

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS  
University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

**Voyage: Spring 2016**

**Discipline: English**

**ENGN 3559-101: Writing the World in Poetry**

**Division: Upper**

**Faculty Name: Jahan Ramazani**

**Credit Hours: 3; Contact Hours: 38**

**Pre-requisites:**

Some experience of reading modern and contemporary poetry and of writing poetry.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

In this class, we will write poems stimulated by our experience in the countries and regions we are visiting and enriched by reading contemporary poems in English tied to those places. We will begin by refreshing and deepening our knowledge of the poetry toolkit, discussing poetic forms, devices, and resources, from anaphora to zeugma. As we sail the Pacific, we will read and respond to poems by Hawaiian poets, and you will try your hand at composing a chant poem. We will follow a similar procedure as we sail to each of the rich variety of ports of call, from East Asia to West Africa. We will be attentive to the relevant world poetic forms, from Japanese haiku and tanka to South Asian ghazal to South African protest poetry. We will refine and develop our poems in workshop discussions. You will be responsible for readings on the nature of world poetic forms, as well the history of poetry in various countries. And there will also be a final exam that tests your comparative knowledge of poems and poetic forms from around the world.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To learn how to write inventive, vivid, engaging poems steeped in travel experience.

To acquaint ourselves with some of the most significant tools for writing poetry, adapting them to our own aesthetic ends.

To write poems in the various poetic forms and styles of the ports of call we are visiting.

To learn about the poetic forms and the history of poetry in the various countries on our voyage.

To explore critically and comparatively poetry from and about various parts of the world.

To deepen awareness, understanding, and appreciation of the poetry of other countries.

To sharpen skills for the close analysis of poetry—that is, how poets use the resources of poetic rhythm, rhyme, imagery, rhetoric, metaphor, form, etc., to represent themselves and the world.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

*The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (2003), vol. 2, ISBN 0-393-97792-7

All other reading will be provided in PDF.

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Ensenada- January 5

### **A1-January 7: What Is Poetry?**

Overall discussion of poetry and poetic terms

### **A2- January 9: Fundamentals of Poetry**

Jon Stallworthy, "Reading Poems," from *Modern Poems: A Norton Introduction*, xxxiii-lxiv

\*Test on reading

### **A3- January 11: Hawaiian Poetry**

Joe Balaz, Kathy Banggo, and Haunani Kay Trask, selected poems, from *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poems in English*, 6-20, 224-30

Background material on *Oli*, Hawaiian chanting, PDF from <http://apps.ksbe.edu/olelo/learning-place/performance-indicators/chant/foundational/significance-oli-chants-in-hawaiian-society>

Honolulu: January 12

\*January 13: Chant Poem Due, 5:00 pm

### **A4- January 14: Workshop Chant Poems**

### **A5- January 17: Japanese Poetry**

L. Morton, "Modern Poetry of Japan," *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, [hereafter *PEPP*], 750-54

E. Ramirez-Christensen, "Japanese Poetics," *PEPP*, 757-60

Study Day: January 19

### **A6- January 20: Haiku**

C. A. Crowley, "Haikai," *PEPP*, 592-94

J. Johnson, "Western Haiku," *PEPP*, 594-95

Poetry Foundation website examples of haiku

David Caplan, "Japanese Forms: Tanka and Haiku," in *Poetic Form: An Introduction*, 157-65

\*January 21: 2 haiku and 2 tanka due, 5:00 pm

### **A7- January 22: Workshop Haiku and Tanka**

\*January 23, 5:00 pm: Revised chant poem, 2 haiku, and 2 tanka submitted, including written comments from workshop partners

Yokohama: January 24-25

In-Transit: January 26

Kobe: January 27-28

### **A8- January 29: China and Poetry**

Ezra Pound, “In a Station of the Metro,” “The River Merchant’s Wife: A Letter,” and “Lament of the Frontier Guard,” *NAMCOP* 1, 351-53

