, and you will be doing a wide variety of writing exercises (individually and as a class) that will help you generate material for your poems, help you learn about the craft of poetry broadly, and the unique styles of individual poets—not to mention your own writing process. You will be writing approximately 4 essays (some quite short, others a bit longer) throughout the semester that ask you to write critically about poetry from a poet’s perspective. You will be responsible for turning assignments in on time, bringing multiple copies of your poems for workshop days, and for reading and responding to your classmates’ work both verbally and in writing. Finally, our course goals not only include writing poems, but how to return to those poems in revision. It is this revision + original drafts of poems along with a final essay about your work that will comprise your final portfolio project. **Please save everything—especially original copies of poems (don’t save**

over them in revision in MS Word) and poems with my comments and your peers' comments. You will need these.

Remember: creative writing is an academic discipline. That means this course and its grading policies are rigorous.

Required Texts & Materials

Koch, Kenneth. *Sleeping on the Wing*
Addonizio, Kim. *The Poet's Companion*
Hass, Robert. *Now & Then*

- In addition to these three required texts, you will also need to access your MIX account and the class WVU eCampus page **regularly** (ecampus.wvu.edu).
- You should familiarize yourself with Poets.org and Poetryfoundation.org
- You will need to purchase a 2-pocket folder or manila envelope for submitting work and for portfolio review

Attendance

I take attendance seriously, and so should you. This class is, I assume, something you're choosing to take, so attendance shouldn't really be an issue. The attendance policy is as follows: **You are allowed—but not entitled to—3 absences without them affecting your final grade; each absence thereafter will lower your final grade by up to one full letter, and by 6 absences, you will fail the course; no exceptions. Failure to complete workshop responses (even if you attend the class meeting), or coming to class unprepared in general may result in an absence.**

Lateness:

Our class meets for just 50 minutes, so coming on time is crucial. Consistent lateness hurts your participation grade, and in severe cases will count as an additional absence. **If you're 15 minutes late, you will be counted absent.** If the PRT is completely down (to the point that many WVU students are affected) I will make an exception. **If you miss the sign-in sheet, it is your responsibility to check in with me after class or you will be counted absent.**

Participation

Participation is a fairly easy way to improve and/or bring up your grade. Getting an A in participation requires coming to class on time, being prepared for class, taking an active part in class activities and peer review, contributing to class discussions, and observing basic classroom politeness. **You should contribute verbally at least once in every class.** *Basic* politeness includes respect of other students, and it includes putting your cell phone and iPod/iPad/laptop away before class begins (if you're late for class, put them away before opening the door). **As a side note: I understand that we are adults and all have emergencies. If you are anticipating a phone call and need to step out of class, please let me know in advance, if possible. If you use your phone to help you take notes on homework, please let me know in advance.**

Late Work

I will not accept late homework. Late homework leads to stress for both me and for you, since you really need to move on to the next assignment. I will drop your lowest grade, so you can miss one without penalty. Because I know things happen—PRT, printers breaking, etc.—I will count major assignments as on time if you put it in my mailbox in Colson by 4 pm the day it is due. **If you need to put a paper in my box, no big deal—just come to class without the paper so you don't get behind.**

Pop Quizzes

Much of our class periods will rely on meaningful discussions. I reserve the right to give you a pop quiz at any time and on any day, but I have been known to do this when: I feel that you are perhaps slacking in the reading, or when I want to test your reading comprehension in a specific way. That being said, **you have the power** to limit pop quizzes by aiding lively, meaningful class discussions.

Class Courtesy

Cell phones and other electronic devices may never be used during class time; (the only exception: I may, on occasion, allow you to bring your laptop to class for a specific activity). A first offense will be met with 0 participation. A second offense will result in an absence. Continual violation of the cell phone policy will result in additional absences. If you have an emergency, please, always speak to me before or after class. We all know that life gets messy at times.

Social Justice

WVU is committed to social justice, as am I. Everyone's voice counts. Our classroom will be a space where mutual respect is fostered, and discrimination is not tolerated.

Using Mix and e-Campus and Contacting Me

As an adult college student, you are responsible for checking your email regularly. I often send out reminders and/or updates via email, or let you know of a cancelation. However, **no assignments will be accepted via email**. I must receive a hard copy of each piece of your writing, or it must be turned in on eCampus as specified.

