

INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

dr. david wilson-okamura english 3410 autumn 2003 east carolina univ.

- Aug. 27 **W** What is poetry?
 29 **F** Sonnets: N. Petty, "Air-Raid Warning"; T. Hardy, "Hap," "A Church Romance," "In the Cemetery," "She, to Him (1)"
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- Sept. 1** **M** **Labor Day (no class)**
 3 **W** Sonnets: D. G. Rossetti, "A Sonnet," "Nuptial Sleep," "The Kiss," "Silent Noon," "Body's Beauty"
 5 **F** S. Daniel, "Beauty, sweet love, is like the morning dew," "When winter snows upon thy sable hairs"; W. Shakespeare, "Let me not to the marriage of true minds," "O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power"
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- 8 **M** DONNE, "The Good-Morrow," "Song (Go and catch a falling star)," "Woman's Constancy," "The Sun Rising," "The Indifferent," "Break of Day"
 10 **W** "The Canonization," "The Anniversary," "Lovers' Infiniteness"
 12 **F** "Confined Love," "The Flea," Elegy XIX ("To His Mistress Going to Bed")
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- 15 **M** "Love's Growth," "The Ecstasy," "Air and Angels,"
 17 **W** "A Valediction: Of My Name, in the Window," "A Valediction: Of the Book," "A Valediction: Of Weeping," "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"
 19 **F** "The Funeral," "The Relic," "A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day, Being the Shortest Day"
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- 22 **M** **First paper due.** O. Wilde, "Hélas"; G. Meredith, "Lucifer in Starlight"
 24 **W** DICKINSON: 49 "I never lost as much but twice," 125 "For each ecstatic instant," 185 "'Faith' is a fine invention," 214 "I taste a liquor never brewed"
 26 **F** 216 "Safe in their Alabaster Chambers" (both versions), 303 "The Soul selects her own Society," 315 "He fumbles at your Soul," 435 "Much Madness is divinest Sense," 1099 "My Cocoon tightens—Colors tease"
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- 29 **M** 441 "This is my letter to the World," 448 "This was a Poet—It is That," 449 "I died for Beauty—but was scarce," 585 "I like to see it lap the Miles," 709 "Publication—is the Auction," 1129 "Tell all the Truth, but tell it slant"
- Oct. 1 **W** 249 "Wild Nights—Wild Nights," 528 "Mine—by the Right of the White Election," 664 "Of all the Souls that stand create," 754 "My Life had stood—a Loaded Gun," 829 "Ample make this Bed"
 3 **F** 241 "I like a look of Agony," 305 "The difference between Despair," 341 "After great pain, a formal feeling comes," 536 "The Heart asks Pleasure—first," 650 "Pain—has an Element of Blank," 1540 "As imperceptibly as Grief"
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- 6 **M** 465 "I heard a Fly buzz—when I died," 501 "This World is not Conclusion," 712 "Because I could not stop for Death," 1078 "The Bustle in a House," 1732 "My life closed twice before its close"
 8 **W** YEATS, from *Crossways* (1889): "The Song of the Happy Shepherd," "The Sad Shepherd," "The Indian to His Love," "The Falling of the Leaves," "The Stolen Child," "To an Isle in the Water," "Down by the Salley Gardens," "The Meditation of the Old Fisherman"
 10 **F** From *The Rose* (1892): "The Lake Isle of Innisfree"; from *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899): "He remembers Forgotten Beauty," "The Cap and Bells"; "He wishes for the Cloths of Heaven"; from *The Green Helmet* (1910): "The Coming of Wisdom with Time," "The Mask," "All Things can Tempt Me"; from *Responsibilities* (1914): "A Coat"
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- 13 **M** **Fall Break (no class)**
 15 **W** From *The Wild Swans at Coole* (1917): "The Wild Swans at Coole," "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death"
 17 **F** From *The Wild Swans at Coole* (cont.): "The Scholars" (both versions), "Lines Written in Dejection," "The People," "The Balloon of the Mind," "Ego Dominus Tuus," "The Double Vision of Michael

