**Intro to Poetry (ENGL 2380. CRN: 27459 ) Emotion recollected in tranquility … and other stuff.**



**Instructor**: Dr. Glenn Jellenik **E-mail**:gjellenik@uca.edu **Office**: 430 Irby **Time:** TR 8-9:15 **Office Hours**: TR 9:30-10:30 **Place:** Arkansas Hall 100

Course Description: This course will be a prolonged exercise in/with careful, active, and creative reading. We all know that poetry is a creative act, but reading is, as well. So we’ll be looking closely at a huge range of poems in order to practice, develop and hone the skill of critical reading, or reading as a creative act. In order to do that, we will develop an analytical toolbox and a set of reading strategies that will help us access the interesting and productive ways that poetry represents and processes the world.

Thus, we will use poems to make **associations** and **connections**. In short, that is one of the huge components of solid critical reading; it carefully processes varied and complex material and considers & rehearses the varied and specific ways in which that material connects to, comments on, questions, drives, and reflects issues and situations outside the text. That is, no text exists in a vacuum. We will put a host of great poems in conversation with our world-at-large and let your wonderful brains perform the seeming-sorcery of making productive connections/associations.

**Learning Outcome:** This course offers an overview of poetry as a form of expression. It will also ask you to look extremely closely at poems and develop specific critical reading strategies. You will develop a critical toolbox that will allow you to strengthen your ability to analyze works of poetry and to organize and express those analyses in written form. Which is to say, you’ll practice reading poems … forming ideas, observations, and arguments about poems … and delivering those ideas, observations, and arguments in clear, concise, and effective essay forms. So really, this is a course in alchemy! You’ll be turning poetry into prose! Not as profitable as turning lead to gold or water to wine, but still pretty cool when done well!

**My Policies.**

**Participation**: It comprises 15% of your final grade. That means that I expect everybody to participate in our discussions. Seriously, you do *not* want to listen to 75 straight minutes of my talking head every Tuesday and Thursday. That said, we will explore a wide range of texts and topics in class; not only would it be impossible for all of you to agree on everything, it would be boring. I highly encourage you to disagree with one another, and I highly encourage you to disagree with me. All I ask (actually, I don’t ask, I demand) is that you disagree with one another (and me) in a **constructive** manner that fosters conversation rather than shuts it down. Show respect for one another’s views, opinions and ideas.

In keeping with the idea that this is a safe space to share and test out ideas, I encourage you all to speak to one another in our discussions. That is, not all comments have to go through me at the front of the room. Let ideas bounce around the room—address one another directly. This will be best accomplished if you learn each other’s names. If done properly, we can all join together in an Intro-to-Poetry brother and sisterhood. We will now join hands and sing Kumbaya.

Small but not insignificant point: In order to truly participate productively in class, you need to have done the assigned readings. If it becomes obvious that you haven’t been doing the readings—and it’s not that difficult to tell—I’ll be forced to administer annoying quizzes at the beginning of each class. Don’t make me administer annoying quizzes. Do the readings.

**Attendance:** If you intend to make a premium grade (A or B), you should attend class as frequently as possible, preferably every class day. Your final grade for this course will drop two points for every absence after three, except in rare situations. Infrequent absences caused by illness or accident, family death, official university functions, or inclement weather are acceptable, but you need to bring documentation of the reason to receive this consideration. If you should miss 6 or more classes, I will strongly recommend that you drop the class.

**Late arrivals/Early departures:** Avoid these at all costs; if it’s unavoidable, be as considerate as possible to your classmates.

**Cell Phones:** Call it a pet peeve, but cell phone interruptions drive me *crazy*—seriously, they give me facial tics. Please preserve the illusion of my sanity; turn all cell phones off before class.

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. All assignments are due on the day indicated on the syllabus, at the start of class. Period.

**Assignments and Grade value:**

Exam 1 (2/11) 15% \*Essay 1 (Compare/Contrast) (3/20) 25% \*Essay 2 (Literature/culture study) (4/24) 30% SWAs (short writing assignments) 15% Participation 15%

\*You cannot pass the class without completing **both** essays.

# Grades: Ahh, grading! Here’s the rub. One of the major sticking points between teacher and student comes down to a potential disparity in goals. My goal is that you develop as a thinker, reader and writer. Often (I didn’t say always, so don’t be offended!), your goal is to obtain a grade that will make you happy. See the potential conflict? Honestly, if I thought that handing out A’s were the best way to improve your thinking/reading/writing, I’d do it. Unfortunately, everything about your academic training to this point has worked in an opposite direction. In our system, I tie a carrot (grade) to a stick and dangle it in front of you as you pull the millstone. Sorry. I didn’t invent the system, but it’s where we work. On the bright side, in my experience, it’s relatively rare for the grade not to reflect the effort of the student.