I will use eCampus for posting supplementary handouts from time to time. More on that later. You can also choose to use the eCampus "My Files" tab to store your work as backup. Files saved to this section of eCampus are only viewable by you and accessible on any computer when you visit eCampus.

Email is the best way to communicate with me. If you choose to call my office phone, please note that the best time to call me is during my office hours. You should also feel free to stop by my office hours, or make an appointment to see me in my office.

Academic Dishonesty

Don't plagiarize. This class, above all, should be fun, a time of discovery for you. You will learn nothing and only make your life and mine seriously messy by cheating and/or passing off someone else's work as your own. WVU takes plagiarism extremely seriously, and it can result in an "Unforgiveable F."

Disability Accommodations

If you have any documented learning disability, hearing or vision problems, or any other special needs that might affect your performance or participation, please let me know immediately. Also, please be aware of the support services available through Disability Services. If you have further questions, ask me as soon as possible or contact:

West Virginia University Office of Disability Services
G-30 Mountainlair
Phone: (304) 293-6700
Email: access2@mail.wvu.edu

Carruth Center

If you ever find yourself overwhelmed by work—or life in general—I strongly encourage you to seek professional help at WVU’s Carruth Center (304-293-4431). Figuring out how to write is good; figuring out how to live is better.

Spring Readings Sponsored by the Creative Writing Department at WVU (Your attendance is strongly encouraged, and may even be required at least once this semester):

- **Monday, January 28** Mark Brazaitis/Amanda Cobb Location and time: Gold Ballroom-Mountainlair, 7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, Feb. 12** Appalachian Prison Book Project benefit reading with Jim Harms, Katie Fallon, Tony Christini, and more! Location and time: Colson Hall room 130, 7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, Feb. 26** Kevin Oderman/Jessie Van Eerden. Location and time: Robinson Reading Room (downtown library), 7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 5th** Valerie Boyd Location and time: Robinson Reading Room (downtown library), 7:30 p.m.
- **Wednesday, March 20** Mary Ann Samyn Location and time: Colson Hall room 130, 7:30 p.m.

Schedule of Work:*

*Subject to change based on our progress and needs as a class. Changes will be announced in class or via email.

****Readings especially are subject to adjustment on a weekly basis**

Text abbreviations: SOW = Sleeping on the Wing; N&T = Now & Then; PC = the Poet’s Companion

WEEK ONE

Monday, 1/14: Course introduction and getting to know each other. Freewriting exercise.

HW: Read SOW introduction (3-23), Whitman (25-38) and do the Whitman exercise (38), typed up for turning in on Wed.

Wednesday, 1/16: Reading discussion; share exercise poems

HW: Read Dickinson (SOW 39-46) and do the Dickinson exercise (46), typed up for turning in on Friday.

Friday, 1/18: Reading discussion: Father and Mother of modern American poetry; share exercise poems. Introduce list of poetic terms to study for next week’s quiz

HW: Study poetic terms using the Poetry Foundation:

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-terms?> Read Hopkins (SOW 47-57) and complete the Hopkins exercise (56-7), typed and ready to turn in on **Wednesday**.

WEEK TWO

Monday, 1/21 MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY. NO CLASS!

HW: No extra homework; just see Friday's homework

Wednesday, 1/23: **ESSENTIAL POETIC TERMS QUIZ: 30 QUESTIONS.** Reading/Hopkins exercise discussion.

HW: Read Yeats (SOW 71-81) and do the Yeat's exercise (80-1), typed and ready to turn in on Friday. Read introduction to PC (11-13) and "Writing and Knowing" (19-29)

Friday, 1/25: Reading discussion. In-class writing—generating "essential material."

HW: Read PC "The Family: Inspiration and Obstacle" (30-38) and "Writer's Block" (199-203); complete Poem #1 for workshop on Monday (**remember to bring copies!**)

WEEK THREE

Monday, 1/28: Workshop of Poem #1. Announce Mark Brazaitus/Amanda Cobb reading tonight!

