

Syllabus, Rhodes College, Fall 2011  
ENG 200 CREATIVE WRITING, INTRODUCTION TO POETRY  
T/TH 9:30-10:45am  
Clough Hall 100

Professor Molinary  
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843-3246  
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Office Hours: (with noted exceptions)  
Tuesdays & Thursdays 2-4pm or by appt.

### Poems \ Poeming

Mariposa, *what a clean word is that! / It can fly around all day / and never get mud on its wings. / It makes a clean sound as it passes right through me— / almost nothing really.*  
—Paul Hoover, “The World is Found”

*Poem as trace, poem as evidence.*  
—Carolyn Forché, Intro to *Against Forgetting*

*Sometimes I trace a word in the dirt.*  
—Aimé Césaire

#### REQUIRED TEXTS

Lennard, The Poetry Handbook [LENNARD]  
Norton Anthology of Poetry, full 5<sup>th</sup> edition [NORTON]  
Lorca, In Search of Duende [DUENDE]

The above texts have all been ordered through the Rhodes Bookstore. Please buy immediately. Students must have the Lennard & Norton by Friday, 26 August & Duende by week 9.

Additionally, students will be asked to borrow or buy or otherwise obtain the Fall 2011 issue of *Beloit Poetry Journal*, a TBA text by Antje Krog, & two books by different authors chosen by each student from a list provided by me. The list will be distributed by Week 7 or 8 & the books are to be acquired by week 10. Handouts may also be required or suggested reading.

#### DESCRIPTION/OVERVIEW

Designed to be an introduction to the arts of reading, analyzing, & writing poetry, this class will place poetry in the larger context of creative writing & the still larger context of writing & of language, itself. The emphasis of this particular class will move between poetic knowledge, correspondence, genealogy, & subjectivity. Among our lines of inquiry will be questions such as: what is a poem? How & where do we encounter poems? Why do we write them? To what do they correspond in the world at large? What does it mean to be an artist “of one’s time”? How does language come to mean & what happens when meaning is transformed, translated, or transported?

Along the way, students will be introduced to forms & prosody as well as to the primary modes of poetry & the currently accepted elements of poems with an emphasis on metaphor & image, rhythm & music, & performance. Students will develop a vocabulary for discussing & analyzing poems.

Furthermore, students will gain practice in generating & revising their own poems & in critiquing peer poems. Students will be introduced to “the Workshop” in its various uses. This course is intended to have students read, write, & analyze as much poetry as is possible in our brief semester together. Inundation is key. The majority of writing will generate from reading & from exercises & techniques plied in class & further honed in weekly assignments.

#### COURSE OBJECTIVE & STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

If a student enters into & completes the class with proper measures of humility, curiosity, & passionate engagement with all the course material, required & suggested, that student will exit the course with increased measures of humility, curiosity, & passionate engagement with the world; that student will have affianced herself or himself, in permanent compact, to the bright lights of imagination, intelligent inquiry, & critical understanding.

Students will be responsible for coming to each class meeting on time having completed all reading & writing assignments & fully prepared to participate in a most lively, generous, & courteous manner. In addition to active participation in all aspects of the class & workshops, students will be responsible for comments on peer work when applicable; for all in-class & homework writing assignments; for one short cento essay (1-2pp); for one inter-textual, analytical essay (3-5pp); for one presentation; for one longer, semester poem & for a final portfolio of 5-8 “finished” poems with very brief introduction.

#### GRADING

<u>Reading &amp; Daily Participation</u>	<u>20%</u>
<u>Essay #1</u>	<u>10%</u>
<u>Essay #2 / Presentation</u>	<u>20%</u>
<u>Weekly Homework/Poems &amp; Final Portfolio</u>	<u>30%</u>
<u>Long Poem</u>	<u>20%</u>

#### Grade Ranges:

F = Work incomplete &/or attendance issues.

D = Work complete but lacking any obvious sign of curiosity or effort; participation lackluster; &/or attendance issues.

C = Fine. All work complete with signs of curiosity & effort; attendance & participation also fine. Good.

B = Very good verging on excellent. All work completed with verve & curiosity. Passionate engagement is evident.

A = Above & beyond. All assignments completed with flair; impeccable participation; evidence of further work, i.e. suggested reading or work beyond the basic requirements.

#### POLICIES

- In any space of collective learning, but in a creative writing class in particular, generosity, courtesy & respect are, perhaps, the most important policies.

