

Semester at Sea Course Syllabus
Colorado State University, Academic Sponsor

Voyage: Fall 2016
Discipline: English
Course Number and Title: E 240 Introduction to Poetry
Division: Lower
Faculty Name: John N. Serio
Semester Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: None

Course Description

Poetry has the power to evoke in us both genuine feeling and introspective reflection. It provides a way to explore the complexities of our own existence as well as to step outside ourselves to understand others. This is especially important on our voyage to nearly a dozen countries, each with its own distinctive culture and history. Just as students will learn to exercise their imagination to experience a poem's often complex feelings and challenging insights, they will see how their imagination is key to understanding and appreciating other people, customs, and beliefs. The course will focus on the development of critical skills necessary to understand and enjoy poetry. Students will be exposed to a rich and diverse selection of poems from many cultures, countries, and eras. They will read poems from different literary periods and assess their relevance today. They will study several poets in depth, exploring how their unique style and vision alter our understanding of ourselves and of our world. As students become sensitive to the nuances of context, tone, imagery, metaphor, symbol, form, and diction, they will enlarge their sensibilities and sharpen their analytical capabilities. Through class discussion and expository essays, they will improve their critical thinking and writing skills.

Learning 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 Textbook

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

Assignments

Depart Hamburg, Germany—September 10

B1—September 13: Course introduction
Ch. 18 What Is Poetry? (327–330)
Handout: several poems about poetry

B2—September 15: Ch. 01 Reading a Poem (5–18)
Focus Poems
Lyric: Adrienne Rich, “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers”
Narrative: Robert Frost, “Out, Out—”
Dramatic: Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess”

No Class—September 16

B3—September 18: The Influence of Italian Poetry on Modernism in Poetry
Focus Poems
T. S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”; Dante, *The Inferno*, Cantos 1, 26, 27, and 33;
Ezra Pound, Canto 14 (“Hell”) and Canto 45 (“Usura”)

Piraeus (Athens), Greece—September 19–23

B4—September 25:
Focus Poems
Wallace Stevens: “The Snow Man,” “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird,” “Peter Quince at the Clavier,” “Of Modern Poetry,” “Large Red Man Reading”

Civitavecchia (Rome) and Livorno, Italy—September 26–30

B5—October 02: Ch. 02 Listening to a Voice: Tone, Persona (19–32)
Focus Poems
Tone: Theodore Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz”; Welden Kees, “For My Daughter”
Speaker: Natasha Trethewey, “White Lies”; Suji Kwock Kim, “Monologue for an Onion”;
William Wordsworth, “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud”; Anne Sexton, “Her Kind”

Barcelona, Spain—October 3–7

B6—October 09: Ch. 02 Listening to a Voice: Irony (33–47)
Focus Poems
Irony: Robert Creeley, “Oh No”; W. H. Auden, “The Unknown Citizen”; Sharon Olds, “Rite of Passage”; William Blake, “The Chimney Sweeper”; Wilfred Owen, “Dulce et Decorum Est”

Casablanca, Morocco—October 10–14

B7—October 16: Ch. 03 Words (48–71)

Focus Poems

Diction: William Carlos Williams, “This Is Just to Say”; Marianne Moore, “Silence”;
Structure: Kay Ryan, “Blandeur”; Wendy Cope, “Lonely Hearts”; E. E. Cummings, “anyone
lived in a pretty how town”; Billy Collins, “The Names”; Gina Valdés, “English con Salsa”

B8—October 18: Ch. 04 Saying and Suggesting (72–83)

Focus Poems

Connotation: Gwendolyn Brooks, “Southeast Corner”; E. E. Cummings, “next to of course
god america i”; Robert Frost, “Fire and Ice”; Diane Thiel, “The Minefield”

B9—October 20: Ch. 05 Imagery (84–91)

Focus Poems

Imagery: Theodore Roethke, “Root Cellar”; Elizabeth Bishop, “The Fish”; Rainer Maria Rilke,
“The Panther”; Charles Simic, “The Fork”; Emily Dickinson, “A Route of Evanescence”

Dakar, Senegal—October 21–24

B10—October 26: Ch. 05 Imagery (91–103)

Focus Poems

Haiku: see past and present examples

Imagery: Paul Goodman, “Birthday Cake”; Louise Glück, “Mock Orange”; Billy Collins,
“Embrace”

No Class—October 28 Neptune Day

B11—October 29: Ch. 06 Figures of Speech: Metaphor and Simile (104–113)

