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Tuesday 9-11 (4:05-7:05 pm)
CBD 216

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4211-H Turlington (Monday, 2-4 pm)

Poetry requires the manipulation of words—it is the words, even more than the feelings within them, that make poetry memorable. Yet to treat poetry as merely a collection of words is too austere; it would be like treating a dog as a bundle of DNA (not that some dogs shouldn't be so treated). We will look closely at words and the way that altering even a single one may change the effect of a poem, without ever forgetting that a poem must proceed simultaneously through what those words evoke.

Eliot said of Milton that a “man may be a great artist, and yet have a bad influence.” We will be looking at poets who are by and large good artists and trying to see what might make them good influences as well.

!§> Logistics

At the end of each class I'll make a writing assignment. Assignments vary from the straightforward to the perverse. I'll ask you to write a poem to a form of my devising, with three or four additional requirements meant to obstruct your conscious mind and give you access to your imagination. I hope to entangle your censoring conscious so completely that you'll concentrate on fulfilling the form and not worry overmuch about what is being said. The poem is due the following week at the end of class (bring copies for all). Poems must be printed in black ink on regular white paper. I'm immune to excuses for late assignments, however ingenious. You may obtain grace until noon the next day (no longer) by bringing lashings of cookies to class the following week. Late assignments will otherwise be marked down severely, 25% per day. These penalties are cumulative and cannot be remitted.

From the poems submitted I'll choose four or five as the worksheet of our discussion (emailing you the names of the lucky poets), to which the first half of class will be devoted. Over the course of the semester, each poet's work will be workshopped about the same number of times. Assignments sent by email should be sent as attachments with your name, number of assignment, class—don't make me your secretary.

In the second half of each class we'll discuss assigned readings. This term we'll read Jay Parini, ed., *Columbia Anthology of American Poetry*; Seamus Heaney, *Field Work*; Elizabeth Bishop, *Complete Poems*; Gjertrud Schnackenberg, *Supernatural Love: Poems 1976-1992*; and Anthony Hecht, *Collected Earlier Poems*. It's a prerequisite of the course that you buy the books. Failure to complete the readings, or to engage in discussion, is

a sign of lack of interest in a grade. You can buy the books at the campus book store or on the web. If you don't have a particular book on one evening, it's a cookie penalty; if you don't have it a second evening, it's two points off your grade. Ebooks are not permitted.

I won't set the direction of our discussions, but I like to look particularly at the uses and habits of revision. My complaint about many younger poets is that they have no concern for the richness of words, the complication of expression, and rarely use what might be called the subsidies of sense (as opposed to plain bread-and-butter prose meanings). These subsidies include ambiguity, nuance, the right wrong word, music of various sorts (alliterative, consonantal), patterns of adherence (meter, set form), thematic tangles, sensitivity to verb tense, timing, and delay—in short, the ways that poets have traditionally put English on English.

!§> Discussions

You're responsible for reading the worksheet each week in advance of class, making notes upon it, and bringing it with you. Copious notes. The quick wit, intelligence, and charm of your analysis will be appreciated by all. Use of laptops during class is forbidden. If your cell phone rings, you owe everyone cake or cookies.

!§> Notebooks

The week after I receive your assignment, I'll hand it back with suggestions. These annotated assignments should be collected in a file folder, due on December 5 (the Thursday before the last week of class), accompanied by new revisions of all poems. There is no midterm, no final, no paper, just the hard work of poems.

!§> Grades

I'll give you ten assignments, the last due November 20. After reading your brilliantly revised portfolios, I'll give each poem a mark of 1 to 10 (these are chili-pepper grades, from ultra mild to red hot). The mark will reflect the courage and imagination shown in the assignment, as well as the technical dexterity or ingenuity, and, in addition, the quality of the revision. Class participation will be awarded 0 to 10 additional points. I'm not able to reward mere chatter, but I'm sure that you'll always respond to the poems and the opinions of others in a deft and polite and witty manner.

!§> Absences

You may have two absences for any reason, even whimsical; but you must notify me in advance. Email me or call me at home to do so. Each uncleared absence (or lateness over ten minutes) and each additional absence will result in loss of half a letter grade for the term. If you miss a class, your assignment is due by email, sent to the whole class, by 12 noon the following day (.pdf, .rtf, .doc, or .docx format, please). Otherwise it will be treated as late. (Poems late because of absence do not have to be rescued by sweets.)

