

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Spring 2014
Discipline: English Literature
ENSP 1559-102: Studies in Poetry
Division: Lower
Faculty Name: John N. Serio

Pre-requisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry,” writes Emily Dickinson. As one of the most compressed art forms, poetry relies on rich and sensuous imagery to convey meaningful experiences that have the power to evoke in us both genuine feeling and deep, often philosophical, thought. As with all art, poetry provides a mechanism to explore the complexities of our own existence as well as to step outside ourselves to understand others. This is especially important in our voyage around the world, as students will be asked to utilize their imagination to relate to foreign cultures, customs, and beliefs. Students will learn the art of reading—and enjoying—poetry. They will be exposed to a rich and diverse selection from many cultures, countries, and ethnicities. As students attend to the nuances of context, tone, imagery, metaphor, symbol, form, and diction, they will expand their sensibilities and sharpen their imaginative capabilities. Through class discussion and various writing assignments, they will also improve their critical thinking and writing skills.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To teach students an appreciation of the many and lasting pleasures of poetry.

To demonstrate how poetry, in exercising the imagination, teaches readers not only to peer deeply within themselves, but also to step outside themselves to increase their awareness and understanding of others.

To introduce students to the formal elements of poetry, such as diction, imagery, tone, figurative language, symbol, rhythm, arrangement, as a means to elucidate not only the meaning of a poem but also the “how” of it, the way in which its form expresses its content.

To introduce students not only to American poets, but also to a spectrum of international voices.

To hone students’ critical thinking and analytical skills through discussion and expository writing.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia
TITLE: *An Introduction to Poetry*
PUBLISHER: Longman/Pearson
ISBN# 978-0-205-68612-4
DATE/EDITION: 2010 13th edition

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

A1- January 16:	What Is Poetry? (327–330)
A2- January 18:	Reading a Poem (5–18)
January 20-21:	<i>Hilo</i>
A3- January 22:	Listening to a Voice: Tone, Persona (19–32)
A4- January 24:	Listening to a Voice: Irony (33–47)
A5- January 28:	Words (48–71)
A6- January 30:	Saying and Suggesting (72–83)
February 1-5:	<i>Yokohama, Transit, Kobe</i>
A7- February 6:	Imagery (84–91)
February 8-13:	<i>Shanghai, Transit, Hong Kong</i>
A8- February 14:	Imagery: Haiku (91–103)
A9- February 16:	Figures of Speech: Metaphor and Simile (104–113)
February 17-22:	<i>Ho Chi Minh City</i>
A10- February 24:	Figures of Speech: Other Figures of Speech (113–123)
February 25-26:	<i>Singapore</i>
A11- February 28:	<u>Examination</u>
March 2-6:	<i>Rangoon</i>
A12- March 7:	Sound (144–162)
A13- March 10:	Rhythm (163–182)
March 11-16:	<i>Cochin</i>
A14- March 18:	Closed Form (183–192)
A15- March 21:	Closed Form (192–203)
March 23:	<i>Port Louis</i>
A16- March 24:	Open Form (204–215)
A17- March 27:	Open Form (216–225)
A18- March 29:	Symbol (226–239)
March 30-April 4:	<i>Cape Town</i>
A19- April 6:	Myth and Narrative (240–260)
A20- April 9:	Poetry and Personal Identity (261–278)
April 11-15:	<i>Tema</i>
A21- April 16	An Album of International Voices (handout)
A22- April 19:	Poetry in Spanish: Literature of Latin America (293–304)
A23- April 22:	A Day Finals
April 23-26:	<i>Casablanca</i>
April 30:	<i>Arrive in Barcelona</i>

Note: There will be several out-of-class essays, format and due dates to be announced.

FIELD WORK

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

Proposal #1 (preferred)

Cape Town: Meeting with South African Poets

We will begin our day with a visit to the University of Cape Town, where we will hear a lecture on South African writers, in general, and poets in particular. Then we will visit the NB Publishing House, the major press for South African poets and other writers, and meet with several poets who will read and discuss their work. We will explore the effects of Apartheid on their writing and the difficulties faced by poets of color to get published in South Africa. In the evening, we will attend a play by a South African author, since many of these plays utilize poetic elements. Ettie Williams, who has been instrumental in setting up South African Writers workshops in the past, has agreed to assist in making arrangements.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Since the Field Lab constitutes 20% of the coursework, students will be expected to write a critical essay on their experience. In particular, they will be asked to select a work by a poet we have met and to discuss their response to it in light of the day's experience.

Proposal #2

Cochin: *Ramayana* and Kathakali

In preparation for our visit to Cochin, we will read portions of the Hindu epic poem *Ramayana*. During a tour of the city, we will visit sites that explain and illuminate the epic poem, including a visit to the Kerala Folklore Museum. In the evening, we will attend a performance of Kathakali, a dramatic enactment of portions of the *Ramayana*. Students will learn about the years'-long training that the performers must complete and the significance of their painstakingly applied make-up. They will be introduced to the significance of subtle gestures during the performance, for even the slightest facial movement conveys meaning.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Since the Field Lab constitutes 20% of the coursework, students will be required to write a critical essay on their experience, relating what they have learned and observed during their Field Lab to their understanding of the *Ramayana*. How have the various depictions of scenes from the *Ramayana* in the Folklore Museum enhanced their understanding and interpretation of the poem? How has the dramatic performance of Kathakali brought life and new meaning to this Hindu epic?

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

- 20% Class participation/attendance (the Socratic method of teaching will be employed and students will be encouraged to volunteer their contributions to class discussion, and not simply respond when called upon)
- 30% Two in-class essays and/or examinations
- 30% Two formal critical essays
- 20% Field-Lab Assignment

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: J. D. McClatchy, Editor
TITLE: *The Vintage Book of Contemporary World Poetry*

PUBLISHER: Knopf Publishing Group
ISBN #: 9780679741152
DATE/EDITION: 1996

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

None

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

None

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."