- Attendance is crucial, but keep in mind that “attendance” means more than the presence of your physical body in the classroom; your mind & voice need be present & active as well. To count you “present” for any given day, I’ll need to see evidence of a heartbeat—of blood coursing through your veins, lungs taking in air supplying oxygen to your brain & your mouth with words. The classroom is a space of collective learning & it may be a dying breed. Take advantage of this space—actual human bodies in a room, engaged together in human thought, imagination, & the history of ideas.
- No whining or public displays of disaffection. See me straight away if you have a problem. Trust. Trust that there are reasons for everything we do in class even if you can’t yet imagine how or why. Trust that this class is designed to help you become better writers, readers, thinkers—better humans. In that spirit, attempt everything. Don’t simply dismiss any given exercise or assignment. \*\*See me about any documented disability.
- Generally speaking, no late work will be accepted.
- This classroom is a “safe zone.”
- Professor reserves the right to expel from the class any student who behaves like a troglodyte. The interpretation of “troglodyte” is in the sole purview of the professor.
- Antithetical to the current climate, in the realm of this course, all students are considered adults & all will be treated as such & expected to act as such. You choose to learn or not.
- Please review the Rhodes Honor Code pertaining to plagiarism & etc.
- Finally: because words & their meanings are arbitrary & because one of the purposes of this course is to help students think more deeply, imaginatively, & critically about languages & their implications, the professor retains the right to cuss &/or use language in colorful manner in order to make students think about words.

#### DAILY SCHEDULE

\*\*\*Please note that the daily schedule is subject to change. It is the student’s responsibility—within reason—to stay abreast. I like to leave room for spontaneity. The Lennard & Norton work in tandem; that is, the Lennard references poems in the Norton. Other anthology assignments will be given in class as will homework writing assignments.

*In general:* your weekends will involve reading, “collecting” & writing. Tuesdays will be spent discussing assigned readings & writings. Poems will be due Thursdays & I’ll grade those for the first weeks until we initiate Workshops at which point Thursdays will be spent mostly on the Workshop. One copy of your poem will be due until Workshop time, & then the appropriate number of copies will be due for distribution to the class.

#### **Week 1. Introduction to the class**

TH 8/25: What’s what (assignments for next week + long poem discussion)

#### **Week 2. History, Bio, & Gender**

TU 8/30: Lennard pp290-351 + Norton selections

TH 9/1: First poem due (ABC)

- Week 3. Diction & Syntax**  
 TU 9/6: Lennard pp222-290 + Norton selections  
 TH 9/8: Revised ABC + field work (diction)
- Week 4. Lineation/ Breaking the Line**  
 TU 9/13: Lennard pp153-189 + Norton selections  
 TH 9/15: Poem due. Line break exercise in class
- Week 5. Metre & Music**  
 TU 9/20: Lennard 1-33 + selections  
 TH 9/22: Poem 3 due \*\*Copies for ALL students + prof)
- Week 6. Rhyme & Music**  
 TU 9/27: Lennard 189-222 + selections \***Essay #1 due**  
 TH 9/29: Begin workshop Poem 4 due (x copies)
- Week 7. Forms**  
 TU 10/3: Group presentations/ assignment  
 TH 10/4: continued Poem 5 due (x copies)
- Week 8. Layout/WCW/Asian Forms**  
 TU 10/11: Object & Image (Reading is TBA)  
 TH 10/13: Poem 6 due
- Week 9. Versus** (Punctuation & Layout & their implications)  
 TU = FALL BREAK NO CLASS  
 TH 10/20 2 Poems due: 13 perspective + one other
- Week 10. Versus continued**  
 TU 10/25: Lennard 81-153 + (TBA reading on performance)  
 TH 10/27: Poem 9 due plenty copies
- Week 11. Breaking out with duende**  
 TU 11/1: CLASS CANCELLED (2 at home exercises)  
 TH 11/3: discuss Lorca's duende Poem 10 due
- Week 12. Poeming**  
 TU 11/8: Making & revising (Lorca & Reyes?)  
 TH 11/10: Poem 11 due
- Week 13. Antje Krog**  
 11/15: book TBA & workshop TBA  
 11/17: ditto Poem 12 due
- Week 14. More poeming**  
 11/22: Long poem revision work  
 11/24: THANKSGIVING NO CLASS stuff birds with poems

**Weeks 15 & 16: Presentations & papers due;  
Readings**

**Last class = 12/6**

**Final Portfolios due TUESDAY 13 December 9:30am**