

ENGLISH 280: READING AND WRITING POETRY: THE OVERVIEW

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We will be working on our own poems, reading one another's work, and learning from various past and present models: the course is designed to make you a better writer and a better reader of poetry, and to give you a chance to spend time with several kinds and modes of poems in English. **Each week**—on days and times the syllabus indicates-- you will be asked to submit a **new poem** of your own; to comment usefully & constructively on other folks' poems in a workshop; and to consider the model poems we'll read.

You'll also do other things. Soon after spring break you'll write a **book review**. Two weeks after that you'll complete a prose **manifesto** stating or implying your goals as a writer. You will write a **letter** to one other poet in our class, describing his or her strengths & weaknesses & the directions you see for her or his work. And you will **revise** your work, as all poets do. Book review, manifesto, letter, and your favorite **seven** among the revised poems together comprise your **portfolio**, which you will turn in at the end of the term; this portfolio and your participation in class will together determine your grade.

Because the class depends so much on the prompt distribution of photocopies to students, **you really need to turn your own poems in on time**. Late work will, in fact, royally screw up your grade. You do, though, get **one pass week** when you don't need to turn in a poem: which week you take is up to you.

The only required text is ***The Norton Anthology of Poetry, current edition***, ed. Ferguson, Salter, & Stallworthy. If you already own a good, *comprehensive* poetry anthology, such as an earlier Norton (not just an anthology of *modern* poetry), and you don't want to buy the new Norton, show me the anthology. (We'll also read some photocopied contemporary poems.)

I'm easy to contact by office phone or email. In odd exigencies you can also call me at home, at 698 1238; if you call after 11:30pm, however, our cats will eat you.

ENGLISH 280: WRITING AND READING POETRY: THE SYLLABUS

Stephen Burt
spring 2005
Humanities 213
TTh 1-2:30pm

Listed poems may all be found in *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, **fifth** edition; almost all are also in the fourth edition—no need to buy the fifth (brand-new, but the only one now in print) if you already own the **fourth** (either from a previous class, or because you bought the used copies which the Mac bookstore still has). Some assignments include a photocopied packet of additional, mostly modern or contemporary, poems.

This syllabus covers the reading and the specific assignments for the **first half** of the course, **up to spring break**, along with **due dates** for the rest of the course. Week-by-week readings and poem-assignments for the second half will depend very much on what sorts of project I think would best suit our particular group of poets; you'll get them long before the first half ends.

TUES JAN 25 Introduction. What is poetry?
"I"-poems packets given out; your own "I" poems assigned.

THURS JAN 27 **"I" poems. Persons and places in poems.**
Berryman, *Dream Songs* no. 1 and 14; Clare, "I Am";
Dickinson, poems no. 280 ("I felt a funeral"), 341 ("After great pain"), 754 ("My Life had stood"), 789 ("On a Columnar Self"); Langston Hughes, "Cross"; Simic, "Cameo Appearance"

MONDAY JAN 31 Your own "I" poems due *by 10am*; pick up workshop "I" poems from **my office door**, Old Main 202, **after 1pm**.

TUES FEB 1 Workshop "I" poems. Sonnet packet given out.

THURS FEB 3 **Sonnets.** Hart Crane, "To Emily Dickinson"; Hill, "The Laurel Axe"; Hopkins, "As kingfishers," "No worst"; Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," "Bright Star"; William Meredith, "The Illiterate"; Merrill, "The Broken Home"; Muldoon, "Why Brownlee Left"; Robinson,

"George Crabbe"; Shakespeare, sonnets 29, 30; Tuckerman, "Thin little leaves..."; Wyatt, "The long love..."

MONDAY FEB 7 Your own sonnets due by 10am; pick up workshop sonnets from my door after 1pm.

TU FEB 8 Workshop sonnets. Rhymes and rhythms packet given out.

TH FEB 10 **Rhymes, rhythms, metres; flow and pulse of a line.** Auden, "The Shield of Achilles," "Lay your sleeping head, my love"; Bogan, "Medusa," "Roman Fountain"; Brooks, "Boy Breaking Glass"; Donne, "The Good Morrow"; Emerson, "Days"; Hardy, "During Wind and Rain," "Neutral Tones"; Herbert, "The Windows"; Kunitz, "Touch Me"; Marianne Moore, "The Fish"; Toomer, "Reapers"; William Carlos Williams, "The Yachts"

MON FEB 14 Your own rhyme, rhythm, or stanza-based poems due at 10am; pick up workshop poems from my door after 1pm.

TU FEB 15 Workshop rhyme, rhythm, and stanza-based poems. Landscape and prospect packet given out.

TH FEB 17 **Landscape and prospect poem.** Gray, "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College"; Greenlaw, "What's Going On"; Larkin, "The Whitsun Weddings"; Marianne Moore, "The Steeple-Jack"; Swift, "A Description of the Morning"; Wordsworth, "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey," "The Solitary Reaper"

MON FEB 21 Landscape/prospect poem due by 10am; get poems from my door after 1pm.

TU FEB 22 Workshop landscape/prospect poems; song-form and repetition packet given out.

TH FEB 24 **Song-forms and repetitions.** Ammons, "The City Limits"; Bishop, "Sestina," "One Art"; Empson, "Missing Dates"; Herbert, "Prayer"; MacNeice, "Bagpipe Music"; Muldoon, "Milkweed and Monarch"; Raine, "For Hans Keller"; Dylan Thomas, "The force that through the green fuse"; Tichbourne, "Tichbourne's Elegy"

MON FEB 28 Song-form/repetition poem due at 10am; get poems from my door after 1pm.

TU MAR 1 Workshop. Diction and dialect packets.

TH MAR 3 **Diction, dialect, levels of language.**

Bishop, "The Armadillo"; Sterling Brown, "Chillen Get Shoes," "Conjured"; Hart Crane, "At Melville's Tomb"; Jarrell, "Next Day"; Langston Hughes, "Bad Luck Card"; Samuel Johnson, "On the Death of Dr. Robert Levet"; Larkin, "Sad Steps," "This Be the Verse"; O'Hara, "How to Get There"

MON MAR 7 Diction or dialect poems due at 10am; get poems from my door after 1pm.

TU MAR 8 Workshop. Dramatic monologue packet.

TH MAR 10 **Dramatic monologue, persona, plot and dialogue.**

Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess," "Andrea del Sarto"; Dove, "Dusting"; Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; Frost, "The Hill Wife"; Glück, "Gretel in Darkness"; Mew, "In Nunhead Cemetery"

MON MAR 14 Dramatic monologue or persona poems due at 10am; get poems from my door after 1pm.

TU MAR 15 Workshop. Epistles and prose poems packet.

TH MAR 17 **Verse-letters; poems to persons; prose poems.**

Hill, from *Mercian Hymns*; Howard, "Nikolas Mardruz..."; Ben Jonson, "Inviting a Friend to Supper"; Lowell, "Water"; O'Hara, "Why I Am Not a Painter"; Pope, "Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot"; Pound, "The River-Merchant's Wife"; Rich, "Orion"; James Wright, "A Note Left in Jimmy Leonard's Shack"

SPRING BREAK

MON MAR 28 Prose-poem or letter-poem due at 10am; get poems from my door after 1pm.

FRI APR 1 BOOK REVIEW DUE

FRI APR 16 MANIFESTO DUE

MON MAY 9 PORTFOLIO (FINAL VERSIONS OF YOUR POEMS) DUE