

## ENGLISH 251: DEVELOPMENTS IN CONTEMPORARY POETRY

Spring Semester 2014

M/W/F 9:00–9:50 AM, Clough Hall 302

CRN: 24753

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Office hours: M/W 12:00-1:30 PM, and by appt.

### TEXT

Ramazani, Jahan, Richard Ellmann, and Robert O'Clair, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: W.W. Norton, 2003.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

An introduction to poetry written in English during the latter half of the twentieth century, this course will examine some key developments in poetic style and sensibility after modernism. Our readings and discussions will address both the sound and the sense of poems. We will look closely at linguistic elements such as diction, syntax, and rhythm, considering the ways postwar poets distinguished themselves from their modernist predecessors. Additionally, course discussion will focus on postwar movements and schools such as confessional poetry, the Beats, the New York school, and the Black Arts movement, as well as trends in postcolonial and ethnic-American poetry.

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS

#### Papers

You will write three papers for this course: two shorter papers (3-4 pages or 900-1200 words) and a longer final paper (10-12 pages or 3000-3600 words). The first two papers will present close readings of several poems based only on your own reading (i.e. no secondary sources). The final paper will explore a theme or trend in the work of two or three poets, and it must incorporate at least two but no more than five secondary sources. We will talk more in class about strategies for locating and evaluating these materials.

#### Exams

There will be an exam at midterm and another at the end of the semester. Designed to test your knowledge and comprehension of the assigned poems and essays, both exams will consist primarily of identifications and short-answer questions.

## Discussion Questions

Twice over the course of the semester you will submit a discussion question that responds to the assigned reading. A thoughtful and well-crafted discussion question cannot be answered with basic factual information; it is not a question for which there is a clear right or wrong answer. Instead, it will address a poem, group of poems, or poet in light of some larger theme or issue: recurring images, stylistic patterns, historical context, a critic's response, connections to other poems and poets, etc. Discussion questions should aim to generate conversation and normally will require several sentences of setup.

The assignment schedule (pp. 4-7) lists the dates that your questions will be discussed. Questions are due the night before class and should be submitted to the "Discussion Questions" forum on Moodle by 9 PM. If you fail to submit your question in time you will be marked absent for the day.

## Group Project

At the end of the semester you will work in groups of three to annotate several poems by a particular poet and to prepare a short presentation on the poet's work. Presentations are scheduled for Monday, 4/14 and Wednesday, 4/16. Specific guidelines will be provided in class.

## Participation

Participation is an important component of this course. You may notice that you have fewer pages to read than you might in another literature course (particularly one that focuses on the novel). Be aware, though, that much of your reading will be dense. In order to make significant contributions in class, you will need to read the poems *at least* twice, paying close attention to both form and content—what a poem is saying and how it's saying it.

I may give quizzes. We will not be able to discuss all of the assigned poems in class, and quizzes will help me keep track of your progress. These will be short (3-4 questions), and if you have done the reading you should not have trouble passing them.

You will be marked as absent for the day if you 1) fail a quiz, 2) fail to submit a discussion question by the deadline, or 3) come to class without your book or other required materials.

## Dates for Papers and Exams

|  |                     |
|--|---------------------|
| Wednesday, February 5                  | Paper 1 due         |
| Friday, February 28                    | Midterm Exam        |
| Friday, March 21                       | Paper 2 due         |
| Monday, April 14 & Wednesday, April 16 | Group Presentations |
| Wednesday, April 23                    | Final Exam          |
| Wednesday, May 1                       | Final Paper due     |

## POLICIES

### Attendance

You are allowed three absences, excused or otherwise. For each absence after the third, your final grade will be deducted by one point. Keep in mind that, as noted above, any of the following will result in being marked as absent: failing a quiz, failing to submit a discussion question, and coming to class without the required materials. If you miss more than eight classes, you will fail the course.

### Paper Requirements

All papers should be typed, stapled, and formatted according to MLA style. A few notes on the MLA guidelines for quoting and citing poetry are included at the end of this syllabus (p. 8).

I will collect your papers at the beginning of class on the scheduled due date. I will not accept work sent through email. Late assignments will be deducted by 1/3 of a letter grade per day (i.e. B+ to B) for up to one week. Assignments received more than a week late will receive an F.