Focus Poems

Metaphor and Simile Emily Dickinson, “My life had stood—a Loaded Gun”; Sylvia Plath,
“Metaphors”; N. Scott Momaday, “Simile”; Emily Dickinson, “It dropped so low—in my
Regard”; Craig Raine, “A Martian Sends a Postcard Home”

B12—October 31: In-Class Essay/Examination

Salvador, Brazil—November 1-6

B13—November 08: Ch. 06 Figures of Speech: Other Figures of Speech (113–123)

Focus Poems

Other figures: Dana Gioia, “Money”; Charles Simic, “My Shoes”; Robert Frost, “The Silken
Tent”; Jane Kenyon, “The Suitor”; Kay Ryan, “Turtle”

B14—November 10: Ch. 08 Sound (144–162)

Focus Poems

Onomatopoeia: John Updike, “Recital”; William Wordsworth, “A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal”
Alliteration and Assonance: A. E. Housman, “Eight O’Clock”; Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The
splendor falls on castle walls”

Rime: William Butler Yeats, “Leda and the Swan”; Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s
Grandeur”; Robert Frost, “Desert Places”

B15—November 12: A Selection of Poems by Derek Walcott

Focus Poems

“The Season of Phantasmal Peace,” “The Virgins,” “The Fist,” “A Far Cry from Africa,”
“After the Storm,” “Pentecost,” “Midsummer Tobago”

Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago)—November 13–14

B16—November 16: Ch. 09 Rhythm (163–182)

Focus Poems

Stresses and Pauses: Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”; Dorothy Parker, “Résumé”
Meter: Edna St. Vincent Millay, “Counting-out Rhyme”; A. E. Housman, “When I was one-
and-twenty” David Mason, “Song of the Powers”

No Class—November 18 Panama Canal Transit; Olympics

B17—November 19: Ch. 10 Closed Form (183–193)

Focus Poems

Formal Patterns: John Keats, “This living hand, now warm and capable”; John Donne,
“Song”; Phillis Levin, “Brief Bio”
Sonnet: Michael Drayton, “Since there’s no help”; Edna St. Vincent Millay, “What lips my
lips have kissed”; William Meredith, “The Illiterate”

B18—November 21: Ch. 10 Closed Form (193–203)

Focus Poems

Sonnet: Kim Addonizio, “First Poem for You”; Mark Jarman, “Unholy Sonnet: After the
Praying”; A. E. Stallings, “Sine Qua Non”; R. S. Gwynn, “Shakespearean Sonnet”

Callao, Peru—November 22–26

B19—November 28: Ch. 11 Open Form (204–215)

Focus Poems

Free verse: E. E. Cummings, “Buffalo Bill’s”; W. S. Merwin, “For the Anniversary of My
Death”; William Carlos Williams, “The Dance”; Carolyn Forché, “The Colonel”

B20—November 30: Ch. 11 Open Form (216–225)

Focus Poems

Free verse: John Hollander, “Swan and Shadow”; Dorthi Charles, “Concrete Cat”; E. E.
Cummings, “in Just-”; A. E. Stallings, First Love: A Quiz”; Carole Satyamurti, “I Shall Paint My
Nails Red”

Guayaquil, Ecuador—December 1-4

B21—December 06: Ch. 12 Symbol (226–239)

Focus Poems

Symbol: Thomas Hardy, “Neutral Tones”; Robert Frost, “The Road Not Taken”; Ted Kooser,
“Carrie”; Mary Oliver, “Wild Geese”; Wallace Stevens, “Anecdote of the Jar”

B22—December 08: Ch. 14 Poetry and Personal Identity (261–278)

Focus Poems

Confessional poetry: Sylvia Plath, “Lady Lazarus”; Rhina Espaillat, “Bilingual/Bilingüe”; Francisco X. Alarcón, “The X in My Name”; Judith Ortiz Cofer, “Quinceañera”; Sherman Alexis, “The Powwow at the End of the Word”; Bettie Sellers, “In the Counselor’s Waiting Room”

Puntarenas, Costa Rica—December 9–13

B23—December 15: Ch. 19 . . . Emily Dickinson (331–347)

Focus Poems

Emily Dickinson: “Success is counted sweetest”; There’s a certain Slant of light”; “I felt a Funeral, in my Brain”; “The Soul selects her own Society”; “Some keep the Sabbath going to Church”; “Much Madness is divinest Sense”; “I heard a Fly buzz—when I died”; “Tell all the Truth but tell it slant”

B24—December 17: Ch. 21 Poems for Further Reading

Focus Poems

William Blake, “The Tyger”; Billy Collins, “Care and Feeding”; Rita Dove, “Daystar”; Robert Frost, “Birches”; “Mending Wall”; Seamus Heaney, “Digging”; Sylvia Plath, “Daddy”

No Class—December 18 Study Day

B25—December 20: B Day Finals In-Class Examination

San Diego, California, United States—December 22

Writing Assignments: There will be several out-of-class formal essays as well as possible quizzes. The format and due dates will be determined during the semester.

