

**Lit. 5-125C Introduction to Poetry**  
**Winter 2011 – Group a**  
**Monday 15:00-18:00 (Room 107)**

**Dr. Tatiani Rapatzikou (Office: 308 E)**  
**Office hours: Monday 13:00 - 15:00**  
**Thursday 10:00-11:00**

### **Course Objectives**

This course aims to provide first year undergraduates with useful advice on reading, thinking critically and writing about poetry.

**Required Text: Photocopied material**

### **Assessment:**

- a. **In-class exam – Compulsory.** Score: 20% of the overall grade
- b. **Essay – Compulsory** (600-700 words) to be written at home and handed in before Christmas. The essays will be submitted electronically via the Blackboard platform. Score: 20% of the overall grade.
- c. **Exercises – in-class activities and take-home writing exercises, deadline keeping.** Score: 10% of the overall grade.
- d. **Final Exam** (350-400 words per question). Score: 50% of the overall grade.

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is essentially the unacknowledged use of another person's work. It can take the following forms:

1. *The copying (or "quotation") without acknowledgement, of the work of others (including the work of fellow students), published or unpublished, either verbatim or in close paraphrase, including material downloaded from computer files and the Internet.*
2. *Submitting as their own work a piece of work lent to them by a fellow student.*
3. *Learning passages by heart, whether from books or other distributed materials and transcribing them in examination answers without acknowledgement.*

You must not therefore copy the work of others and pass it off as your own. **If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you fail the course.**

### **Attendance policy:**

Attendance is **compulsory**. Students should realize that their **presence** in the classroom and **active participation** in class discussions is required. It is essential that students will have **studied** the **material** or completed the **homework assigned** before the class.

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## Syllabus

- Oct 10 M      **Introduction – Course Information/Course logistics**  
 Preconceptions or misconceptions about poetry.  
 How to approach a poem.
- Exercise:**  
**(in class)**  
 Read Dudley Randall’s poem “Ballad of Birmingham,” and then consider whether you find it interesting or not (please explain the reasons why). Do refer to those poem features you find intriguing or puzzling.
- Oct 17 M      **Listening to a Voice**  
 Theodore Roethke “My Papa’s Waltz”; Randall Jarrell “A Sick Child”; Robert Creeley “Oh No”; William Blake “The Chimney Sweeper.”
- Exercises:**  
**(in class)**  
 Learning how to analyze a poem and how to quote from a poem.
- (homework)**  
 What does Sherman Alexie’s poem “Evolution” (1992) reveal about the condition of Native Americans? What is the tone of Alexie’s poem? Check the meaning/significance of the following terms/words: “Evolution,” “Buffalo Bill,” “pawn shop,” and “reservation.”
- Oct 24 M      **What a poem says – Word use/Word choice/Word Order**  
 William Carlos Williams “This is Just to Say”; E.E. Cummings “Anyone Lived in a Pretty How Town”; Wallace Stevens “Metamorphosis.”
- Exercises:**  
**(in class)**  
 Comparing and contrasting.
- (homework)**  
 Concentrate on the kind of diction and word order Gwendolyn Brooks employs in her poem “We Real Cool.” What strikes you as particularly inventive in this poem? Compare and contrast this poem with James A. Emanuel’s “The Negro.”
- Oct 31 M      **Imagery**  
 Elizabeth Bishop “The Fish”; Ezra Pound “In a Station of the Metro”; William Carlos Williams “Spring and All.”
- Exercise:**  
**(in class)**  
 Preparing for the in-class test: analyzing poems; quoting from poems; comparing and contrasting.
- (homework)**  
 Write a short account of the kind of imagery Robert Frost uses in his poem “The Wood-Pile.” Which are the images that draw your attention, and why?
- Nov 7 M      **Figures of Speech**  
 Robert Burns “A Red, Red Rose”; Sylvia Plath “Metaphors”; James Stephens “The Wind”; William Shakespeare “Shall I Compare Thee To A Summer’s Day?” and Howard Moss “Shall I Compare Thee to A Summer’s Day?”

**Exercise:  
(in class)**

Preparing for the in-class test: analyzing poems; quoting from poems; comparing and contrasting.

Nov 14 M

**In-class test - Compulsory**

Nov 21 M

**Essay Writing**

Distribution/Discussion of essay topics, formatting exercises, setting up tutorials, electronic submission guidelines (Blackboard), other in-class exercises.

Nov 28 M

**Sound and Rhythm**

Galway Kinnell "Blackberry Eating"; Robert Frost "Desert Places"; T.S. Eliot "Virginia."

**Exercise:  
(homework)**

Write about your experience when reading aloud W.H. Auden's poem "As I Walked Out One Evening." Does the way the poem sound affect its meaning?

**Essay discussion (Tutorials)**

Dec 5 M

**Closed Form, Open Form**

William Shakespeare "My Mistress Eyes are Nothing Like the Sun" and Elizabeth Barrett Browning "How I love thee? Let me Count the Ways"; E.E. Cummings "In Just—"; Robert Frost "Mending Wall."

**Exercise:  
(homework)**

Edna St. Vincent Millay's poem "I, Being Born a Woman and Distressed" is a sonnet. Using your own words, paraphrase the octet and then go on to paraphrase the sestet. Do they make use of the same ideas? How do they contribute to the overall meaning of the poem?

**Essay discussion (Tutorials)**

Dec 12 M

**Poems for the Eye**

George Herbert "Easter Wings"; John Hollander "Swan and Shadow"; Richard Kostelanetz "Disintegration"; Peter Cho "Letterscapes" ([http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/cho\\_wordscapes\\_letterscapes/letterscapes/](http://collection.eliterature.org/2/works/cho_wordscapes_letterscapes/letterscapes/))  
Dorthi Charles "Concrete Cat."

**Exercise:  
(in class)**

Write and present in class your own concrete poems. Bring with you a pair of scissors, colored markers, interesting letters (in different sizes, font types and colors) that you've found in magazines or newspapers. For inspiration do pick some familiar objects and try to look for words that remind you of them.

**Essay discussion (Tutorials)**

Dec 19 M

**Symbol**

T.S. Eliot "The *Boston Evening Transcript*"; Emily Dickinson "I heard a fly buzz – When I died"; George Herbert "Redemption."

**Exercise:  
(homework)**

Discuss the symbolism in Adrienne Rich's poem "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers."

**Essay submission (via Blackboard and in hard copy)**

Jan 9 M

**Retelling Myths – Poems and Paintings**

William Butler Yeats “The Second Coming”; H.D. “Helen”; Anne Sexton “The Starry Night”; X.J. Kennedy “Nude Descending Staircase.”

**Exercise (in-class)**

For instructions look at your photocopy.

**CHRISTMAS BREAK 23 Dec. 2009 – 7 Jan. 2010**

Jan 16 M

**Comments, Revision, Exam**

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**Books to Consult (On Reserve)**

Barnet, Sylvan, et. al. *An Introduction to Literature* (1997).

Hunter, J. Paul. *The Norton Introduction to Poetry* (1996).

Miller, Ruth. *Poetry: An Introduction* (1981).

Padgett, Ron. *Handbook of Poetic Forms* (1987).

Scholes, Robert, et.al. *Elements of Literature: Essay, Fiction, Poetry, Drama, Film* (1991).

**\*\*Have a good semester\*\***