HW: Read and comment on workshop poems

Wednesday, 1/30: Continue workshop of Poem #1

HW: Continue to read and comment on workshop poems. Also read excerpt from Ann Lamott's *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (handout or eCampus)

Friday, 2/1: Wrap up workshop. Discuss Lamott. In-class writing.

HW: Read Rilke (SOW 99-106) and Apollinaire (SOW 123-136) and do one writing exercise (Rilke or Apollinaire—your choice), typed and ready to turn in Monday.

WEEK FOUR

Monday, 2/4: Reading discussion; discuss writing exercises—why you chose as you did. International poets; poets in translation.

HW: Read PC 39-45 "Death and Grief," and choose one of the exercises to complete, typed and bring to class Wed. Read PC 46-55 "Writing the Erotic."

Wednesday, 2/6: Reading discussion and in-class writing. Sharon Olds

HW: Read Stevens (SOW 107-122) and Williams (SOW 137-149) and do both writing exercises (120-22, 148-9), type up and bring to class Friday

Friday, 2/8: Reading/writing discussion

HW: Read Pound (SOW 160-168) and Eliot (SOW 169-180) and do the Pound exercise (167-8), typed and ready to turn in Monday

WEEK FIVE

Monday, 2/11: Discuss all our poets to this point. In-class writing. Announce Appalachian Prison Book Project benefit reading with Jim Harms, et. al, scheduled for Tuesday.

HW: Read PC “The Shadow” (56-63) and “Witnessing” (64-73) and choose one exercise from each chapter to complete. Type and prepare to turn in Wednesday.

Wednesday, 2/13: Reading and writing discussion. In-class writing.

HW: Read Lorca (SOW 203-213) and Auden (SOW 214-225) and do one of the Auden exercises (223-24), typed and ready to turn in Friday.

Friday, 2/15: In-class writing. Group work. Some discussion. Introduce Poem #2

HW: Read PC “Poetry of Place” (74-81) and complete Poem #2 for workshop (**remember to bring copies!**)

WEEK SIX

Monday, 2/18: Workshop of Poem #2

HW: Comment on workshop poems

Wednesday, 2/20: Continue workshop of Poem #2

HW: Continue reading/commenting on poems as needed. Further reading TBD

Friday, 2/22: Wrap up workshop. Introduce Short Critical Assignment #1 (taken from the N&T book, or too soon?)

HW: Complete Short Critical Assignment #1, typed and ready to turn in Monday. Read PC “Images” (85-93) and “Simile and Metaphor” (94-103)

WEEK SEVEN

Monday, 2/25: In-class writing; group work; reading discussion. Announce Kevin Oderman/Jessie Van Eerden reading tomorrow evening

HW: Read “A Note to Readers” (N&T xi-xv) as well as “Gerard Manley Hopkins” (146-148) and “A Poem for the End of a Thousand Years: W.H. Auden” (120-122) and “Rainer Maria Rilke Translated by...” (N&T 224-227).

Wednesday, 2/27: Picking up the thread of earlier poets; poetry as a conversation; learning to write *about* poetry

HW: Read “Wallace Stevens” (245-250), “Wallace Stevens and Joni Mitchell” (3-6) and “Audubon’s Birthday...” (47-49).

Friday, 3/1 (MID-SEMESTER POINT): Poets in time, poets in theme, poets in season. In-class reflective writing. Assign Short Critical Assignment #2

HW: Complete Short Critical Assignment #2

WEEK EIGHT

Monday, 3/4: Personal Writing Day: No regular class!

HW: Read PC “The Music of the Line” (104-114) and complete exercise #2. Be ready to talk about the results in class Wed.

Wednesday, 3/6: Exercise #2, PC 113; reading discussion.

HW Read “Voice and Style” (PC 115-128) and complete exercise #1 and #2, type and bring to class on Friday

Friday, 3/8: Share exercise poems; reading discussion and in-class writing. Assign Poem #3

HW: Complete Poem #3 and make copies for workshop on Monday!

WEEK NINE

Monday, 3/11: Workshop of Poem #3.

