

Introduction to Poetry (as *History of Poetics*)

Chuck Carlise

This course will explore the evolution of lyric poetry in English – from the development of the lyric to the post-modern era. The class will be writing intensive, reading intensive and discussion-heavy. Week one will be dedicated to building a common vocabulary for discussing poetry, and putting various reading methods into practice. For the rest of the course, we will track various movements in the poetic tradition, from the early sonnets of Thomas Wyatt through Ashbery and Merwin. Students will read several poems in preparation for each class discussion, as well as one critical essay per week that will help situate the week's readings. A short lecture on historical, aesthetic, and socio-political context of the day's poems will open each class and provide a launch for class discussions. As each meeting concludes, a brief introduction to the upcoming reading will close the class.

Course will be graded primarily on two papers and in-class participation, with occasional quizzes factored in. The first essay will ask students to compare one of the poems from the first half of the course to a contemporary piece, using close-reading and historical context. The final essay will ask students to either (1) apply the ideas from critical essays to one of a selection of poems they have not seen before, or (2) track the poetic lineage of contemporary poem, referring to least three sources (poems or essays) from the course material.

Attached:

Grading Summary
Course Calendar

Grading Summary

Participation	30%
Mid-Term Paper	30%
Final Paper	30%
<u>Quizzes</u>	<u>10%</u>
	100

* **Please note:** the following calendar can be distributed over two meetings per week or three meetings per week. Because of this, I have not designated specific days for reading assignments below.

Course Calendar:

Week 1

Defining Poetry

- In Class: How to Talk About Poetry (terms) / How to Read Poetry (performance & text)
Reading: Robert Hass – “The World as Will and Representation”
Robert Hayden – “Those Winter Sundays”
Matthea Harvey – “Pity the Bathtub its Forced Embrace of the Human Form”
Philip Larkin – “Church Going”
Adrienne Rich – “Diving into the Wreck”
Richard Wilbur – “Love Calls Us to the Things of the World”
Quiz: Poetry Terms

Week 2

Evolution of the Lyric

- In Class: The Lyric; the Troubadours; the Sonnet; the Metaphysical Poets
Poems: “Psalm 123”; “Psalm 137”
Sappho – fragments
Petrarch – “Rime 190”; “Rime 267”
Sir Thomas Wyatt – “Whoso List to Hunt”
William Shakespeare – “Sonnet 130”; excerpt from *Romeo and Juliet*

Week 3

The Early Modern Period

- In Class: Pastoral vs Metaphysical poets; Early Romanticism
Poems: Christopher Marlowe – “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love”
John Donne – “The Bait”
George Herbert – “Death”
William Blake – “The Chimney Sweeper” (I); “The Chimney Sweeper” (E);
“The Ecchoing Green” (I); “The Garden of Love” (E)
Essay: T.S. Eliot – excerpt from “The Metaphysical Poets”

Week 4

Romanticism

- In Class: The Sublime & Importance of Now; Negative Capability
Poems: William Wordsworth – “Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey”
Samuel Taylor Coleridge – “Kubla Khan”
Percy Shelley – “Ozymandias”
John Keats – “Ode to a Nightingale”; “This Living Hand”
Essay: John Keats – excerpt from *Letters*

Week 5

American Traditions

- In Class: American Romanticism; the Gothic & Private Interior
- Poems: Walt Whitman – “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”
Emily Dickinson – “I Like the Look of Agony”; “Much Madness in
Divinest Sense”; “Tell All the Truth But Tell It Slant –”; “Wild Nights–
Wild Nights –”
- Essay: Walt Whitman – Introduction to *Leaves of Grass*

Week 6

Transition: Victorian Era to Modern

- In Class: Modernism: Difficulty; Pessimism; & *Making it New*
- Poems: Alfred Lord Tennyson – “Lady of Shallott”; “Ulysses”
William Butler Yeats – “The Second Coming”; “Leda and the Swan”
T.S. Eliot – “Love Song of J.Alfred Prufrock”
- Essay: T.S. Eliot – excerpt from “Tradition & the Individual Talent”

Mid-Term Paper Due

Week 7

Modernism

- In Class: Psychology & Stream of Consciousness; Imagism
- Poems Gertrude Stein – from *Tender Buttons*
James Joyce – from *Ulysses*
Ezra Pound – *Cantos* 1 and 2; “In a Station of the Metro”
William Carlos Williams – “Between Walls”; “Spring & All”; “Landscape
with the Fall of Icarus”
- Essay: Hart Crane – “General Aims & Theories”

Week 8

The Other Modernisms

- In Class: Imagination v. Realism; Harlem Renaissance
- Poems: Wallace Stevens – “Anecdote of the Jar”; “The Snow Man”
Robert Frost – “Need of Being Versed in Country Things”
Marianne Moore – “The Fish”
Sterling Brown – Memphis Blues
Langston Hughes – “Weary Blues”
Gwendolyn Brooks – “Sadie & Maud”; “Song for the Back Yard”
- Essay: Robert Frost – “The Shape a Poem Makes”
Alain Locke – excerpt from “The New Negro”

Week 9**20th Century**

In Class: The Banal & Ordinary; The Beat Movement
Poems: W.H. Auden – “Musee de Beaux Artes”
Frank O’Hara – “The Day Lady Died”
Elizabeth Bishop – “Sestina”
Allen Ginsberg – “America”; “Howl”
Gary Snyder – “Milton By Firelight”; “Mid-August at Sourdough
Mountain Lookout”

Week 10**20th Century**

In Class: Confessionalism / Post-Modernism
Poems: Sylvia Plath – “Lady Lazarus”
Anne Sexton – “With Mercy for the Greedy”
Robert Lowell – “For the Union Dead”
John Ashbery – “Soonest Mended”
W.S. Merwin – “Some Last Questions”
Essay: Marjorie Perloff – excerpt from *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*

Week 11**Final Paper Due**