

LIT 3031(Section 2E29)
Spring 2016
T/R 5-6/6
TUR 1105

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Lyric Poetry/Lyric Theory

What is a lyric poem? Can we identify characteristics of lyric that persist over time or do poems described as lyrics differ dramatically from one age to the next? Do lyrics share features or do we realize poems as lyrics only through certain strategies of reading that make up the lyric experience? Are lyric poems essentially about private experience or can they speak to public issues? These are the kinds of questions that we will be addressing in this course, and we will do so by reading both poems categorized as lyrics, and literary theory that attempts to define the lyric.

Since the reading of poetry is not widely taught in the department, we will begin the semester with an intensive introduction to poetry. We will use the third edition of Helen Vendler's *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology* (2010) as our primer. Vendler has a working theory of lyric, and we will go on to situate that theory in relation to other theories of lyric as we find them in texts by twentieth- and twenty-first-century thinkers whose work is collected in Virginia Jackson's and Yopie Prins' *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology* (2014).

Required Texts

The following texts have been posted at the textbook adoption website. Following each title, you will find the abbreviation I employ to designate the text in question on the projected schedule of classes at the end of this syllabus.

Helen Vendler, *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*, Third Edition (Boston & New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Press, 2010)—PPP

Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, *The Lyric Theory Reader: A Critical Anthology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014)—LTR

Office Hours

As the English Department's Coordinator of Student Affairs, I advise undergraduate English majors. I am, therefore, available in my office most of the time when I am not teaching or preparing to teach. You should generally be able to find me in my office M 9:30am-12:15pm & 2:30pm-4:15pm, TR 2:30pm-4:15pm, and WF 9:30am-1:15pm & 2:00pm-4:15pm. You may drop by or make an appointment to see me. I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss the course, the readings, or the assignments.

Instructor Expectations & Requirements

Attendance (5% of final grade)

Attendance is mandatory, and discussion will be the principal format. During the course of the semester, the length of time that we will spend together will be approximately that of an average workweek. From class meeting to class meeting, we will, through our discussions, be attempting to develop a shared understanding of the materials we are reading. To miss any thread of this developing understanding is a considerable loss.

In order to be marked present for a class meeting, a student must arrive on time with the assigned texts. Students who are more than ten minutes late for class will be marked absent, as will students who come to class without the assigned texts.

Students may miss three 50-minute class sessions without penalty. I will deduct 10% from the attendance grade for each of the following three unexcused absences. Students who have more than six unexcused absences run the risk of forfeiting the whole portion of their final grades assigned to attendance, and, quite possibly, of failing the course.

Participation (15% of final grade)

All students must participate actively in class discussion. Active participation involves:

(a) Preparation

In order to be prepared for class discussion, students need to read the assigned materials carefully and develop thoughtful responses to them. Careful reading typically entails annotation of texts and taking notes about texts.

(b) Involvement in Discussion

Students should attempt to contribute to discussion on a consistent basis, and in a way that advances discussion. One can advance discussion in a variety of ways—for example, by answering questions about facts, by putting forth hypotheses or hazarding interpretations, by asking questions that try to clarify issues or questions that attempt to formulate problems for further discussion.

Students should keep in mind that some people are more sensitive about making contributions to class discussion than others. It certainly does not follow from this fact that students should not disagree with one another. Without disagreement, it is difficult to find one's way forward in an argument. However, students should pursue their disagreements with as much tact and discretion as possible, and be prepared to pursue the implications of their differences in a serious fashion.

A student who has a perfect attendance record, but only rarely contributes to class discussion, cannot expect a perfect participation score.

Preparation Pages (worth 10% each, for a total of 20%)

On 2 occasions in the course of the semester, each student will distribute to the rest of the members of the class what I'm calling a preparation page (one in weeks 2-5, and one in weeks 7-16). Each should be one page, single-spaced. These preparation pages must demonstrate preparation to discuss the texts at hand, and they must suggest directions for the discussion of those texts. The first will use strategies of reading exemplified in a chapter of *PPP* to discuss one of the poems in the "Reading Other Poems" section of that same chapter. The second preparation page will summarize, assess, and propose terms of discussion for one of the essays we are reading in *LTR* in the second part of the course.

Students should send their preparation pages to me as email attachments by noon on the day before we discuss the readings to which the preparation pages are responding. I will then distribute the preparation pages to the class roll listserv.

It is particularly important that students read and generate responses to the preparation pages as well as to the readings, as we will be trying to approach the readings through the preparation pages. I will be judging preparedness to discuss the preparation pages as part of my assessment of participation.

Close Reading Essay of 5-6 pages (25% of final grade)

Students will write an analysis of a poem from *PPP* employing techniques derived from Vendler. This essay will be due by noon on Friday, February 19.

Final Argumentative Essay of 8 pages (35% of final grade)

Students will write an argumentative essay dealing with texts or issues arising from our readings in *LTR*. The essay will be due by noon on Wednesday, April 20.

Essay Formatting

Unless an essay assignment requests a particular format, follow these specifications when you write your essays:

- All written work must be typed in a font no larger than 12 point.
- Page margins may not exceed 1.25 inches at left & right, 1 inch top and bottom.
- The type or print must be clearly legible.
- The paper must be of a quality that allows the instructor to write marginal comments in ink without those comments blotting and bleeding.

Finally, any essay you submit must correctly employ either the MLA or Chicago Style Manual citation protocols. If it does not, it will be handed back to you without a grade. The paper should be resubmitted with correct citations at the class meeting following the class meeting at which it has been handed back to you. Once the paper has been resubmitted with appropriate citations, it will be graded. Five points will be deducted from the assigned grade for the initial failure to use correct citation form, and three further points will be deducted from the assigned grade for each day beyond the resubmission deadline that the paper is late.