A book like this, a problem like this, is in no hurry. We both, I just as much as my book, are friends of *lento* [Latin "lingering"]. It is not for nothing that I have been a philologist. Perhaps I am a philologist still—that is to say, a teacher of slow reading. In the end I also write slowly. Nowadays it is not only my habit, it is also to my taste—a malicious taste, perhaps?—no longer to write anything which does not reduce to despair every sort of man who is "in a hurry." For philology is that venerable art which demands of its votaries one thing above all: to go aside, to take time, to become still, to become slow—the leisurely art of the goldsmith applied to language, which has nothing but delicate, cautious work to do and achieves nothing if it does not achieve it *lento*. But precisely for this reason it is more necessary than ever today. By precisely this means does it entice and enchant us the most, in the midst of an age of "work," that is to say, of hurry, of indecent and perspiring haste, which wants to "get everything done" at once, including every old or new book. This art does not so easily get anything done, it teaches to read *well*, that is to say, to read slowly, deeply, looking cautiously before and aft, with reservations, with doors left open, with delicate eyes and fingers. – NIETZSCHE

		Robartes"; from <i>Michael Robartes and the Dancer</i> (1921): "The Second Coming"
20	M	From <i>The Wild Swans at Coole</i> (cont.): "On Woman" ; from <i>Michael Robartes and the Dancer</i> (cont.): "Michael Robartes and the Dancer," "Easter, 1916," "A Prayer for My Daughter"
22	W	From <i>The Tower</i> (1928): "Sailing to Byzantium," "Among School Children"
24	F	From <i>The Winding Stair</i> (1933): "The Choice," "Byzantium," "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop"
27	M	From <i>Last Poems</i> (1939): "Under Ben Bulben," "High Talk," "The Circus Animals' Desertion"
29	W	AUDEN, "The Public v. the Late Mr. William Butler Yeats" (handout), "In Memory of W. B. Yeats"
31	F	Second paper due. J. L. Hunt, "To the Nile"; Shelley, "Ozymandias," "To the Nile"; T. L. Beddoes, "A Crocodile"
Nov. 3	M	The City: "Hearing of harvests rotting in the valleys," "Oxford," "The Capital," "Atlantis," "Archaeology"
5	W	Art: "O who can ever gaze his fill," "Orpheus," "Musée des Beaux Arts," "At the Grave of Henry James," "Song for St. Cecilia's Day," "Ode to Terminus"
7	F	History: "Spain," "In Time of War," "Epitaph on a Tyrant," "September 1, 1939," "August 1968"
10	M	Community: "The Unknown Citizen," "Under Which Lyre," "The Fall of Rome," "The Shield of Achilles," "Tonight at Seven-Thirty," "The Common Life"
12	W	Love: "From the very first coming down," "Dear, though the night is gone," "Lay your sleeping head, my love," "As I walked out one evening," "In Sickness and in Health," "Song," "Nocturne," "The More Loving One"
14	F	WHITMAN, "One's-Self I Sing," "I Hear America Singing," "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"
17	M	"Song of Myself" §§ 1, 2, 6, 10, 11, 13, 17, 19–24, 46–52
19	W	"Song of the Open Road"
21	F	Children of Adam: "From Pent-up Aching Rivers," "I Sing the Body Electric," "A Woman Waits for Me"
24	M	Calamus: "Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand," "Of the Terrible Doubt of Appearances," "When I Heard at the Close of Day," "Are You the New Person Drawn toward Me," "To a Stranger," "Here the Frailest Leaves of Me"
26	W	Thanksgiving holiday (no class)
28	F	Thanksgiving holiday (no class)
Dec. 1	M	Calamus (cont.): "The Prairie-Grass Dividing," "A Glimpse," "Earth, My Likeness," "I Dream'd in a Dream," "Among the Multitude," "Full of Life Now"
3	W	Drum-Taps: "From Paumanok Starting I Fly Like a Bird," "As Toilsome I Wandrer'd Virginia's Woods," "The Wound-Dresser," "Over the Carnage Rose Prophetic a Voice," "Look Down Fair Moon," "Reconciliation"
5	F	[Death]: "Sleepers," "The Last Invocation," "Faces," "Scented Herbage of My Breast"
8	M	Third paper due. E. B. Browning, "Go from me," "When our two souls stand up erect and strong," "First time he kissed me," "How do I love thee?"
10	W	"O Captain! My Captain," "When Lilacs Last in the Doorway Bloomed"

REQUIRED TEXTS

Briggs, A. D. P. D., ed. *English Sonnets*. Everyman. Rutland, VT: Tuttle, 1999.

Clements, A. L., ed., *John Donne's Poetry*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1992.

