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ENGL 2228        FALL 2015

Reading Poetry

Section: 001   TTH   11 – 12:15   MH 261

Course Instructor: Prof. Niyi Osundare   Phone: 280 6455
                      280 6274
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Office Hours: Tues. 12:30-1:30
              Wed.   1-5
              Thur  12:30-1:30
              (or by appointment)

In this course, we intend to carry out an introductory study of poetry as a vital genre of
literature. Among other preoccupations, we shall be looking at poetry as an intensely
special use of language, its primal debt to the oral tradition, the connection between
poetry and music, and poetry as a vehicle of ideas and product of human imagination.
Because this is a survey course, the poems selected for study will be drawn from different
authors, different places, and different historical periods. Throughout, we shall be
interested not only in what the authors have to say, but also how they have chosen to say
it in order to achieve the desired literary and aesthetic effect.

Student Learning Outcomes
After successfully completing this course, students will be able to

1. apprehend the relationship between written poetry and the oral/vernacular tradition
2. appreciate poetry from a more global perspective
3. discern the relationship between the content of a poem and its form
4. learn the techniques for analyzing and interpreting a poem
5. get inspired to write their own poems

M.J. Salter, and J. Stallworthy. Unless otherwise stated, all page references below are to
this text
Week 1
Aug. 20: Course Introduction
Aug. 25: Poetry, orality, and music

Week 2
Aug. 27, Sept. 1
Poetry, music, and orality (continued)
Negro Spirituals: ‘Go Down Moses’ (pp.676-677)
Isaac Watts: ‘Our God, Our Help’ (pp.353-354)
The oriki genre: ‘Eshu’; ‘Oshun’ (Texts to be supplied in class)
Nicolas Guillen: ‘Sensemaya’ (Text to be supplied in class)

Week 3
Sept. 3, 8
Thomas Gray: ‘Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard’ (pp.410-413)

Week 4
Sept. 10, 15
Margaret Atwood: ‘Flowers’ (p.1178)
Dylan Thomas: ‘Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night’ (p.991)

Week 5
Sept. 17, 22
First Essay due Thu Sept 17
First Quiz: Tues. Sept. 22
Siegfried Sassoon: ‘“They”’ (p.853)
Wilfred Owen: ‘Dulce Et Decorum Est’ (p.890)

Week 6
Sept. 24, 29
Matters of Form: Analysis of George Herbert’s ‘Easter Wings’ (p.237)
Edgar Allan Poe: ‘Sonnet – To Science’ (p.614)

Week 7
Oct. 1, 6
Seamus Heaney: ‘Digging’ (p.1179)
Robert Frost: ‘The Road Not Taken’ (p.801)

Week 8
Oct. 8, 13
Elizabeth Bishop: ‘One Art’ (p.966) Mid-semester Exam: Tues. Oct. 6
Elizabeth Jennings: ‘One Flesh’ (Text to be provided in class)
Week 9
Oct. 20, 22  (Mid-semester break: Oct. 15, 16)
Walt Whitman: ‘To a Locomotive in Winter’ (p.703)
Emily Dickinson: ‘I Would Like to see It Lap the Miles’ (Text to be supplied in class)

Week 10
Oct. 27, 29
William Blake: ‘London’ (p.448)
William Wordsworth: ‘London, 1802’ (p.477)

Week 11
Nov. 3, 5
Sterling Brown: ‘Bitter Fruit of the Tree’ (p.912)
Derek Walcott: ‘A Far Cry From Africa’ (pp.1132-1133)
Wole Soyinka: ‘Telephone Conversation’ (pp.1159-1160)

Week 12
Nov. 10, 12
Langston Hughes: ‘The Negro Sings of Rivers’ (p.913)
Gwendolyn Brooks: ‘We Real Cool’ (pp.999-1000)

Week 13  2nd Essay due Thur., Nov. 12
Nov. 17, 19  2nd Quiz: Thur. Nov. 19
John Donne: ‘A Valediction Forbidding Mourning’ (pp.198-199)
Andrew Marvell: ‘To His Coy Mistress’ (pp.293-294)

Week 14
Nov. 24, Dec. 1  Thanksgiving Holidays: Nov. 26, 27
Adrienne Rich: ‘Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers’ (pp.1114-1115)
Course review

Week 15
Dec. 3
FINAL EXAM: Dec. 3. (Last Day of Class)
COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1st Essay 10%
2nd Essay 10%
1st Quiz 10%
2nd Quiz 10%
Mid-semester Exam 20%
Final Exam 20%
Class Participation 20%

The quiz is designed to test your close reading of the assigned texts: your ability to read and remember important ideas, issues, characters, places, events, dates, formal/stylistic characteristics, and other relevant features encountered in the texts and/or highlighted in our class discussions. It is to ensure that you read every text for depth and detail. Please note: the quiz will not be by multiple choice.
The essays will be on topics emanating from our class deliberations, and will be given in class by me on dates specified in our course schedule. Each essay is expected to be **1,200 words** long, neatly typed or word-processed according to the MLA guidelines. (See the *MLA Handbook* and the *Harbrace College Handbook*). Late submissions will be penalized by one drop in grade level for each day the paper is overdue.

**Attendance:** Regular and prompt attendance of class is mandatory. Roll will be taken each day of class. If for any genuine reason you will be absent from class, notify me ahead of time or call the department secretary and explain why. See me immediately you return so that we can discuss what you have missed. Unexcused absence beyond two times carries a penalty of one drop in grade level. Serious cases of absenteeism may result in an ‘F’ grade. (For more information, see department handbook).

**Class Participation** is crucial. This class will be taught in a highly interactive manner. Remember: this is your class. Make the best of it. Do all assigned readings for your own edification and in preparation for meaningful contributions to class discussion. Be prepared to take the texts to task; raise issues; engage in stimulating debate; put forward your views logically and convincingly. Remember: one of the goals of the university is to make you a creative, questioning, and articulate person.

**Academic Integrity** is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Therefore, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information. The Code is available online at

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:** Students who qualify for services will receive the academic modifications for which they are legally entitled. It is the responsibility of the student to register with the Office of Disability Services each semester and follow their procedures for obtaining assistance.

**Classroom Conduct**

1. Be in class on time. Distracting interruptions caused by lateness are inconsiderate, disrespectful, and time-wasting. There is no excuse for arriving repeatedly late. Parking is often a hassle; allow enough time for it. Cell phones should be turned off before class begins. There should be no eating or drinking while class is in session.

2. Feel free to ask questions from the instructor during class. But please do not ask other students, as that disturbs my concentration and the concentration of other class members.

3. Students are expected to treat faculty and fellow students with respect. Any actions that purposefully and maliciously distract the class from the work at hand will not be allowed.

4. Civility in the classroom and respect for the opinion of others is very important in an academic environment. It is likely that you may not agree with everything that is said or discussed in the classroom. Learn to disagree respectfully. Courteous behaviour and responses are expected at all times.

**Conferences and Office Hours:** Take full advantage of my office hours and see me at least twice in the semester, one at the beginning, the other towards the end. If you wish to see me outside the stipulated office hours, let me know immediately after class so we can arrange a time suitable for both of us.

I look forward to a stimulating and rewarding semester with you.