

English 222: Lyric Poetry 1800-Present

Rachel Trousdale

TTh 2-3:15

Buttrick 307

Office Hours MW 2:30-4:00, T 1:00-2:00, and by appointment

In his “Defence of Poetry,” Percy Bysshe Shelley says that “poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.” If that’s true, how does it work, and what are they legislating? This course is a far too speedy survey of British and American lyric poetry from the Romantics to the present. We will discuss the history of poetry and poetic theory, looking both at how individual poems work and the larger scale of what ambitions and effects lyric poetry has had. Topics will include poetic form (rhyme, meter, named forms, experimentation); poetic genre (love poems, elegy, dramatic monologue); imitation, influence, and canon formation; and the relationship between artistic and political history. We will look at individual poets, small groups of poets, and larger groups who share common themes, circumstances, or simply decades. Students will become adept at close reading, and will write three critical papers: two shorter (5-6 pages) and one longer (8-10 pages). Students will also memorize and recite a poem.

Required Text: Margaret Ferguson, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy, *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*, Fifth Edition

Additional readings on Moodle

Th, August 27: Introduction

T September 1: **Romantics I: Wordsworth and Coleridge.** Wordsworth, *She Dwelt among the Untrodden Ways* 789; *Three Years She Grew* 789; *A Slumber Did My Spirit Steal* 790; *Ode: Intimations of Immortality* 796; *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* 801; *She Was a Phantom of Delight* 802; excerpt from the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* on Moodle; Coleridge, *This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison* 807; *Kubla Khan* (and Coleridge’s note on its composition) 809, Chapter XIV of *Biographia Literaria* on Moodle.

Th 3: **Romantics II: Keats.** *When I Have Fears* 906; *La Belle Dame sans Merci* 917; *Ode to a Nightingale* 935; *Ode on a Grecian Urn* 938; *To Autumn* 939; *Bright Star* 940; *This Living Hand* 940; letter on “negative capability” on Moodle; Stallworthy, “Versification,” 2027-2036

T 8: **Romantics III: Byron and Shelley** Byron, *She Walks in Beauty* 834; *The Destruction of Sennacherib* 834; *When a Man Hath No Freedom* 862; *On This Day I Complete My Thirty-sixth Year* 862; Shelley, *Stanzas Written in Dejection, Near Naples* 870; *England in 1819* 871; *Ode to the West Wind* 872; *To a Skylark* 876; excerpt from “Defence of Poetry” on Moodle

Th 10: **Victorians I: The Brownings** Barrett Browning, Sonnets from the Portuguese 947; A Musical Instrument 950; Browning, Porphyria's Lover 1009; Home-Thoughts, from Abroad 1017; A Toccata of Galuppi's 1017; Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came 1020; Fra Lippo Lippi 1026; Stallworthy, "Versification," 2036-2051

T 15: **Victorians II: Tennyson, Arnold, the Rossettis, and Hardy** Tennyson, Mariana 982; The Kraken 984; In Memoriam 1, 7, 54, 119, 130 (996ff); Arnold, To Marguerite 1088; Dover Beach 1101; D. G. Rossetti, The Woodspurge 1105; C Rossetti, In an Artist's Studio 1129; Up-Hill 1129; Passing Away, Saith the World, Passing Away 1133; Hardy, Hap 1152; A Broken Appointment 1154; The Darkling Thrush 1155; The Ruined Maid 1156; Afterwards 1162

W 16: Poetry recitation due (Minimum ten lines; any poem in the anthology is fair game. Recitations by appointment; early recitations are welcome.)

Th 17: **19th C Americans I: Melville and Whitman** Melville, The Portent 1054; Shiloh 1055; The Maldive Shark 1055; Whitman, Crossing Brooklyn Ferry 1066; When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer 1071; Vigil Strange I kept on the Field One Night 1071; Beat! Beat! Drums! 1072; Cavalry Crossing a Ford 1073; When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd 1078; A Noiseless Patient Spider 1085

T 22: **19th C Americans II: A Sampler** Emerson, Concord Hymn 941; The Snow-Storm 942; Brahma 945; Fate 946; Longfellow, The Jewish Cemetery at Newport 952; Snow-Flakes 956; Whittier, Telling the Bees 957; Oliver Wendell Holmes, The Chambered Nautilus 974; Poe, To Helen 975; Annabel Lee 981; Thoreau, I am a Parcel of Vain Strivings Tied 1045; Lanier, From the Flats 1162; Dunbar, We Wear the Mask 1223; Little Brown Baby 1223

Th 24: **19th C Americans III: Dickinson** 39 (1110); 68 (1110); 112 (1111); 124, both versions (1111-2); 202 (1113); 259 (1113); 260 (1113); 269 (1114) 314 (1114); 340 (1115); 348 (1116); 372 (1117) 383 (1117) 445 (1119); 479 (1119) 588 (1120); 591 (1121); 764 (1122); 788 (1123); 935 (1125); 1096 (1125); 1263 (1126)