### Grading

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>First Paper</b>   | <b>15%</b> |
| <b>Second Paper</b>  | <b>15%</b> |
| <b>Midterm Exam</b>  | <b>15%</b> |
| <b>Final Exam</b>  | <b>15%</b> |
| <b>Participation</b> (includes discussion questions, quizzes, and group project) | <b>10%</b> |
| <b>Final Paper</b>   | <b>30%</b> |

### Academic Honesty

All work in this course should be original and individual, unless I have made a group assignment. Evidence of collusion (someone helped you write the assignment), plagiarism (using someone else's published or unpublished words without acknowledgement), or multiple submissions (handing in the same work to different classes) will not be tolerated. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the Honor Code.

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| <b>ENGLISH 251: SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS</b> |
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Readings and assignments are listed on the day they are due. Unless otherwise noted, all poems and essays referenced are from *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, Vol. 2. Essays appear at the end of the anthology.

**WEEK ONE**

**Wednesday, 1/8** Introductions / syllabus review  
**Friday, 1/10** Yvor Winters, Foreword to *The Testament of a Stone* (Moodle)  
 Modernist Poems (Moodle)  
 Randall Jarrell, “90 North,” “The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner,”  
 and “Eighth Air Force”

**WEEK TWO**

**Monday, 1/13** Elizabeth Bishop, through “Sestina”  
**Wednesday, 1/15** Elizabeth Bishop, “The Armadillo” through “North Haven”  
**Friday, 1/17** Robert Lowell, “The Quaker Graveyard at Nantucket” and “After the  
 Surprising Conversions”

**WEEK THREE**

**Monday, 1/20** Martin Luther King Day – NO CLASS  
**Wednesday, 1/22** Gwendolyn Brooks, through “The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett  
 Till”  
 Robert Hayden, “Those Winter Sundays”  
**Friday, 1/24** Howard Nemerov, “The Goose Fish” and “The Icehouse in Summer”  
 Richard Wilbur, “The Death of a Toad,” “Ceremony,” “Boy at the  
 Window,” and “Love Calls Us to the Things of This World”  
 James Wright, “Saint Judas”  
 Adrienne Rich, “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers”  
*DQ: Sarah Bauman; Ellen Booras*

**WEEK FOUR**

**Monday, 1/27** Dylan Thomas, all poems  
*DQ: Conner Bradley; Za’na Carter*  
**Wednesday, 1/29** Kingsley Amis, all poems  
 Donald Davie, through “In California”  
 Philip Larkin, “Reasons for Attendance”  
 Thom Gunn, “My Sad Captains”  
**Friday, 1/31** Philip Larkin, “Water” through end of section and “The Pleasure  
 Principle” (essay)

**WEEK FIVE**

- Monday, 2/3** Ted Hughes, all poems  
*DQ: Alex Cronin; Blair Drum*
- Wednesday, 2/5** Paper 1 due  
Charles Olson, “The Thing Was Moving” and “Projective Verse” (essay)  
Robert Duncan, “Poetry, a Natural Thing”  
Denise Levertov, “The Dog of Art,” “September 1961,” and “Olga Poems”
- Friday, 2/7** Robert Creeley, “Naughty Boy,” “I Know a Man,” and “For Love”  
Allen Ginsberg, all poems and “Notes Written on Finally Recording *Howl*” (essay)

**WEEK SIX**

- Monday, 2/10** Kenneth Koch, through “Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams”  
Frank O’Hara, all poems and “Personism: A Manifesto” (essay)  
John Ashbery, “The Instruction Manual” and “The Tennis Court Oath”  
*DQ: Alvaz Kaukab; Allycia Kleine*
- Wednesday, 2/12** Robert Lowell, “Grandparents” through end
- Friday, 2/14** Sylvia Plath, all poems

**WEEK SEVEN**

- Monday, 2/17** Sylvia Plath, all poems  
*DQ: Dianne Loftis; Heather Lomax*
- Wednesday, 2/19** John Berryman, all poems
- Friday, 2/21** James Wright, “Autumn Begins in Martins, Ferry, Ohio” through end

**WEEK EIGHT**

- Monday, 2/24** Robert Hayden, “Homage to the Empress of the Blues,” “Night, Death, Mississippi,” and “Elegies for Paradise Valley”  
James Dickey, “Buckdancer’s Choice” and “The Sheep Child”  
*DQ: Casey Means; Emily Neale*
- Wednesday, 2/26** TBA
- Friday, 2/28** Midterm Exam

