

ENGL 4627: 19th Century Poetry
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Holmes Hall 417
Office hours MW 1:00-2:40 and by appointment

Course Description and Learning Goals

The nineteenth century was a period of intense poetic experimentation. Poets made their works the vehicles for radical philosophy, new forms of narrative, political activism, and heightened emotional experience. At the same time, poetry was a popular form, and the century produced a wealth of light verse and sentimental effusion. This class will examine this rich poetic scene. Major topics will include movements like the late Romantics, the Pre-Raphaelites, and the beginnings of Modernism; the divide between popular and “high” art; the shifting relationship between poetic and religious discourse in the age of Darwin; the place of literature in delineating national history; utopianism; poetic experimentation and the visual arts; women’s authorship; and the poet’s role as public figure. Students will write three analytical papers and give a presentation on historical or literary context.

Over the course of the semester, you will

- gain familiarity with the work of 19th-century British poets and poetic movements
- acquire and use vocabulary for discussion of the formal elements of poetry
- gain experience in historical research and the application of that research to literary argument
- improve your ability to write a literary essay, from the formulation of a topic question through the production of a polished argument
- become a more thoughtful and sophisticated reader of literature, attentive to the interplay of content, structure, and context

Required Text (available at the Bookstore)

The Norton Anthology of Poetry, ed. Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and John Stallworthy
Additional texts on Blackboard

Most days we will be reading the work of a single poet. On those days, please read the brief biography of that poet available at www.poets.org.

Monday, January 6: intro; **Blake**, “The Lamb”; “The Tyger”
W 7: **Blake**, “The Book of Thel” 737-740

Th 8: **Wordsworth**, “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey,” 765-768;
“She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways” 789; “Three Years She Grew” 789-790; “A

Slumber Did My Spirit Seal” 790; “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud” 801; “She Was a Phantom of Delight” 802; excerpt from the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* on Blackboard; Stallworthy, “Versification,” 2027-2036

M 13: **Wordsworth**, excerpt from *The Prelude*, 781-789; Stallworthy, “Versification,” 2036-2051; **Meter exercise due**

W 15: **Coleridge**, “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison,” 807-808; “Kubla Khan,” 809-810; “Dejection, an Ode” 828-831; Chapter XIV of *Biographia Literaria* on Blackboard

Th 16: **Byron**, “Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos” 833-834; “She Walks in Beauty” 834; “The Destruction of Sennacherib” 834-5; “So We’ll Go No More A-Roving” 836; excerpt from Canto I of *Don Juan*, 837-862. Presentation: Byron and Shelley in Italy

M 20 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day — no classes

W 21: **Shelley**, “Mont Blanc” 866-870; “Ozymandias” 870; “Ode to the West Wind” 872-874

Th 22: **Keats**, “When I Have Fears” 906; “La Belle Dame sans Merci” 917-918; “Ode to a Nightingale” 935-937; “Ode on a Grecian Urn” 938-939; “To Autumn” 939; “Bright Star” 940; “This Living Hand” 940; letter on “negative capability” on Blackboard

M 27: **Keats**, “Lamia” 918-933

W 29: **Burns**, “Green Grow the Rashes” 747; “To a Mouse” 748-749; “John Anderson My Jo” 754; “A Red Red Rose” 759; **Clare**, “Badger” 893-4; “Love Lives beyond the Tomb” 984-5; “First Love” 895-896; “Farewell” 896; Presentation: Peasant Poets

Th 30: Sonnet sampler: **Spenser**, Sonnet 1 190; **Shakespeare**, 18 259; 55 262; **Smith**, “To the Shade of Burns” 711-712, “Written Near a Port on a Dark Evening” 712; **Wordsworth**, “London, 1802” 795; “Nuns fret not...” 796; “Scorn Not the Sonnet” 804; **Landor**, “To Robert Browning” 832-833; **Shelley**, “To Wordsworth” 863; “England in 1819” 871; **Clare**, “Gypsies” 894; **Keats**, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” 905; “On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again” 905-6; “On the Sonnet” 916-917; **Meredith**, “Lucifer in Starlight” 1110

F 31: **Paper #1 due**

M Feb 3: **Hemans**, “England’s Dead” 897-898; “The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England” 898-9; “Casabianca” 899-900; “Indian Woman’s Death-Song” 901-902; **Levy**, “Xantippe” on Blackboard; Presentation: Women Poets and Popular Poetry

W 5: **FitzGerald**, “The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám of Naishápúr” 961-973; Presentation: Victorian Orientalism; **Due in class: sonnet**

Th 6: **EB Browning**, excerpt from *Sonnets from the Portuguese* 1 and 43, 947; and 5, 6, 9, 18, 20, 22, 38, on Blackboard; excerpt from *Aurora Leigh* 948-950; “A Musical Instrument” 950-951

M 10: **Tennyson**, “Mariana” 982-983; “The Lady of Shalott” 984-988; “The Lotos-Eaters” 988-992; “Ulysses” 992-994; “Break, Break, Break” 994

W 12: **Tennyson**, “The Kraken” 984 excerpt from *In Memoriam A.H.H.*; 996-1004; “The Eagle” 1004-1005; “Tithonus” 1006-1008; “Frater Ave atque Vale” 1008; “Crossing the Bar” 1008-1009; Presentation: Tennyson and Darwin

Th 13: **Brontë**, “Long Neglect Has Worn Away” 1046; “Hope” 1046-1047; “Remembrance” 1047-1048; “The Prisoner. A Fragment” 1048-1050; “No Coward Soul is Mine” 1050

M 17 Presidents’ Day — no classes

W 19: **R Browning**, “Porphyria’s Lover” 1009-1010; “Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister” 1010-1011; “My Last Duchess” 1012-1013; “The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed’s Church” 1014-1016; “A Toccata of Galuppi’s” 1017-1019; Presentation: The Brownings

Th 20: **R Browning**, “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came” 1020-1025; “Fra Lippo Lippi” 1026-1034

M 24: **Clough**, excerpt from *Amours de Voyage* 1051-1052 plus further selections on Blackboard; “The Latest Decalogue” 1052-1053; “Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth” 1053; Presentation: The siege of the Roman Republic

W 26: **Arnold**, “Shakespeare” 1087-1088; “To Marguerite” 1088; “The Scholar-Gypsy” 1089-1094

Th 27: **Arnold**, “Thyrsis” 1095-1100; “Dover Beach” 1101

F 28: **Paper 2 due**

M 3 Spring break

W 5 Spring break

Th 6 Spring break

M 10: **Morris**, “The Haystack in the Floods” 1139-1143; “The Earthly Paradise” 1143; Chapter II of *News from Nowhere* on Blackboard. Presentation: The Arts and Crafts movement

W 12: **DG Rossetti**, “The Blessed Damozel” 1102-1105; excerpt from *The House of Life* 1106-1107; “Jenny,” on Blackboard; Presentation: the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood

Th 13: **C Rossetti**, “Song” 1128; “Remember” 1128; “In an Artist’s Studio” 1129; “Up-Hill” 1129-30; “The Convent Threshold” 1130-1133; “Mona Innominata” and “Goblin Market” on Blackboard

M 17: **Lear**, “There Was an Old Man with a Beard” 1041-1042; “There Was an Old Man in a Tree” 1042; “There Was an Old Man Who Supposed” 1042; “The Owl and the Pussy-Cat” 1042-3; “How Pleasant to Know Mr. Lear” 1043-1044; **Carroll**, “Jabberwocky” 1135-1137; **Gilbert**, “I Am the Very Model of a Modern Major-General” 1144-1145; “Titwillow” 1146. Presentation: Nonsense verse

W 19: Love: **Meredith**, excerpt from “Modern Love” 1107-1109; on Blackboard: **EB Browning**: “Lady Geraldine’s Courtship”; **Levy**, “At a Dinner Party”; **Meynell**, “Renouncement”

Th 20: **Swinburne**, “Chorus from *Atalanta in Calydon*” 1146-1148; “The Garden of Proserpine” 1148-1150; “A Forsaken Garden” 1150-1152; on Blackboard: “Anactoria”

M 24: **Hardy**: “Hap” 1152; “A Broken Appointment” 1154-1155; “The Darkling Thrush” 1155; “The Ruined Maid 1156”; “The Convergence of the Twain” 1156-1157; “Afterwards” 1162; “The Voice”

W 26: **Hopkins**, “God’s Grandeur” 1166; “Pied Beauty” 1167; “As Kingfishers Catch Fire, Dragonflies Draw Flame” 1167; “Felix Randal” 1168; “Spring and Fall” 1168; “Carriage Comfort” 1169; “No worst, there is none. Pitched past pitch of grief...” 1169; “I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day” 1170; “My Own Heart Let Me More Have Pity On” 1170-1171; “That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and of the comfort of the Resurrection” 1171. Presentation: Hopkins’ “sprung rhythm”