HW: Read and comment on workshop poems

Wednesday, 3/13: Workshop of Poem #3 continued

HW: Read and comment on workshop poems as needed. Further reading TBD

Friday, 3/15: Wrap up workshop of Poem #3

HW: Read Ginsberg (SOW 225-238) and complete the writing exercise 237-8), typed and ready to turn in Monday. Read “A Question of Decency: Walt Whitman” (N&T 24-26).

WEEK TEN

Monday, 3/18: Whitman/Ginsberg: a comparison. Reading discussion and sharing writing exercises

HW: Read O'Hara (SOW 239-253) and PC "Stop Making Sense: Dreams and Experiments" (129-137) and do the O'Hara exercise (SOW 251-53), typed and ready to turn in on Wed.

Wednesday, 3/20: Reading discussion. Exquisite corpse class writing exercise. Announce Mary Ann Samyn reading tonight.

HW: Read Ashbery (SOW 254-267) and do the Ashbery exercise (265-7), typed and ready to turn in Friday; also read N&T "John Ashbery" (97-99)

Friday, 3/22: Reading discussion. Assign Poem #4

HW: Complete Poem #4 for workshop after the break. Remember copies!

WEEK ELEVEN: Monday, 3/25-Friday, 3/29 SPRING BREAK!!!!!!!!!!!!

WEEK TWELVE

Monday, 4/1: Workshop of Poem #4

HW: Read and comment on workshop poems

Wednesday, 4/3: Continue workshop of Poem #4

HW: Continue reading/commenting on workshop poems as necessary. Further reading TBD

Friday, 4/5: Wrap up workshop of Poem #4. Assign Short Critical writing assignment #3

HW: Complete Short Critical assignment #3 in conjunction with the Hass book (N&T)

WEEK THIRTEEN

Monday, 4/8: Catch-up day. Spring poems: in class reading and writing. Assign reading exercise from N&T

HW: Complete reading assignment (TBD) from N&T

Wednesday, 4/10: Reading discussion; in-class writing. Focus on theme(s). Create self-assignment.

HW: Complete self-assignment and reflection. Read "Self-Doubt" (PC 195-198).

Friday, 4/12: Writing/nature excursion and assignment discussion. Introduce reading exercise in N&T: Poets in translation

HW: Read Poets in translation and complete short reflection

WEEK FOURTEEN

Monday, 4/15: Reading discussion; in-class writing. Introduce Critical Introduction to final portfolio

HW: Read “Meter, Rhyme, and Form” (PC 138-150) and complete exercise #1 (148-49)

Monday, 4/17: Small group, in-class writing exercises based on reading.

HW: Read “Repetition, Rhythm, and Blues” (PC 151-160) and complete exercise #5 (160), typed and ready to bring to class Friday. Also read “Richard Wright and Langston Hughes” (N&T 152-154).

Friday, 4/19: Share Hughes audio. Reading discussion; share writing exercise. In-class writing. Assign Short Critical writing exercise #4.

HW: Complete Short Critical writing exercise #4 (due Monday by midnight on eCampus).

WEEK FIFTEEN

Monday, 4/22: Personal Writing and Revision day. **NO REGULAR CLASS.** Homework due on eCampus! **I will not accept this assignment if you miss the eCampus deadline. No exceptions.**

HW: Read “The Energy of Revision” (PC 186-192). Bring copies of 1-2 poems for revision work in-class.

Wednesday, 4/24: Revision: editing vs. revision. Assign critical preface to portfolio and portfolio specifics

HW: Read “A Grammatical Excursion” (PC 171-185) and complete a draft of your critical preface for class on Friday.

Friday, 4/26: Troubleshooting. Peer review/discussion of critical preface

HW: Continue to work on revisions and your critical preface

WEEK SIXTEEN (Final Week of Class!)

Monday, 4/29: OPTIONAL, DROP-IN CONFERENCES in 321 Colson Hall. NO REGULAR CLASS.

HW: Read “Writing in the Electronic Age” (PC 204-216) and “Getting Published” (PC 217-223). Bring revision work to class.

Wednesday, 5/1: Troubleshooting; reading discussion, wrapping up

HW: Complete your Final Portfolio, due in class Friday! Prepare for final class reading.

Friday, 5/3 LAST DAY OF CLASS. FINAL PORTFOLIOS DUE. CLASS READING!