Johnson, Thomas H., ed., *Final Harvest: Emily Dickinson's Poems*. New York: Little, 1961.

Mendelson, Edward, ed., *Selected Poems of W. H. Auden*. New York: Vintage, 1979.

Pethica, James, ed., *Yeats's Poetry and Prose*. New York: Norton, 2000.

Moon, Michael, ed. *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 2002.

REQUIREMENTS

Written assignments must be typed and are due at the beginning of the class period. Assignments delivered after that will receive a lower grade. (For instance, an A- essay that is delivered up to 24 hours late will receive a B+, an A- essay that is delivered between 24 and 48 hours late will receive a B, and so on.)

Essays (65%). Submit three essays of 1,850–2,000 words on course readings of your choice. (It may, in some cases, be possible to write on a text that does not appear on the syllabus, but you will need to clear this with me first.)

- Essays should be typed, include a list of works cited, and follow the citation format specified in the *MLA Handbook* (at the reference desk, LB2369.G53.1999).
- When you're done, do a word count and write the result on the first page of your paper. Word count should not include such things as long quotations and list of works cited.
- Pages should be (a) stapled and (b) numbered by computer. Ask someone at the computer lab if you don't know how to do this already.
- First impressions count; so do spelling, punctuation, and grammar. If you have trouble with these, I recommend *Grammar in Plain English* by Harriet Diamond and Phyllis Dutwin.
- Double-space. Use 12 point Times Roman (or a similar font of the same size).

This is a writing intensive class; it is assumed, therefore, that you will take each paper through multiple drafts. You are strongly encouraged, but not required, to show me at least one draft of your first two papers. Please don't give me a draft of your paper two days before it is due; I need time to read your paper and think about it. If, therefore, your paper is due on Friday, I will need to see a draft on Monday, so that we can talk about it at office hours on Wednesday. If the paper is due on Monday, I will need to see a draft on Wednesday, so that we can talk about it at office hours on Friday. And so on.

Reading Quizzes (20%). Reading quizzes are scheduled randomly and graded on a pass/fail basis: easy if you do the reading, hard if you don't. Most quizzes are open book, and focus on vocabulary. Suggestion: if you don't know what a word means, look it up before class. There will be no make-ups for missed quizzes.

Recitation (5%). Part of becoming intimate with a poem is learning it by heart. For this course, you will need to memorize and recite one poem. Minimum length: fourteen lines. The poem must rhyme. No song lyrics, please. Recitations will be given during office hours; a schedule will be posted online at the beginning of the semester. Grades will be assigned on the following basis: you know the poem, but stumble your way through it = C range; you know the poem letter-perfect, but haven't done much with pauses, emphasis, tone = B range; you know the poem letter-perfect and interpret it with your voice = A range. Don't memorize a poem you don't understand; we'll probably have a chat afterwards about what it means.

Expertise (10%). Most of learning to read poetry is just a matter of keeping your eyes open. Sometimes, however, you also need to know things: the meaning of rare words, for example, or the significance of names, places, and dates; the poet's birthday; whether she went to college; and so forth. As for words: when you come to class, I will expect every student to know the meaning of every word in the assigned reading. That's every word in every poem, every day. The rationale for this requirement is simple: if you don't know what the individual words mean, you're not qualified to talk about the poem as a whole, period.

Now, for the other stuff, biography, geography, and history: at some point in the semester, we will look to you for expertise in these matters. When your turn comes around, you will be responsible to know the following for each of the poems that we will be discussing that day: the identities of all the people named in the poem, the historical and biographical significance of all the dates (including the date of composition, if that's known), and the geographical location and significance of all the places. If there's an allusion to mythology, philosophy, or theology, you'll be responsible for that, too.

Some of these questions can be answered easily enough by means of the internet. Some can be answered using the reference works named below. Others will require the assistance of a reference librarian. You'll be working in pairs, so I advise you to divide up the work ahead of time.

Midterm and Final Exams. There will be no midterm or final exams in this course.

Email. Announcements and changes to the schedule will be delivered by email; you will therefore need to check your university email account on a daily basis.

Cell phones are here to stay, but they don't belong in the classroom. If you have one, turn off the ringer before class starts. If you answer a vibrating call alert during class, it had better be your mother calling from her deathbed; anything less urgent will have to wait until the end of class.

Midterm and Final Exams. There will be no midterm or final exams in this course.