FIELD WORK

Field Class 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 class. Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course, and will be developed and led by the instructor.

Field Class and Assignment

- Port: Livorno, Italy
- Date: **Day 2, Friday, 30 September 2016**
Note: On ship time by midnight Thursday, September 29
- Schedule:

In the morning we will meet with Professor Massimo Bacigalupo, University of Genoa, who is a specialist in British and American literature. He will discuss the influence of Italian literature on American poetry, especially on the poetry of T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound, initiators of the movement in literature called “modernism.” Students will learn about the significant shift in the arts that occurred during this period and the effect such classic works as Dante’s *Inferno* had on changing the course of American poetry. Professor Bacigalupo, who has just edited a dual-language volume of the complete poetry of Wallace Stevens, will also describe the challenges of literary translation, especially that of poetry. After lunch, we will tour important sites in Livorno to gain insight into its cultural, historic, and artistic significance.

After returning to the ship, we will discuss the impact of this in-port encounter on what we have learned about the influence of classic Italian literature on modern American poetry as well as the complexities involved in literary translation.

Field Class Writing Assignment

Students will be required to write an expository essay (one that explains an interpretation) on T. S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." How has the lecture on modernism contributed to their understanding of the poem? Why does Eliot begin with an epigraph from Dante's *Inferno*? What would make that fourteenth-century poem relevant to Eliot's time and even to ours today? What perspectives in the Critical Casebook on the poem (367–389) have contributed to students' interpretation and appreciation of the poem? How does the turn toward modernism manifest itself in the poem's theme and arrangement? What role do allusions play? How do the new findings in psychology about the subconscious affect Eliot's depiction of Prufrock, and in what respect can Prufrock, with his heightened self-consciousness, be said to be representative of a modern person? What is experimental about the poem, and in what way can Eliot be termed an "initiator of modernism" in poetry?

Outcomes

- To learn about "modernism," the great shift in the arts as exemplified in poetry that occurred around 1912 and continued to and after WWII
- To see the influence of Italian literature on American poetry during this period
- To learn about the challenges of literary translation, especially of poetry

Independent Field Assignments

Students will compose a brief poem that captures an important aspect of three additional ports, one in each of the three major cultural and geographical areas we will visit (Mediterranean, African, and Latin American). Students should try to express a distinctive feature of the culture, setting, or people by crafted description, imagery, and form. The poems need not be long, but they should be consciously crafted and utilize some of the elements we have studied in class such as word choice, form, simile, metaphor, irony, symbol, rhyme, etc. Perhaps one or two haiku from each selected port would work as well. Here is a suggestive example from Wallace Stevens:

The dress of a woman in Lhasa,
In its place,
Is an invisible element of that place
Made visible.

Methods of Evaluation

- 20% Class participation/attendance/quizzes (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)
- 10% Independent field assignments
- 30% Two in-class essays and/or examinations
- 20% Formal critical essay
- 20% Formal critical essay on Field-Class Assignment

Grading Scale

One must have at least the grade point average to receive the corresponding letter grade. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea coursework.

- A+ 4.30
- A 4.00 Excellent
- A- 3.70
- B+ 3.30
- B 3.00 Good
- B- 2.70
- C+ 2.30
- C 2.00 Satisfactory
- D 1.00 Poor
- F 0.00 Failure

Attendance/Engagement in the Academic Program

Attendance in all Semester at Sea classes is mandatory, and students will be penalized for accrued absences. Students must inform instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work, which must be accomplished under the instructor's supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures. Since this is a discussion class, no electronic devices (laptops, cell phones) will be allowed during class discussion. The instructor reserves the right to modify the assignments and/or evaluation percentages if necessary.

Union Seminars

Faculty members on the Fall 2016 Voyage will present on various academic topics during the evening Union Seminars, held during sea days. These topics will present relevant cultural information in various disciplines, depending on the location on the itinerary. Students are encouraged to attend at least one of these sessions, relevant to the academic topic of this course. An appropriate assignment can be made at a time when the Union Seminar schedule has been finalized.

Learning Accommodations

Semester at Sea provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation. A memo from the student's home institution verifying the accommodations received on their home campus is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit this verification of accommodations pre-voyage as soon as possible, but no later than July 19, 2016 to academic@isevoyages.org.

Student Conduct Code

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."