

LIT 3031/class # 23348
Spring 2020
T 7, R 7-8
MAT 0116

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Things To Do with Poems

The things we will do with poems will range from the patiently traditional (which is not without its own subversive force) to the impertinently experimental (which is not at all without tradition). At the former end of the spectrum, we will perform "close readings" of poems, attending to them in detail, responding to all the resources of language that poems utilize. At the latter end of the spectrum, we will "poem-surf" through substantial portions of the *Norton Anthology of Poetry* each week. "Poem-surfing" encourages readers to follow their desires: to skim, graze, alight, and finally delve into poems when phrases, images, ideas, or sound effects catch their attention. In between these poles, we will treat poems as works to be evaluated, as triggers for meditation, as distinctive ways of thinking and knowing, as models of expression, as sources of pleasure, and as sustaining enigmas. We will try to learn not just about poems, but also from poems and through poems.

Texts

- Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1982)
- Thomas Carper and Derek Attridge, *Meter and Meaning: An Introduction to Rhythm in Poetry* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003)
- Margaret Ferguson et al (eds.), *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, Sixth Edition (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Co., 2018)

Office Hours

In order to fulfill my responsibilities as the English Department's undergraduate academic advisor, I am available in my office most of the time when I am not teaching or preparing to teach. Although meetings or other appointments will sometimes take me out of my office, you should generally be able to find me in my office MF 9:30am-12:00pm and 12:45pm-4:15pm, T 9:30am-11:00am and 3:00pm-4:15pm, R 9:30am-11:00am, W 9:30am-11:30am and 3:00pm-4:15pm. You are welcome either to drop by or to make an appointment to see me. Please do not hesitate to come to talk with me about any questions you have regarding the course, the readings, or the assignments. I am more than happy to meet with you.

Course Requirements

Attendance (5% of final grade)

Attendance is required. You will be expected to arrive on time with the course textbook and whatever other materials may be required for class. Anyone who arrives more than 10 minutes late for class, and who has not previously alerted me to a compelling reason for such tardiness will be marked absent for the entire session. Anyone who arrives for class without the readings will similarly be marked absent since there is no way that s/he will be able to participate in the class without the reading materials.

Students will be permitted to miss 3 50-minute class sessions without excuse or penalty. Each of the next three unexcused absences will entail a 10-percentage point penalty in the assessment of an attendance grade. Students who have more than 6 total unexcused absences will fail the course.

Absences will be excused in conformity with university policy as outlined at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx#absences>.

While serious illness or a family emergency may be grounds for excusing absences, students cannot expect that they will be able to pass the course if they are absent for prolonged periods. Certainly, even if your absences are excused, you should expect that 9 absences or more would cause you to fail the course.

Participation (15% of final grade)

Active participation will be required of all students. I take active participation to include:

(a) Preparation

Students must come prepared for class. Being prepared for a discussion involves reading the material carefully and developing a thoughtful response to it. In order to read these materials fully, you must read them actively, taking notes, and reflecting on them.

(b) Involvement in Discussion

Students must involve themselves in our discussions as energetically as possible, and with as much tact and discretion as possible. Although some students are more reticent than others, education is a public and collective process, and part of that process entails engagement in public debate. Students must, therefore, participate on a regular basis, and must be willing to pursue the implications of their differences in a serious fashion.

The "Essence of Poetry" Assignment

Your major individual project for the course will be modeled on Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. In the sequence of fragments that make up this brief book, Barthes narrates his attempt to discover the essence of photography by analyzing what "holds" him in photographs. Your job will be to discover what the essence of poetry is (for you) by analyzing that which "holds" you in poems. The final project will (at least partially) draw upon your reading journal as a resource, and you will compose it as a series of fragments like that which Barthes produces.

In the first half of the semester, you will write two trial fragments for the "Essence of Poetry" project, each of which should be 500-750 words in length. Together, they will be worth 5% of your final grade.

A first complete draft of the "Essence of Poetry" project will be due at class on 3/17 for a revision workshop scheduled for 3/24. The final version of the project will be due on Monday 3/30 by noon

The completed "Essence of Poetry" assignment, which should be 10-12 pages in length, will be worth 30% of your final grade.

The "Poetic History of the Present" Project

The "Poetic History of the Present" Project will be a group enterprise that complements the individual work you will undertake in the "Essence of Poetry" project. It will take its inspiration from experimental projects such as T.S. Eliot's long poem *The Waste Land* and Walter Benjamin's *The Arcades Project*, which worked with fragments of past texts to make implicit arguments about the relations between the past and the present. After class discussions in which we attempt to define some of the salient features of our present moment in time, each student will work as part of a group that will explore the prehistory of one of these features of our present moment in time by culling fragments of poetry from the *Norton Anthology*. Each group will assemble a collection of fragments from poems and order them in such a way that a reader would be able to make out the argument the group is making about the relation between the past and the present, and then will share their assemblages with the rest of the class at the end of the semester. Class sessions in the second half of the semester will be devoted to discussing poems relevant to the topics the groups are addressing, and to group work on the projects.