F 25: Paper 1 (5-6 pages) due by 3:00

T 29: **Forwards and Backwards: Hopkins and Housman** Hopkins, God's Grandeur 1166; Pied Beauty 1167; As Kingfishers Catch Fire...; 1167; Felix Randal 1168; Spring and Fall 1168; Carrion Comfort 1169; No Worst, There is None... 1169; That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire 1171; Housman Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now 1173; To an Athlete Dying Young 1174; Is My Team Ploughing 1175; Terence, This Is Stupid Stuff... 1177; Crossing Alone the Nighted Ferry 1180; Here Dead Lie We Because We Did Not Choose 1180

Th October 1: **Retrospective I: Sonnets through the 19th C** Wyatt, Whoso List to Hunt 126; Spenser, Sonnets 1 and 8 (190); Shakespeare, 18 (259), 55 (262), 87 (264); Donne, Batter my heart... 320; Wordsworth, Nuns fret not... 796; Shelley, Ozymandias 870; Clare, Gypsies 894; Keats, On the Sonnet 916; Poe, To Science 975; Meredith, Lucifer in Starlight 1110; Hopkins, I Wake and Feel the Fell of Dark, Not Day 1170; My Own Heart Let Me More Have Pity On 1170; Robinson, George Crabbe 1212; Reuben Bright 1213

T 6: **Modernism I: Yeats, Pound, Eliot** Yeats, Lake Isle of Innisfree 1190; The Wild Swans at Coole 1192; The Second Coming 1196; Sailing to Byzantium 1199; Leda and the Swan 1200; Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop 1204; Lapis Lazuli 1204; Pound, The Garden 1296; Ts'ai Chi'h 1296; In a Station of the Metro 1297; "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste" on Moodle; Eliot, The Hollow Men 1356, from "The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism" on Moodle

Th 8: **Modernism II: Stevens, Williams** Stevens, The Snow Man 1256; The Emperor of Ice-Cream 1256; Anecdote of the Jar 1260; Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird 1260; Waving Adieu, Adieu, Adieu 1265; The Poems of Our Climate 1266; The House Was Quiet and the World Was Calm 1267; Table Talk 1267; Williams, Danse Russe 1272; Portrait of a Lady 1273; Red Wheelbarrow 1274; This is Just to Say 1274; The Yachts 1275; A Sort of a Song 1276

T 13: **War:** Tennyson, Charge of the Light Brigade 1005; Hardy, Channel Firing 1157; Housman, Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries 1180; McCrae, In Flanders Fields 1225; Sandburg, Grass 1253; Thomas, As the team's head brass 1255; Brooke, The Soldier 1327; Gurney, The Silent One 1372; Rosenberg, Louse Hunting 1374; MacDiarmid, Another Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries 1379; Owen, Dulce et Decorum Est 1387; Spender, Ultima Ratio Regum 1505; Jarrell, A Front 1554; Reed, Lessons of the War 1564; Lewis, Goodbye 1575; Levertov, Tenebrae 1679; Rich, *From Eastern War Time* 1799 (optional but interesting: Kipling, Epitaphs of the War 1183)

Th 15: **October Break**

T 20: **Toomer, Brown, Hughes** Toomer, Reapers 1398; Georgia Dusk 1398; Portrait in Georgia 1399; Harvest Song 1399; Brown, Slim in Atlanta 1426; Bitter Fruit of the Tree 1428; Hughes, The Weary Blues 1429; The Negro Speaks of Rivers 1430; Dream Variations 1431; Cross 1431; Bad Luck Card 1432; Harlem Sweeties 1432; Harlem 1433; Theme for English B 1434; Dinner Guest: Me 1435; "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" on Moodle

Th 22: **Brooks and Hayden** Brooks, kitchenette building 1586; my dreams, my works, must wait till after hell 1586; the birth in a narrow room 1586; the rites for Cousin Vit 1587; The Bean Eaters 1587; We Real Cool 1588; Medgar Evers 1588; Boy Breaking Glass 1589; Interview on Moodle; Hayden, Those Winter Sundays 1533; Mourning Poem for the Queen of Sunday 1533; " 'Mystery Boy' Looks for Kin in Nashville" 1535

T 27: **Late Modernism I: Auden, Crane, Larkin** Auden, Lullaby 1465; Spain 1937 1466; Their Lonely Betters 1479; The Shield of Achilles 1479; Crane, My Grandmother's Love Letters 1410; from The Bridge 1415; Larkin, An Arundel Tomb 1650; Talking in Bed 1654; Ambulances 1655; The Trees 1656; This Be The Verse 1657

Th 29: **Late Modernism II: Moore and Bishop** Moore, To a Steam Roller 1328; To a Chameleon 1328; The Fish 1328; Poetry 1329; A Grave 1330; Nevertheless 1334; Bishop, The Fish 1516; Filling Station 1517; Sandpiper 1518; The Armadillo 1519; In the Waiting Room 1521, "Efforts of Affection" on Moodle