When

you're absent, you may pick up your packet from my mailbox in 4301 Turlington, across from the double elevators. I'm available for conferences Monday afternoons or by appointment if that time is impossible due to a scheduled class (but not a job or a hot date).

Some rules of presentation

- 1) Title your poems.
- 2) Single space with 12-point font (and don't use a clever font).
- 3) Don't center justify. (It makes the poor poems look like a Rorschach test.)
- 4) Put your name, class, my name, and the assignment number in the upper-left or upper-right corner of the page.
- 5) No sentence fragments. You must use correct grammar and punctuation.
- 6) No rhyming unless the assignment explicitly calls for it.

Some rules of composition

- 1) Stay away from abstraction until you can handle detail.
- 2) Stay away from passive voice and sentence fragments until you can handle sentences.
- 3) Stay away from dialogue until you can handle exposition.
- 4) Learn the rules of punctuation.
- 5) Learn the difference between "like" and "as."
- 6) Write only in complete sentences, on pain of defenestration and rustication.

From Trollope's Journal

[Winter, 1861]

As far as statues go, so far there's not much choice: they're either Washingtons or Indians, a whitewashed, stubby lot, His country's Father or His foster sons. The White House in a sad, unhealthy spot just higher than Potomac's swampy brim, —they say the present President has got ague or fever in each backwoods limb. On Sunday afternoons I wandered—rather I floundered—out alone. The air was raw and dark; the marsh half-ice, half-mud. This weather is normal now: a frost, and then a thaw, and then a frost. A hunting man, I found the Pennsylvania Avenue heavy ground . . . There all around me in the ugly mud —hoof-pocked, uncultivated—herds of cattle, numberless, wond'ring steers and oxen, stood: beef for the Army, after the next battle. Their legs were caked the color of dried blood; their horns were wreathed with fog. Poor, starving, dumb or lowing creatures, never to chew the cud or fill their maws again! Th'effluvium

made that damned anthrax on my forehead throb.
 I called a surgeon in, a young man, but,
 with a sore throat himself, he did his job. We
 talked about the War, and as he cut away, he
 croaked out, "Sir, I do declare everyone's
 sick! The soldiers poison the air."

—Elizabeth Bishop

I Remember, I Remember

Coming up England by a different line
 For once, early in the cold new year,
 We stopped, and, watching men with number plates
 Sprint down the platform to familiar gates,
 "Why, Coventry!" I exclaimed. "I was born here."

I leant far out, and squinnied for a sign
 That this was still the town that had been "mine"
 So long, but found I wasn't even clear
 Which side was which. From where those cycle-crates
 Were standing, had we annually departed

For all those family hols? . . . A whistle went:
 Things moved. I sat back, staring at my boots.
 "Was that," my friend smiled, "where you 'have your roots'?"
 No, only where my childhood was unspent,
 I wanted to retort, just where I started:

By now I've got the whole place clearly charted.
 Our garden, first: where I did not invent
 Blinding theologies of flowers and fruits,
 And wasn't spoken to by an old hat.
 And here we have that splendid family

I never ran to when I got depressed,
 The boys all biceps and the girls all chest,
 Their comic Ford, their farm where I could be
 "Really myself." I'll show you, come to that,
 The bracken where I never trembling sat,

Determined to go through with it; where she
 Lay back, and "all became a burning mist."
 And, in those offices, my doggerel
 Was not set up in blunt ten-point, nor read
 By a distinguished cousin of the mayor,

Who didn't call and tell my father There
 Before us, had we the gift to see ahead—

“You look as though you wished the place in Hell,”
My friend said, “judging from your face.” “Oh well,
I suppose it's not the place's fault,” I said.

“Nothing, like something, happens anywhere.”