Attendance and Reading. There is one more requirement for this course: you have to come to class and you have to do the reading. If you don't, you'll get a NO CREDIT (NC) for the semester, even if you hand in all of the graded assignments. Not coming to class = missing nine or more class meetings.

EXTENSIONS

Everyone gets a two-day extension on one paper over the course of the semester. You choose which one. You don't need to ask me ahead of time: just hand in a sheet of paper with the date and your name on it that says "I'm taking my extension on this paper." In the interest of fairness, however, no one will be granted a second extension.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is using someone else's words or ideas in such a way that a reader cannot distinguish them from your own work. As such, it is a form of cheating. If you have questions about plagiarism, please ask me about it before your paper is due; after a paper is handed in it's too late to claim ignorance. The penalty for plagiarism is an automatic F for the course, in addition to whatever penalty the University sees fit to impose.

IMPORTANT TIMES, PHONE NUMBERS, ADDRESSES

Office: Bate 2137 (phone 252.328.6714)

Email: wilson-okamura@virgil.org

Office hours: MWF 1:00-2:00, 3:50-4:30 and by appointment. To schedule an appointment, grab me after class or give me a phone call and we'll set up a time. (In practice, I find that setting up appointments via email is not very efficient.)

If you call my office and I'm not there, do try me at home, though not after 9:00 pm, please. My number is in the phone book.

Email discussion group for this course: poetry@virgil.org

Course materials on the web: <http://virgil.org/dswo/courses/poetry>

RESERVE These items can be found in the reserve section, to the left of the library entrance.

Allt, Peter, and Russell K. Alspach, eds. *The Variorum Edition of the Poems of W. B. Yeats*. New York: Macmillan, 1957. PR5900.A3.1957.

Fuller, John. *W. H. Auden: A Commentary*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1998. PR6001.U4.Z694.1998.

Gardner, Helen, ed. *The Elegies and Songs and Sonnets*. By John Donne. Oxford: Clarendon, 1965. PR2246.G27.

Unterecker, John Eugene. *A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1959. PR5907.U5.1959.

REFERENCE These items can be found online or in the reference section, to the right of the library entrance.

Balay, Robert, ed. *Guide to Reference Books*. 11th ed. Chicago: American Library Association, 1996. Z1035.1.G89.1996 (not on the shelf; ask for at reference desk).

Bell, Robert E. *Dictionary of Classical Mythology: Symbols, Attributes, and Associations*. Oxford: Clio, 1982. BL715.B44.1982.

Boyer, Paul S., ed. *The Oxford Companion to United States History*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2001. E174.O94.2001.

Catholic Encyclopedia, The. 15 vols. New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1913. Online: www.newadvent.org/cathen/

Cannon, John, ed. *The Oxford Companion to British History*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002. DA34.O93.2002.

Cross, F. L., and E. A. Livingstone, eds. *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. 3rd ed. New York: Oxford UP, 1997. BR95.O8.1997.

* *Dictionary of Literary Biography* [abbreviated as *DLB*]. Detroit: Brucoli Clark-Gale Research, 1978-. Online, as part of the Literature Resource Center: www.lib.ecu.edu/erdb/lrc.html

Grimal, Pierre. *The Dictionary of Classical Mythology*. Tr. A. R. Maxwell-Hyslop. Oxford: Blackwell, 1986. BL715.G713.1986.

Harner, James L. *Literary Research Guide: An Annotated Listing of Reference Sources in English Literary Studies*. 3rd ed. New York: MLA, 1998. PR83.H25.1998.

Honderich, Ted. *The Cambridge Companion to Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. B51.094.1995.

Langer, William L. *An Encyclopedia of World History*. 5th ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1972. D21.L27.1972.

Oxford English Dictionary, The [abbreviated as *OED*]. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1989. PE1625.O87.1989.

Partridge, Eric. *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*. 8th ed. New York: Macmillan, 1984. PE3721.P3.1984. Check dates to see when an expression came into use.

Preminger, Alex, and T. V. F. Brogan, eds. *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993. PN1021.N39.1993.

Slavens, Thomas P. *Sources of Information for Historical Research*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1994. D20.S62.1994.

Stephen, Sir Leslie, and Sir Sidney Lee, eds. *The Dictionary of National Biography* [abbreviated *DNB*]. 21 vols. plus supplements. London: Oxford UP, 1921-. DA28.D47.