Li-Young Lee, selected poems, *NAMCOP* 2, 1039-45

M. Yeh, “Modern Poetry of China,” and P. Rouzer, “Poetry of China,” *PEPP*, 232-35

\*January 30, 5:00 pm: Poem drawing on Chinese poetic forms and techniques due

Shanghai: January 31-February 1

In-Transit: February 2-3

Hong Kong: 4-5

### **A9- February 6: Vietnam and Poetry**

Yusef Komunyakaa, selected poems from *Dien Cai Dau*, in *NAMCOP* 2, 858-64

Q. Phu Van, “Poetry of Vietnam,” *PEPP*, 1519-21

Background information on luc bat and song that luc bat from PDF derived from The Poet’s Garrett website <http://thepoetsgarret.com/orientl.html>

\*February 7, 5:00 pm: Luc bat due

Ho Chi Minh: February 8-12

### **A10- February 13: Workshop of Chinese-Inspired Poem and Luc Bat**

\*February 14, 5:00 pm: Revised Chinese-inspired poem and luc bat submitted, including written comments from workshop partners

Study Day: February 15

### **A11- February 16: Burmese Poetry**

Hla Pe, "Burmese Poetry," *PEPP3*, 152-53

Background information on than bauk and ya du from The Poet's Garrett website

<http://www.thepoetsgarret.com/orient.html>

\*February 17, 5:00 pm: Poem due in form of than bauk or ya du

Yangon: February 18-22

**A12- February 23: Indian Poetry**

A. K. Ramanujan, selected poems, *NAMCOP 2*, 438-44

Eunice de Souza, selected poems, *NAMCOP 2*, 774-78

**A13- February 25: Indian Poetry and the Ghazal**

Agha Shahid Ali, selected poems, *NAMCOP 2*, 889-98

David Caplan, "Other Asian Forms," in *Poetic Form*, 166-75

F. D. Lewis, "Ghazal," *PEPP*, 570-72

\*February 26, 5:00 pm: Ghazal due

Cochin: February 27 - March 3

**A14- March 4: Workshop Than Bauk/Ya Du and Ghazal**

\*March 5, 5:00 pm: Revised than bauk/ya du and ghazal submitted, including written comments from workshop partners

Study Day: March 6

**A15- March 7: South African Poetry**

S. Gray and O. Hena, "Poetry of South Africa in English," *PEPP*, 1330-331

Dennis Brutus, selected poems, *The Vintage Book of Contemporary World Poetry*, ed. J. D.

McClatchy (1996), 373-80

Port Louis: March 9

**A16- March 10: South African Poetry**

Karen Press, excerpts from *Echo Location: A Guide to Sea Point for Residents and Visitors*, 11,

17-23, 26-27, 35, 40-41, 42-43, 52-53, 60, 62

Study Day: March 12

**A17- March 13: South African Poetry**

Lesego Rampolokeng, "Lines for Vincent," *The Bavino Sermons*, 11-13

"Mountain Sermon" and "Notes from the Smoke," *Head on Fire: Rants/Notes/Poems 2001-2011*, 36-37, 154-75

Cape Town: March 15-20

**Field Lab, March 15: Discussion with South African Poets**

**A18- March 21: African Poetry**

J. Ramazani and D. F. Dorsey, "Poetry of Africa in English," *PEPP*, 13-16  
Selections from Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino*, in *NAMCOP 2*, 571-81

\*March 22, 5:00 pm: Field Lab submitted

**A19- March 23: Workshop Field Lab Poetry**

\*March 24, 5:00 pm: Revised Field Lab poetry due, including written comments from workshop partners

**A20- March 25: West African Poetry**

Christopher Okigbo, selected poems, *NAMCOP 2*, 555-58  
Wole Soyinka, selected poems, *NAMCOP 2*, 626-32