—Philip Larkin

TEXTS:

Jay Parini, ed., Columbia Anthology of American
Poetry

Seamus Heaney, Field Work

Elizabeth Bishop, Complete Poems

Gjertrud Schnackenberg, Supernatural Love:
Poems 1976-1992

Anthony Hecht, Collected Earlier Poems

week

1 (August 26)	Introduction and Baptism by Fire
2 (September 2)	Seamus Heaney, Field Work Whitman
3 (September 9)	Seamus Heaney, Field Work Bryant, Dickinson
4 (September 16)	Seamus Heaney, Field Work Frost, Emerson, Poe
5 (September 23)	Elizabeth Bishop, Complete Poems Stephen Crane,
6 (September 30)	Elizabeth Bishop, Complete Poems Stevens, Williams
7 (October 7)	Elizabeth Bishop, Complete Poems H.D., Moore
8 (October 14)	Gjertrud Schnackenberg, Supernatural Love Ransom, Eliot
9 (October 21)	Gjertrud Schnackenberg, Supernatural Love Pound
10 (October 28)	Gjertrud Schnackenberg, Supernatural Love Roethke, Jarrell
11 (November 4)	MOVIE NIGHT
12 (November 11)	VETERANS DAY (NO CLASS)
13 (November 18)	Anthony Hecht, Collected Earlier Poems Berryman, Lowell
14 (November 25)	Anthony Hecht, Collected Earlier Poems Clampitt, Wilbur
15 (December 2)	Anthony Hecht, Collected Earlier Poems Justice, Plath
	(Friday, December 5)
	NOTEBOOKS DUE
16 (December 9)	Final pronouncements

It may be necessary for the instructor to be absent one evening. Warning shall be given!

All the Other Things

Classroom Behavior:

Every student in this class is expected to participate in a responsible and mature manner that enhances education. Any conduct that disrupts the learning process may lead to disciplinary action. Because this course requires much contact, collaboration, and dialogue among students, it is essential that each student work to create an environment of respect and tolerance. Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the readings we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

Important Tip: You should never copy and paste something from the Internet without providing the exact location.

Final Grade Appeals: Students should consult the Associate Chair of the English Department.

Turn off your cell phone before class.

Grading

A few reminders: (1) This is a studio course, so grading is even more subjective than usual; (2) You are graded on your final assignments and your class participation; (3) There are penalties for late assignments that may affect your final grade; (4) There are penalties for lateness to class, or for missing more than two classes.

A

Assignments almost always show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a complete understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might often pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is almost always adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

A-

Assignments often show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as an almost complete understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might reasonably often pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is usually adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

B+

Assignments reasonably often show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as an excellent understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might fairly often pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is frequently adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

B

Assignments more often than not show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a very good understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might sometimes pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is sometimes adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

B-

Assignments sometimes show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a very good understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might very occasionally pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is on occasion adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

C+

Assignments rarely show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, as well as a fair understanding of the formal

or informal demands of the poem, and might once or twice pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is usually not adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions.

C

Assignments almost never show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, have a not so good understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and might once or twice pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is almost never adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions. In addition, there may be frequent problems with grammar and syntax.

C-

Assignments virtually never show remarkable ingenuity or imagination, have a poor understanding of the formal or informal demands of the poem, and would probably never pass for graduate-level work. Class participation is virtually never adept, insightful, and surprising in its perceptions. In addition, there may be very frequent problems with grammar and syntax.

D+

C- work further marred by problems of insight and understanding, as well as persistent difficulties with grammar and syntax.

D

D+ work further marred by very great problems of insight and understanding, as well as extraordinary difficulties with grammar and syntax.

D-

D work further marred by inexplicable and apparently ineradicable problems of insight and understanding, as well as even more extraordinary difficulties with grammar and syntax.

E

D- work further marred by nearly incomprehensible insights and understanding, as well as difficulties with grammar and syntax far beyond the norm for someone who cares about the language.

Remember that these are the rubrics only for the assignments and class participation. Your grade may move down with penalties for late attendance or late assignments.

UF Stuff

This course can satisfy the UF General Education requirement for Composition (not Humanities). For more info, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx>

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office provides information and support regarding accommodations for students with disabilities. For more info, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>

UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/sexual/>

All students must abide by the Student Honor Code. For more info about academic honesty, including definitions of plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration, see: <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/honorcode.php>

This is a General Education course providing student learning outcomes listed in the Undergraduate Catalog. For more information, see <http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/advising/info/general-educationrequirement.aspx#learning>.