Late Paper Policy

If you anticipate that circumstances will cause you to submit an assignment late, you must negotiate an extension with the instructor at least 24 hours in advance of the deadline. Any assignment submitted late without a negotiated extension will be subject to penalty. I will subtract 3 points from the assigned grade for each day the paper is late.

Student Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) provides students and faculty with information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities in the classroom. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter that must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Academic Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by the Honor Pledge that states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: ‘On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.’” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with instructor of this class.

Whenever you represent the work of someone else as your own, or employ words or ideas borrowed from another without full acknowledgement and correct documentation of the source, you have committed plagiarism. This is the most grave of academic offenses and will not be tolerated in this course.

The *MLA Handbook* asserts that “you should document everything that you borrow—not only direct quotations and paraphrases but also information and ideas. Of course, common sense as well as ethics should determine what you document. For example, you rarely need to give sources for familiar proverbs (‘You can’t judge a book by its cover’), well-known quotations (‘We shall overcome’), or common knowledge (‘George Washington was the first president of the United States’). But you must indicate the source of any appropriated material that readers might otherwise mistake for your own. If you have any doubt about whether or not you are committing plagiarism, cite your source or sources” (33).

Statement on Harassment

UF provides an educational and working environment for its students, faculty, and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Cell Phones

During class meetings, students should focus exclusively on the work of the seminar. Cell phones must be turned off and students must refrain from checking for messages.

Grading Scale

A = 94-100; A- = 90-93; B+ = 87-89; B = 84-86; B- = 80-83; C+ = 77-79; C = 74-76; C- = 70-73; D+ = 67-69; D = 64-66; D- = 60-63; E = 0-59

UF Grading Policies for Assigning Grade Points

See <http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Final Grade Appeals

If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Stephanie A. Smith, Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course

materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Smith. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

******ALL WRITTEN WORK MUST BE COMPLETED AND SUBMITTED IN ORDER FOR A STUDENT TO RECEIVE A GRADE FOR THE COURSE.**

Projected Schedule of Classes

The schedule below is designed to give students an outline of the due dates for reading and writing assignments. The instructor reserves the right to revise this schedule if it becomes necessary. Students will be given due warning of any such revisions.

Part I

Week 1

T 1/5: Introduction: Syllabus, policies, etc.

R 1/7: *PPP* "About Poets and Poetry," xxxix-xliii & Chapter 1: "The Poem as Life," 3-26

Week 2

T 1/12: *PPP* Chapter 2: "The Poem as Arranged Life," 27-76

R 1/14: *PPP* Chapter 3: "Poems as Pleasure," 77-110

Week 3

T 1/19: *PPP* Chapter 4: "Describing Poems," 111-152

R 1/21: *PPP* Chapter 5: "The Play of Language," 153-178

Week 4

T 9/26: *PPP* Chapter 6: "Constructing a Self," 179-212

R 9/28: *PPP* Chapter 7: "Poetry and Social Identity," 213-238

Week 5

T 2/2: *PPP*, Chapter 8: "History and Regionality," 239-280

R 2/4: *PPP*, Chapter 9: "Attitudes, Values, Judgments," 281-306

Week 6

T 2/9: *PPP*, Chapter 10: "Poets on Poetry," 307-320

R 2/11: *PPP* wrap-up

Part II

Week 7

T 2/16: Gérard Genette, "The Architext," *LTR*, 17-30; Ralph Cohen, "History and Genre," *LTR*, 53-63

R 2/18: Jonathan Culler, "Lyric, History, and Genre," *LTR*, 63-77

F 2/19: ***Close Reading Paper due by noon***

Week 8

T 2/23: Stanley Fish, "How to Recognize a Poem When You See One," *LTR*, 77-85

R 2/25: Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, "Introduction" to *Understanding Poetry*, *LTR*, 177- 192

Week 9

T 3/1 & R 3/3: SPRING BREAK

Week 10

T 3/8: T.S. Eliot, "The Three Voices of Poetry," *LTR*, 192-200; Reuben Brower, "The Speaking Voice," *LTR*, 211-218

R 3/10: Mikhail Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," *LTR*, 224-233;

Week 11

T 3/15: Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics," *LTR*, 234-248; Michael Riffaterre, "The Poem's Significance," *LTR*, 249-265

R 3/17: Paul de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," *LTR*, 291-304

Week 12

T 3/22: Barbara Johnson, "Anthropomorphism in Lyric and Law," *LTR*, 304-318

R 3/24: Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," *LTR*, 327-338

Week 13

T 3/29: Theodor W. Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society," *LTR*, 339-350

R 3/31: Drew Milne, "In Memory of the Pterodactyl: The Limits of Lyric Humanism," *LTR*, 361-367

Week 14

T 4/5: Martin Heidegger, ". . . Poetically Man Dwells . . .," *LTR*, 390-399; Allen Grossman, "Summa Lyrica: A Primer of the Commonplaces in Speculative Poetics," *LTR*, 418-430

R 4/7: Giorgio Agamben, "The End of the Poem," *LTR*, 430-434

Week 15

T 4/12: Marjorie Perloff, "Can(n)ons to the Right of Us, Can(n)ons to the Left of Us: A Plea for Difference," *LTR*, 460-476; Christopher Nealon, "The Matter of Capital, or Catastrophe and Textuality," *LTR*, 487-499

R 4/14: Nancy J. Vickers, "Diana Described: Scattered Woman and Scattered Rhyme," *LTR*, 511-521

Week 16

T 4/19: Thomas E. Yingling, "The Homosexual Lyric," *LTR*, 541-556

W 4/20: ***Argumentative Essay due by noon***