

Introduction to Poetry

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English 200, Section 002
Fall Semester 2014

Office: Simpkins 109
Hours: TTh, 1:00–2:00; W, 1:00–3:00

TTh, 11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m.
Simpkins 14

No prerequisites.

Texts

Addonizio, Kim. *Tell Me*. ISBN: 9781880238912
The Norton Anthology of Poetry. Shorter Fifth Ed. ISBN: 9780393979213
O'Hara, Frank. *Lunch Poems*. ISBN: 9780872860353
There will be poems to print from my webpage.

Introduction to the Introduction to Poetry

Marianne Moore's famous poem, "Poetry," begins, "I too dislike it." Certainly many people would agree, not considering that their favorite rap or song lyric is poetry, or perhaps forgetting the healing words spoken at a grandparent's funeral. We often turn to poetry when something happens in our lives that needs special expression, such as when we fall in love, contemplate death, or want to speak at a public event. It is true that poems can be difficult, but they can also ring easy and true. Poems may cause us to think hard, or make us feel something deeply.

This course offers a broad introduction to poetry, across time and around the globe. For most of the semester, the readings are organized around formal topics crucial to understanding poetry, such as imagery, irony, and free verse. The course also attends to traditional verse forms, which are not only still in use, but also help us better to understand non-traditional poetry. Toward the end of the semester, we shift focus toward the contemporary, to look at two important books of poetry, Frank O'Hara's 1964 *Lunch Poems* and Kim Addonizio's 2000 *Tell Me*.

Although Marianne Moore recognizes that many people "dislike" poetry, she insists that "one discovers in / it after all, a place for the genuine." William Carlos Williams concurs:

Look at
what passes for the new.
You will not find it there but in
despised poems.
It is difficult
to get the news from poems
yet men die miserably every day
for lack
of what is found there.

All the same, Frank O'Hara jokes, "Nobody should experience anything they don't need to, if they don't need poetry bully for them."

Course Objectives

This course aims to assist students in becoming engaged and competent readers of poetry. At the same time, Introduction to Poetry develops the ability to formulate and develop interpretive arguments. It brings issues of social justice, including those involving race, gender, sexuality, and class, to bear on the study of poems, celebrating the diversity of both poems and people.

Requirements

Introduction to Poetry involves two five-page essay assignments, two creative assignments, a midterm exam, and a final exam. You will receive instructions for each assignment, and you have the option of rewriting all of them. Writing done outside of the classroom must be typed, paginated, and stapled, printed in a standard-sized font and double-spaced. Handwritten work gets zero credit, with no opportunity to redo it. Failure to comply with other formatting requirements will result in grade reductions.

Students will be responsible for leading small group discussions on a rotating basis. When it is your turn, you will prepare three typed, double-spaced questions for discussion and turn them in to me at the end of the class. Please do not write out answers to the questions on the page you give to me. There will also be in-class and homework exercises.

Absences will not be taken lightly, only excused with a doctor's note or other suitable documentation. Please refer to <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/student/> for student rights and responsibilities. Everyone *must* actively participate. Lack of participation will damage your grade. This means doing the homework, completing the readings, and joining in class discussion.

Grading

Participation	10%
Homework	10%
Discussion Questions	10%
Creative Assignments	10%
First Essay	20%
Second Essay	20%
Midterm Exam	10%
Final Exam	10%

Unless excused, late essays receive a one-time, one-letter grade reduction. I will grant an extension for almost any reason, if the student contacts me *at least 24 hours in advance*. Plagiarism will result in an “F”, and I will report the student for academic discipline. See WIU’s Policy on Academic Integrity at <<http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>>. Unexcused absences will affect the participation grade, and four of them is an automatic “F” for the course. Do not expect an “A” if you don’t talk regularly in class.

Please take the opportunity to meet with me in Simpkins 109, during my office hours, or by appointment, to talk about the readings and your writing. If something about the course bothers you, please don’t wait until the end, when it is too late to change it.

The Writing Center

The University Writing Center can assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The tutor’s job is to add another voice in response to your writing. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center can help with generating ideas, suggesting organization, and even working through grammatical issues. The University Writing Center is located in Malpass Library (3rd Floor, West Side). Call for an appointment (298–2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment to your session. For more information on other locations, see www.wiu.edu/uwc.

Students with Disabilities

In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), I will make academic accommodations for any student who notifies me of the need. For me to provide the proper accommodation(s), you must provide me documentation from Disability Support Services. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to my attention, as I am not legally permitted to ask. Students who require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e., fire, tornado, etc.) should tell me the most appropriate procedures to follow. Please contact Disability Support Services at 298-2512.

Schedule

I give each day's assignment at the end of class. Do not pack your bags until everyone has had a chance to write it down. Contact me by email if you cannot attend.

Week 1: August 26 & 28

Introduction to the Course.

Week 2: September 2 & 4

Tone & Irony.

Week 3: September 9 & 11

Words. Saying & suggesting. Syntax.

Week 4: September 16 & 18

Imagery.

Week 5: September 23 & 25

Metaphor & Figurative Language.

First Creative Assignment due Tuesday, September 23.

Week 6: September 30 & October 2

Stanza & Ballad.

First Essay Due in Class on Tuesday, February 22.

Week 7: October 7 & 9

Alliteration, Assonance, & Rhyme. Midterm review.

Week 8: October 14 & 16

Midterm exam.

Sound & Meter.

Week 9: October 21 & 23

Meter. Closed and Open Forms.

Week 10: October 28 & 30

Symbol, Allegory, Parable, & Archetype.

Week 11: November 4

Identity. Experimental poetry.

Second Essay Due in Class on Tuesday, November 4.

No class November 6.

Week 12: November 11 & 13
Lunch Poems.

Week 13: November 18 & 20
Lunch Poems. Introduction to Research.
Second Essay due November 20.

Thanksgiving Break.

Week 14: December 2 & 4
Tell me.

Week 15: December 9 & 11
Tell Me. Final exam review.

Final Exam Week
Final exam.