Each group's assemblage will be assigned a grade, and each student in a group will receive the same grade as the other students in the group for the assemblage. The "Poetic History of the Present" project will be worth 15% of the final grade.

Reading Journal

Throughout much of the semester, students will maintain reading journals. The entries in these journals will serve a number of purposes.

(a) Poem-Surfing Entries

Many of the entries will be products of what I am calling "poem-surfing." While our class discussions will typically focus on close consideration of a few poems, students will also be expected to read widely in the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*. This wide reading, as one might expect, cannot involve detailed attention to every line of every poem. Indeed, students are encouraged to move from poem to poem in an unsystematic manner, just as one might jump from channel to channel on TV, or as one might surf the Internet. When one surfs, one is waiting for something to catch one's attention, to provoke some sort of interest or curiosity. In part, the journals are to be the records of your surfing. In them, you will assemble quotations from the poems you are reading under the following headings:

- What I Admire (what seems exemplary, what you would like to have written)
- What I Find Irritating (what is annoying, insufferable, intolerable)
- What Bores Me (what provokes indifference or little response at all)
- What Puzzles me (what is baffling or perplexing)
- What Sounds Fabulous (what is especially pleasing musically or rhythmically)

You may devise further headings under which you can collect quotations from the poems you read; indeed, I encourage you to do so. These five headings, however, are mandatory. Each week you should assemble no less than 10 quotations under these headings. You must have at

least one quotation under each heading. No more than two quotations in any given week may be drawn from the work of a single poet. Each quotation must be accompanied by the name of the writer, the title of the poem, and a page reference to the anthology.

Each week, you will be responsible for surfing through a specific set of pages in the *Norton Anthology*, and the quotations you assemble in your journal for that week must be drawn from those pages.

1/21	1210-1397 (poets born 1840-1887)
1/28	1397-1573 (poets born 1888-1908)
2/4	1573-1750 (poets born 1909-1923)
2/11	1750-1946 (poets born 1925-1934)
2/18	1946-2157 (poets born 1935-1972)
2/25	131-339 (poets born 1503-1572)
3/10	340-561 (poets born 1572-1631)
3/17	562-770 (poets born 1632-1754)
3/24	771-987 (poets born 1757-1795)
3/31	987-1209 (poets born 1801-1837)

(b) "Essence of Poetry" Project Entries

Through week 8, you will also use your reading journal to collect materials for your major individual project for the course, the "Essence of Poetry" project. The poem-surfing will doubtless help you with this project in some ways, but you will also need to collect a category of quotations specific to the project:

- What Holds Me (what makes a poem "exist" for you as a poem)

Each week, you must assemble 3 quotations under this category. Almost inevitably, the poems from which you extract passages to include under this category will be poems that you have been led to spend more time with in the process of poem-surfing.

(c) Poetic History of the Present Entries

As you are working on your Poetic History of the Present projects in weeks 6-12, you will be poem-surfing texts drawn from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. These poems will, then, be specially relevant to the Poetic History of the Present projects. In each of these weeks, include at least two quotations relevant to the work your group is doing on the History of the Present project.

Journals must be typed, and they will be due by the beginning of our Tuesday class meetings.

In week 14, you will be required to resubmit all the reading journal entries in their totality.

The reading journal will be worth 30% of your final grade. Each entry you submit will be graded on an S/U basis. If you have fulfilled the requirements as outlined above, you will receive an S grade for that submission. Each S grade will count as a perfect (100%) score when I assess the completed reading journals at the end of the semester.

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>

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 the instructor of this class.

Statement on Harassment

It is the policy of The University of Florida to provide an educational and working environment for its students, faculty and staff that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex, including sexual harassment. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated, and individuals who engage in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. The University encourages students, faculty, staff and visitors to promptly report sex discrimination and sexual harassment. For more about the University of Florida policies regarding harassment, see the University of Florida Student Conduct Code at <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/conductcode.php> and policies regarding harassment at <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/eo/sexharassment.htm>.

Student Disability Services

The Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office (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.

Cell Phones and Laptops

During class, students should have cell phones turned off, and stashed away. Students may use laptops to take notes, but if students are found to be using laptops for other purposes, they will be marked absent for the class meeting in which they have misused their computers.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on

how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Final Grade Appeals

If you want to appeal the final grade you receive for this course, you should contact Professor Kenneth Kidd, Associate Chair and Undergraduate Coordinator of the English Department. You will submit your course materials for evaluation by a committee assembled by Professor Kidd. The committee may decide to raise, lower, or leave unchanged your final grade for the course. Its decision is final.