F 30: Paper 2 (5-6 pages) due by 3:00

T November 3: **Lowell, Snodgrass, Sexton, Plath** Lowell, Mr. Edwards and the Spider 1596; My Last Afternoon with Uncle Devereux Winslow 1597; Water 1602; Harriet 1605; Epilogue 1605; Snodgrass, from Heart's Needle 1731; Mementos, 1 1734; Sexton, The Truth the Dead Know 1764; And One For My Dame 1764; Plath, The Colossus 1836; Daddy 1840; Ariel 1842; Lady Lazarus 1843

Th 5: **American Observers: Frost, Penn Warren, Bogan, Wilbur, Wright, Levertov, Ammons** Frost, Design 1240; Come In 1242; The Most of It 1243; Penn Warren, There's a Grandfather's Clock in the Hall 1458; Evening Hawk 1459; Bogan, Medusa 1406; Man Alone 1407; Roman Fountain 1408; Song for the Last Act 1408; Night 1409; Wilbur, First Snow in Alsace 1632; Love Calls Us to the Things of This World 1633; Wright, A Note Left in Jimmy Leonard's Shack 1749; Speak 1750; Levertov, O Taste and See 1678; Ammons, The City Limits 1698; Pet Panther 1700

T 10: **Experiments: Stein, Cummings, Swensen, Ferlinghetti, Ginsberg, Ashbery, Hollander** Stein, Stanzas in Meditation 1248; Cummings, All in green my love went riding 1391; somewhere i have never travelled, gladly beyond 1395; anyone lived in a pretty how town 1396; Swenson, Motherhood 1540; Cardinal Ideograms 1541; Waterbird 1542; Ferlinghetti, Sometime During Eternity 1606; Ginsberg, To Aunt Rose 1714; Ashbery, The Painter 1736; Soonest Mended 1737; Paradoxes and Oxymorons 1739; Hollander, Swan and Shadow 1775; Palmer, Of this cloth doll which 1936; I Do Not 1937

Th 12: **Travelers:** Walcott, A Far Cry from Africa 1820; Nights in the Gardens of Port of Spain 1821; The Glory Trumpeter 1821; The Gulf 1822; Midsummer 1827; Moraes, Kanheri Caves 1883; Snow on a Mountain 1883; Simic, Watch Repair 1891; Prodigy 1892; A Book Full of Pictures 1892; Raine, The Onion, Memory 1942; A Martian Sends a Postcard Home 1943; Lee, Persimmons 2011; Out of Hiding 2013

T 17: **Contemporary Irish: Kinsella, Heaney, Longley, Mahon, Muldoon, Boland**

Kinsella, Ancestor, 1757; Heaney, Digging 1899; The Forge 1900; Punishment 1900; Casting and Gathering 1906; Two Lorries 1909; Longley, The Linen Industry 1910; Mahon, A Disused Shed in Co. Wexford 1921; The Window 1923; Muldoon, Why Brownlee Left 1979; Meeting the British 1980; Milkweed and Monarch 1980; Boland, That the Science of Cartography Is Limited 1938; The Dolls Museum in Dublin 1939

Th 19: **The 1980s and 1990s:** Merrill, Arabian Night 1727; Merwin, Losing a Language 1744; Davidson, Peaches 1752; Levine, The Simple Truth 1763; Gunn, The Missing 1774; Rich, Modotti 1800; Lorde, Echoes 1860; Williams, Repression 1869; Wilner, High Noon at Los Alamos 1881; Murray, The Quality of Sprawl 1888; Atwood, Up 1898; Glück, The Garden 1931; Komunyakaa, Facing it 1949; Banking Potatoes 1950; The Smokehouse 1950; Sarah, Courtney, Mentioned in Passing, Years After 1956; Ali, The Dacca Gauzes 1958;

T 24: **Humor, Light Verse, Play:** Carroll, Jabberwocky (and Humpty-Dumpty's explication) 1135; Millay, First Fig 1382; Parker, Unfortunate Coincidence 1391; Résumé 1391; Nash, The Cow 1437; Reflections on Ice-breaking 1437; Requiem 1437; Columbus 1438; The Turtle 1438; Auden, Tell Me the Truth About Love 1470; Preface to the *Oxford Book of Light Verse* (photocopy); MacNeice, Bagpipe Music 1486; Hecht, The Ghost in the Martini 1669; Ormond, Lament for a Leg 1681; Koch, Permanently 1691; Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams 1693; Porter, A Consumer's Report 1786; Collins, Litany 1918; Cope, Bloody Men 1947; Fenton, God, a Poem 1965; Bernstein, Of Time and Line 1967

Th 26: Thanksgiving Break

T December 1: **Retrospective II: Poets on other Poets** Marlowe, Passionate Shepherd 256; Raleigh, Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd 152; Landor, "To Robert Browning" 832; Shelley, "To Wordsworth" 863; Hemans, Casabianca 899; Bishop, Casabianca 1515; Keats, On First Looking into Chapman's Homer 905; On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again" 905; Browning, Memorabilia 1019; Matthew Arnold, Shakespeare 1087; Dickinson, 533 (1120); Pound, A Pact 1296; Crane, To Emily Dickinson 1416; Smith, