

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

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

Prerequisites: 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

B1 January 13	Ch. 18 What Is Poetry? (327–330)
B2 January 15	Ch. 01 Reading a Poem (5–18)
B3 January 18	Ch. 02 Listening to a Voice: Tone, Persona (19–32)
<i>January 17 Hilo, United States</i>	
B4 January 21	Ch. 02 Listening to a Voice: Irony (33–47)
B5 January 23	Ch. 03 Words (48–71)
B6 January 26	Ch. 04 Saying and Suggesting (72–83)
B7 January 28	Ch. 05 Imagery (84–91)
<i>January 29–February 3 Yokohama, Transit, Kobe, Japan</i>	
B8 February 5	Ch. 05 Imagery: Haiku (91–103)
<i>February 6–11 Shanghai, Transit, Hong Kong, China</i>	
B9 February 13	Ch. 06 Figures of Speech: Metaphor and Simile (104–113)
<i>February 14–19 Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam</i>	
B10 February 21	Ch. 06 Figures of Speech: Other Figures of Speech (113–123)
<i>February 22–23 Singapore</i>	
B11 February 26	<u>Examination</u>
<i>February 27–March 4 Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar)</i>	
B12 March 6	Ch. 08 Sound (144–162)
B13 March 8	Ch. 09 Rhythm (163–182)
<i>March 9–14 Cochin, India</i>	
B14 March 16	Ch. 10 Closed Form (183–192)
B15 March 19	Ch. 10 Closed Form (192–203)
<i>March 21 Port Louis, Mauritius</i>	
B16 March 22	Ch. 11 Open Form (204–215)
B17 March 24	Ch. 11 Open Form (216–225)
B18 March 27	Ch. 12 Symbol (226–239)
<i>March 28–April 2 Cape Town, South Africa</i>	
B19 April 4	Ch. 13 Myth and Narrative (240–260)
B20 April 6	Ch. 14 Poetry and Personal Identity (261–278)
B21 April 9	Ch. 17 Recognizing Excellence (305–323)
<i>April 10–14 Takoradi, Tema, Ghana</i>	
B22 April 16	Ch. 19 Two Critical Casebooks—Emily Dickinson (331–347)
B23 April 18	Ch. 19 Two Critical Casebooks—Langston Hughes (348–365)
B24 April 21	Ch. 21 Poems for Further Reading (selections)
<i>April 23–27 Casablanca, Morocco</i>	
B25 April 29	B Day Finals: <u>Examination</u>
<i>May 2 Arrive in Southampton, England</i>	

Note There will be several out-of-class essays, format and due dates to be announced as well as possible quizzes.

FIELD WORK

Wednesday, 2 April 2014, Cape Town, South African Poets

In the morning, we will travel to the Book Lounge, a popular bookstore located in City Centre that hosts numerous literary events throughout the year. We will meet with several practicing South African poets, who will read from their work and discuss both their own poetry and South African poetry in general. In the afternoon, we will travel to the University of Cape Town where we will have lunch with some University students interested in creative writing. Then we will attend a poetry reading/workshop with renowned South African writer and poet Joan Hambridge. She will read from her poetry and discuss her sources of inspiration and the various techniques of composition. She will then conduct a brief poetry workshop.

ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES

1. To learn about and meet practicing South African poets
2. To discover their sources of inspiration, methods of composition, struggles, and rewards
3. To gain an appreciation not only of their poetry, but also of South African poetry in general
4. To benefit personally from this encounter, especially through a question-and-answer session and workshop

FIELD ASSIGNMENT

Since the Field Lab constitutes 20% of the coursework, students will be required to write a critical essay on their experience. In particular, they will be asked to select several works by the poets we have met and to discuss critically their response to their work, especially in light of what they, as students, have learned both during the Field Lab and in the course. What modes of expression have the poets chosen and why are they appropriate? How has the social and political background of South Africa affected their poetry? How well do these poets employ the various elements of poetry we have studied, such as diction, imagery, rhythm, closed or open form, metaphor, simile, irony, and/or symbol? How well do their poems attain a universal level of expression?

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 they 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]."