Overview Schedule of Classes

I reserve the right to add, subtract, substitute or rearrange readings with due notice.

Week 1

T 1/7: Syllabus, policies, etc. Robert Frost, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things" (Xerox, NAP 1309)

R 1/9: Robert Frost, "The Need of Being Versed in Country Things" (continued); Philip Larkin, "An Arundel Tomb" (NAP 1721-2)

Week 2

T 1/14: *Meter and Meaning* (1-45); William Butler Yeats, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" (NAP 1246); Thom Gunn, "The Missing" (NAP 1862)

R 1/16: Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*

Week 3

T 1/21: Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*

R 1/23: *Meter and Meaning* (46-75); John Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (NAP 964); Emily Dickinson, 588, "The Heart asks Pleasure—first—" (NAP 1182); Hart Crane, "To Emily Dickinson" (NAP 1474); Langston Hughes, "Cross" (NAP 1488); Robert Lowell, "Mr. Edwards and the Spider" (NAP 1657-8)

Week 4

M 1/27: First "Essence of Poetry" fragment due.

T 1/28: Walter Benjamin, extract from *The Arcades Project* (Xerox); T.S. Eliot, "The Waste Land" (NAP 1404-1417)

R 1/30: "The Waste Land" continued. Discussion of features of our present moment the prehistories of which we would like to explore

Week 5

T 2/4: Isolation of Poetic History of Present topics and formation of groups

R 2/6: *Meter and Meaning* (76-123--especially chapters 5 and 7); Sir Thomas Wyatt, "The long love" (NAP 131); Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, "Love, That doth Reign" (NAP 143)

Edmund Spenser, *Amoretti* (NAP 198-203); Sir Philip Sidney, *Astrophil and Stella* (NAP 224-32);

William Shakespeare, *Sonnets* (NAP 269-82); John Donne, *Holy Sonnets* (NAP 332-35); Ben

Jonson, "Sonnet to Lady Mary Wroth" (NAP 361); Lady Mary Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus* (NAP 366-73)

Week 6

T 2/11: Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, "Wyatt Resteth Here" (NAP 143-44); Ben Jonson, "To the Memory of My Beloved, the Author Mr. William Shakespeare" (NAP 351-353); Robert Herrick, "Upon Ben Jonson" (NAP 381)

R 2/13: Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (NAP 707-710)

Week 7

M 2/17: Second "Essence of Poetry" fragment due

T 2/18: W.H. Auden, "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" (NAP 1537-1539); Theodore Roethke, "Elegy for Jane" (NAP 1567); Reading Proposals for Poetic History of the Present Due

R 2/20: W.B. Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium" (NAP 1254-1255); William Carlos Williams, "Landscape with the Fall of Icarus" (NAP 1347-48); Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica" (NAP 1436-7); W.H. Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts" (NAP 1536-7); Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" (NAP 1595); John Ashbery, "The Painter" (NAP 1809)

Week 8

T 2/25: Refresher on *Camera Lucida*

R 2/27: Poetic History of the Present: Group #1 Readings

Week 9

T 3/3: Spring Break—Classes Suspended

R 3/5: Spring Break—Classes Suspended

Week 10

T 3/10: Wallace Stevens, all selections (NAP 1320-1333)

R 3/12: Poetic History of the Present: Group #2 Readings

Week 11

T 3/17: William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" (NAP 837-841); Complete Draft of "Essence of Poetry" project due; exchange drafts with partners

R 3/19: Poetic History of the Present: Group #3 Readings

Week 12

T 3/24: "Essence of Poetry" revision workshop

R 3/26: Poetic History of the Present: Group # 4 Readings

Week 13

T 3/31: Walt Whitman, "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (NAP 1114-1118); Allen Ginsberg, "A Supermarket in California" (NAP 1794-5); Sylvia Plath, "Lady Lazarus" (NAP 1918-1920); Charles Wright, "As Our Bodies Rise, Our Names Turn into Light" (NAP 1948)

R 4/2: Poetic History of the Present: Group # 5 Readings

Week 14

T 4/7: Catch-up day; Groups submit Poetic History of the Present projects

R 4/9: Discussion of selected contemporary poems to be decided by class.

Week 15

T 4/14: Discussion of selected contemporary poems to be decided by class.

R 4/16: Discussion of Poetic History of the Present projects. Course Evaluations.

Week 16

T 4/21: Discussion of Poetic History of the Present projects. Final remarks.