Takoradi: March 27-28

Tema: March 29-31

**A21- April 1: Arabic Poetry**

"Arabic Poetry," *PEPP*, 65-72

"Arabic Prosody," *PEPP*, 72-75

Poetry by Fady Joudah at the Poetry Foundation website, including his translations of Darwish

**A22- April 3: Arabic Poetry**

Poetry by Naomi Shihab Nye and Khaled Mattawa at the Poetry Foundation website

April 5: Study Day

**A23- April 6: Overview Discussion for Final**

Casablanca: April 8-12

**A24- A Day Finals, April 13**

**Final Exam**

April 16: Disembarkation Day

**FIELD WORK AND FIELD ASSIGNMENTS**

Experiential course work on Semester at Sea is comprised of the required field lab led by your instructor and additional field assignments that span multiple ports.

You will keep a personal journal, writing down sensations, phrases, metaphors, lines, and ideas for poetry during the voyage. You will be responsible for turning in a poem in the assigned form, style, or manner of a number of the countries we are visiting.

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

Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field lab.

The field lab for this course takes place in Cape Town on March 15.

“South African Poets, Live.” We will meet with South African poets to discuss their writing practices and social perspectives. Meeting with poets from another part of the world who write in English, we will explore what similarities and differences they may have as compared with those of us writing poetry on the ship. The meeting is intended to help engage you in a high-level discussion of poetry, form, poetic theory, genre, publishing, politics and art, etc., ultimately to enhance your own writing and your understanding of its relation to the practices in another country. By hearing South African poets read their work and discuss their ideas, you may be inspired to write poems that come out of the depths of your own emotional, sensual, and intellectual experience, including the circumnavigation of the world. You will be evaluated according to the quality of your participation in the field lab, the poetry you produce after the lab, your assistance to workshop partners, and the insights you provide in class in reflecting on the lab, altogether worth 20% of your grade.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC**

Test: 5%

Poems: 30%

Field Lab: 20%

Final Exam: 25%

Class Participation: 20%

**Poems:** Poems will be evaluated according to criteria for excellence in poetry, such as freshness of diction, vividness of expression, figurative daring and richness, formal inventiveness, tonal complexity, psychological or social depth, aesthetic coherence, and creative adaptation of inherited forms, conventions, and genres. Poems must be handed in on time, due to workshop format. No credit will be awarded for late poems. See attached comment sheet.

**Final Exam:** This exam will provide you with an opportunity to synthesize your knowledge of the poetry from and about the various ports of call we have visited, developing narratives about significant lines of connection and difference. It will also test your knowledge of the poetry, poetic

forms, and poetic history that we have been reading about all semester.

**Class participation:** In addition, you will also be evaluated on your participation in class. Collaborative and constructive reflection on the assignments and on each other's writing is essential to the life of the seminar. We will also take the opportunity after each port to reflect comparatively on our experience and look ahead to the next port. Active participation is required, including pair exercises, group work, workshop feedback, and other ways of deepening our engagement with the poetry and with our voyage. Attendance is also required. You cannot pass the class without passing each of the requirements, including class participation and attendance.

**Writing the World in Poetry  
Comment Sheet**

**Poet:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Critic:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**LANGUAGE** (innovation, freshness of diction, vividness of expression, effective use of syntax, avoidance of cliché, management of poetic voice and tone)

**FORM** (creative adaptation of inherited forms, conventions, and genres; skillful and appropriate use of poetic forms, line length, enjambment, line breaks)

**SOUND** (creative and effective use of rhythm, rhyme, assonance, alliteration, and other sound patterns)

**IMAGERY** (daring, richness, creativity of simile, metaphor, synecdoche, metonymy, etc.)

**OTHER COMMENTS**

**OVERALL:**



## **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

Items listed above.

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Access to two sites: Poetry Foundation at <http://www.poetryfoundation.org> and The Poet's Garrett at <http://thepoetsgarret.com/orientl.html>.

## **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]."