Th 27: **Housman**, “Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now” 1173; “Reveille” 1173-1174; “When I Watch the Living Meet” 1174; “To an Athlete Dying Young” 1174-5; “Is My Team Ploughing” 1175-1176; “On Wenlock Edge the Wood’s in Trouble” 1176-1177; “Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff...” 1177-1179; “Astronomy” 1179-1180; “Crossing Alone the Nighted Ferry” 1180

M 31: Nature after the Romantics: **R Browning**, “Memorabilia” 1019-1029; **DG Rossetti**, “The Woodspurge” 1105-1106; **Hopkins**, “The Windhover” 1166-1167; on Blackboard: **EB Browning**, “The Dead Pan”

W April 2: War: **Tennyson**, “Charge of the Light Brigade” 1005; **Hardy**, “Drummer Hodge” 1154; “Channel Firing” 1157; “In the Time of “The Breaking of Nations” 1161; **Housman**, “Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries” 1180; “Here Dead Lie We Because We Did Not Choose” 1180; **Kipling**, “Tommy” 1181-1182; “Epitaphs of the War” 1183-1188; **MacDiarmid**, “Another Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries” 1379

Th 3: **Wilde**, “The Ballad of Reading Gaol” on Blackboard

M 7: **Field**, “Maids, not to you my mind doth change,” “Already to mine eyelids’ shore,” “A Girl,” “It was deep April,” “Cyclamens,” “A Flaw,” “The Mummy Invokes his Soul,” “To Christina Rossetti” on Blackboard. Presentation: Aestheticism.

W 9: **Yeats**, “The Stolen Child,” 1188-1189; “The Lake Isle of Innisfree” 1190; “Adam’s Curse” 1190-1191; “No Second Troy” 1191-1192; “The Wild Swans at Coole” 1192-1193; “An Irish Airman Foresees His Death” 1193. Presentation: The Celtic Twilight

Th 10: Modernist experimentation: **Pound**, Canto II, on Blackboard

M 14: Last day of class. Paper #3 due.

This syllabus is subject to change.

Course requirements:

Students will do a short exercise in meter, write a sonnet, write three five-page papers, and give a brief contextual presentation.

Reading questions:

Bring a question about the reading with you to every class. These questions will be the basis for class discussions and paper topics, so they shouldn’t be readily answerable by checking a dictionary or encyclopedia. (Questions that come up as a result of checking a dictionary or encyclopedia, on the other hand, are great.)

Notes on the reading assignments:

Despite the long list of titles for each day, reading assignments for this course are often short. Please read the poems for each day carefully and thoroughly.

Please bring hard copy of all reading assignments with you to class. Note that online versions of poems are frequently unreliable (typos, no notes, etc.). Other reputedly edited books containing these poems are acceptable.

When reading any poetry seriously, it’s a good idea to have a dictionary handy. For British poetry, it can also be useful to have a good reference guide to Greek and Roman mythology. Bullfinch’s *Mythology*, available at <http://www.bartleby.com/>, is one useful resource.

If you get stuck on a difficult poem, try reading it out loud. You’ll find it easier to catch both the poem’s meaning and its beauty.

Attendance policy:

This class centers around discussion. If you don’t participate in discussions, whether by contributing or listening to your peers, you haven’t really taken the class. You will be

allowed three absences over the course of the semester, but after that, your final grade will be penalized by one third of a letter grade for each absence. Since there can be no way to make up discussions, this policy applies even in cases where students have medical or other legitimate excuses. Frequent lateness will also result in a reduced grade. Participation grades do not reflect absences; rather, they reflect your performance once you've shown up.

Late paper policy:

You may have a three-day extension (i.e., from Friday to Monday) on any one assignment, no questions asked. Beyond that, unexcused late papers will incur a penalty of one third of a grade per day past deadline. Failure to hand in any one of the papers will result in failure of the class.

Academic Integrity:

Students are expected to abide by the principles of academic integrity. Plagiarism is a very serious offence. Be scrupulous in your documentation, and always make clear the difference between your own ideas and those of others. Any plagiarized work will result in automatic failure of the class.

Many students who choose to plagiarize do so because they are afraid to turn in papers late; please remember that a late penalty is by far the lesser of two evils in this situation. If you're in over your head, contact me and we'll figure something out.

Grading:

Participation and reading questions: 10%

Meter exercise: 5%

Sonnet: 5%

Presentation: 15%

Paper 1: 20%

Paper 2: 20%

Paper 3: 25%

Office hours and how to reach me:

I will hold walk-in office hours MW 1:15-2:30, and will be glad to schedule extra appointments. Come to discuss paper topics, to ask questions about the class, to argue about a text, to get help with a confusing poem, etc. To make an appointment, or for any other contact, it's best to e-mail me at r.trousdale@neu.edu.