**WEEK NINE**

- Monday, 3/3** Adrienne Rich, “Snapshots of a Daughter-in-Law” through end  
and “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision” (essay)  
*DQ: Chelsea Ortego; Colin Perry*

**Wednesday, 3/5** Gwendolyn Brooks, “Boy Breaking Glass,” “The Blackstone Rangers,”  
and “The Boy Died in My Alley”  
Amiri Baraka, through “A New Reality is Better Than a New Movie!” and  
“The Myth of a ‘Negro’ Literature” (essay)

**Friday, 3/7** Louise Bennett, all poems and “Jamaica Language” (essay)  
*DQ: Jackson Roberts; Anna Singletary*

**WEEK TEN** Spring Break – NO CLASS

**WEEK ELEVEN**

**Monday, 3/17** Seamus Heaney, all poems and “Feeling into Words” (essay)  
**Wednesday, 3/19** Seamus Heaney, all poems and “Feeling into Words” (essay)  
*DQ: Jenna Sullivan; Megan Thursby*

**Friday, 3/21** Paper 2 due  
Eavan Boland, all poems

**WEEK TWELVE**

**Monday, 3/24** Judith Wright, all poems  
Les Murray, all poems  
*DQ: Sarah Bauman; Ellen Booras*

**Wednesday, 3/26** Derek Walcott, through “The Season of Phantasmal Peace”  
*DQ: Conner Bradley; Za’na Carter*

**Friday, 3/28** A.K. Ramanujan, all poems and “Where Mirrors are Windows: Toward an  
Anthology of Reflection”  
*DQ: Alex Cronin; Blair Drum; Alvaz Kaukab*

**WEEK THIRTEEN**

**Monday, 3/31** Margaret Atwood, all poems  
Anne Carson, all poems  
*DQ: Allycia Kleine; Dianne Loftis*

**Wednesday, 4/2** Alberto Ríos, all poems  
Lorna Dee Cervantes, all poems  
*DQ: Heather Lomax; Casey Means; Emily Neale*

**Friday, 4/4** Rita Dove, all poems  
Rita Dove and Marilyn Nelson, “A Black Rainbow: Modern Afro-  
American Poetry” (Moodle)  
*DQ: Chelsea Ortego; Colin Perry*

**WEEK FOURTEEN**

**Monday, 4/7** Marilyn Chin, all poems  
Cathy Song, all poems  
*DQ: Jackson Roberts; Anna Singletary*

**Wednesday, 4/9** Joy Harjo, all poems  
Sherman Alexie, all poems  
*DQ: Jenna Sullivan; Megan Thursby*  
**Friday, 4/11** TBA

**WEEK FIFTEEN**

**Monday, 4/14** Group Presentations  
**Wednesday, 4/16** Group Presentations  
**Friday, 4/18** Easter Recess – NO CLASS

**WEEK SIXTEEN**

**Monday, 4/21** TBA; Submit abstract (final paper)  
**Wednesday, 4/23** Final Exam

**→ Final papers due in my office by noon on Wednesday, April 30.**

**QUOTING AND CITING POETRY  
MLA FORMAT**

→ When quoting 1, 2, or 3 lines of poetry, you should blend the quoted lines into your own sentence, using a slash to indicate line breaks. Provide the line numbers (instead of the page numbers) in parentheses.

In the second stanza of “Glazunoviana” the speaker abandons his previous questions, stating, “The bear / Drops dead in sight of the window” (8-9).

→ If you remove words from the middle of a line, use an ellipsis (three, spaced periods) to indicate the omission.

The speaker asks, “The window . . . / Is that here too?” (3-4).

→ Use brackets to add your own clarifications.

The speaker also wonders what has become of “all the little helps, / [his] initials in the sky” (5-6).

→ When quoting 4 or more lines of poetry, separate the lines from your paragraph as a block quotation.

The first stanza of “Glazunoviana” consists of three questions, one after the other:

The man with the red hat  
And the polar bear, is he here too?  
The window giving on shade,  
Is that here too?  
And all the little helps,  
My initials in the sky,  
The hay of an arctic summer night? (1-7)

→ Use indentions (rather than ellipses) to show that you’ve begun a block quotation in the middle of a line. If you remove one or more full lines in the middle of a block quotation, use a row of ellipses to indicate the omission.

The man with the red hat  
And the polar bear, is he here too?  
.....  
And all the little helps,  
My initials in the sky,  
The hay of an arctic summer night?

→ Remember: if you include a quotation, you should comment on it.