Extra credit opportunities **may** be offered throughout the semester, but they exist in order to enhance your engagement with the college and our material, not to explicitly improve a student’s grade (though, of course, they will improve your grade). What I’m saying here is, don’t ask me to devise extra extra credit opportunities to make up for missed or poor work.

**University Policies.**

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy.

**The Americans with Disabilities Act:**The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans withDisabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

Students should familiarize themselves with all policies included in the Student Handbook, particularly the **Sexual Harassment Policy** and **Academic Policies**. You are responsible for acting in accordance with these university policies. If you have any questions about these policies and how they pertain to you, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification.

**Emergency Procedures:** Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

**Course Texts:** *The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 5th Edition* ed. Ferguson, Salter & Stallworthy. Supplemental handouts

**Class Schedule**

All readings in *The Norton Anthology*, unless otherwise indicated.

**Week 1:** Welcome!

Th 1/9: Let us go the, you and I …

**Week 2:** What is poetry? Defining a genre and stocking our analytical toolbox

T 1/14: **Read:** p. 2027-2051 **Due:** Email me song lyrics. SWA 1: 1 page on why this is a great poem.

Th 1/16: **Read:** p. 2053-2073

**Week 3:** Romanticism, the birth of a simple abstraction

T 1/21: **Read:** Wordsworth and Shelley essays (handout), Wordsworth, “We Are Seven,” Shelley “To Wordsworth”

 Th 1/23: **Read:** Coleridge “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” **Due:** SWA 2

**Week 4:** Romanticism con’t … and its legacy

 T 1/28: **Read:** Byron & Shelley

 Th 1/30: **Read:** Keats **Due:** SWA 3

**Week 5:** Love & Death

T 2/4: Shakespearean sonnets. How do I read thee? Let me count the ways …

**Read:** #s 12, 15, 18, 130

 Th 2/6: **Read:** Dickinson: 339, 340, 479. Frost: “Home Burial”

**Week 6:** Women in/of poetry

 \*T 2/11: **Exam 1**

 Th 2/13: **Read:** “Chaucer’s “Wife of Bath’s Prologue & Tale”

**Week 7:**

 T 2/18: **Read:** “Chaucer’s “Wife of Bath’s Prologue & Tale” **Due:** SWA 4

 Th 2/20: **Read:** Barbauld & Adrienne Rich

**Week 8:** Epic/Mock Epic & the rise of the individual

 T 2/25: **Read:** Milton, *Paradise Lost*

 Th 2/27: **Read:** Milton, *Paradise Lost*  **Due:** SWA 5

**Week 9**

 T 3/4: **Read:** Pope, “The Rape of the Lock”

 Th 3/6: **Read:** Swift, “A Description of the Morning,” Gay, *The Beggar’s Opera*

**Week 10:** Ultimate individual #1: “I must create a system …” William Blake

 T 3/11: **Read:** from *Songs of Innocence*

 Th 3/13: **Read:** from *Songs of Experience* **Due:** SWA 6

**Week 11:** Ultimate individual #2: The poet of democracy …Walt Whitman

 T 3/18: **Read:** from “Song of Myself”

 \*Th 3/20: **Read:** “When I heard the learn’d astronomer” **Due:** Essay 1

**Week 12:** Free (verse)[[1]](#footnote-1) Spring Break advice from Whitman:

**This is what you shall do: Love the earth and sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to every one that asks, stand up for the stupid and crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence toward the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and with the mothers of families, read these leaves in the open air every season of every year of your life, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem and have the richest fluency not only in its words but in the silent lines of its lips and face and between the lashes of your eyes and in every motion and joint of your body.**

**Week 13:** We sound our barbaric yawps over the roofs of the world! The defiant call of poetry.

 T 4/1: **Read:** Tennyson & Thomas

 Th 4/3: **Read:** Hughes & Brooks **Due:** SWA 7

**Week 14**

 T 4/8: **Read:** Eliot, “The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock”

 Th 4/10: **Read:** Wilfred Owen

**Week 15**

 T 4/15: **Read:** Ginsberg, from Howl & “A Supermarket in California”

 Th 4/17: **Read:** Armitage, from *Killing Time*, Listen to: DiFranco, “To the Teeth” **Due:** SWA 8

**Week 16.** The end. With a bang or a whimper?

 T 4/22: Play day.

 \*Th 4/24: Last day: Till human voices wake us, and we drown. **Due:** Essay 2

1. Okay, this is from Whitman’s Preface to *Leaves of Grass*, and it’s in prose, not free verse, but I couldn’t resist the pun. I also couldn’t resist giving it to you, because it’s one of the most amazing things I’ve ever read! Oh yeah, and thanks for being the one student who bothered to read the footnote in our syllabus … have a great Spring Break! [↑](#footnote-ref-1)