

ENGL 765/865  
Dr. Kenneth Sherwood  
Thursday 6:00-9:00, Leo 118

Topics in Literature as Genre: Poetry  
sherwood@iup.edu  
www.chss.iup.edu/sherwood

*It is quite safe to say that the means and objects of poetry have been constant, that is, recognizably human since ca. 3000 B.C.*

## Overview

Is the poet's statement above ironic or utopian? What constitutes poetry as a genre? Can we talk about poetry as a singularity, or do we have varied poetries? This course will be grounded in the practice of close and creative reading, and will move students towards an appreciation for the contemporary conversation about poetry (poetics), and position students to explore how the reading, criticism, teaching, and writing of poetry reflects the light of twentieth-century developments such as structural linguistics, postcolonialism, the linguistic turn of philosophy, the textual turn of history, and the general modernist questioning of traditional poetic forms. I will select some common poems and poets for our semester reading, but the emphasis will be upon acquiring the sharp eyes, attuned ears, and conceptual information to work confidently with a range of poetries.

## Major Texts

Brogan. The New Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms.

Cook. Poetry in Theory: An Anthology 1900-2000.

Easthope, Anthony. Poetry as Discourse,\*

Hollander, John. Rhymes Reason

(\* Out of Print – we will share copies)

## Poetry Folio

Rather than relying on an edited collection, we will begin with a packet of poems I have selected. Should they wish, students can choose a poem to add to this packet when they present to the class (distribute 20 copies a week in advance). We may wish to recreate some of the editorial apparati of the scholarly collection by editing these poems.

## Poetic Terms Readings

(suggested list for presentations, from The New Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms)

Ambiguity	Line	Poet
Free Verse	Linguistics and Poetics	Poetry
Imagery	Lyric	Politics and Poetry
Imagination	Metaphor	Sound
Influence	Music and Poetry	Symbol
Irony	Onomatopoeia	Voice
Lexis	Performance	

## Digital Readings

Assigned for weekly reading, these critical titles will all be accessed as class e-reserve documents.

Anthony Easthope. Poetry As Discourse. Methuen 1983.

Bernstein, Charles. "Artifice of Absorption." A Poetics. Harvard U P, 1992. 9-89

DuPlessis, Rachel. "Entitled New" C1, "Corpses of Poetry C2. Genders, Races, and Religious Cultures in Modern American Poetry. Cambridge 2001.

McGann, Jerome. Introduction and Chapter 1. Black Riders: The Visible Language of Modernism. (1-75)

McLaughlin, Thomas. "Figurative Language." Critical Terms for Literary Study. Ed. Lentricchia and McLaughlin. U Chicago P, 1995.

Perloff, Marjorie. "Lucent and Inescapable Rhythms," Poetry On and Off the Page. Northwestern UP 1988.

Stewart, Garret. Prologue and Ch 4. Reading Voices: Literature and the Phonotext. California, 1999.

Tsur, Revuen. C1 What Makes Sound Patterns Expressive. Duke, 1992. (1-51)

## Activities and Grading

---

*Discussion and Presentations*                      30%

- ❑ Informed contributions to weekly class meetings.
- ❑ 1 - Paired Presentation: you will sign-up to lead the class in the close-reading of a poem; (as preparation for this, you'll collaborate on a *wiki* page annotation of the piece; see *portfolio* explanation below)
- ❑ 2 - solo presentations: you will sign-up to lead class discussion of a critical article (this entails preparing a brief overview and discussion questions); and another week you will present an application or elaboration of a critical term entry.

*Portfolio*                      30%

You will use the portfolio to collect work produced in a digital space, and other miscellany; these items should be saved and printed throughout the semester, so that you can submit a folder at the end of the semester.

- ❑ Blogging: I will ask that you post an individual response to class reading and class discussion posted on the blog each week; (ideally this thoughtful, 3+ paragraph entry will arrive before the class meeting); please also comment on at least two classmates posts each week; (though this can be done before or after the class meeting)
- ❑ Wiki: you will collect any contributions you make to the collaborative wiki, including the poem-annotation entry you initiate when you present.

*Final Essay*    40%

I will ask you to write a compressed essay (10-12 pages) discussing a poem of your choice in relation to course concepts and readings. You will have a great deal of freedom in how to pursue this, even possibly proposing an alternative media project. Please submit a proposal (for instructor review and class discussion) no later than (10/19); I encourage you to meet with me prior to this for conversation about your general interests. The final essay or project should be submitted on November 30th.

---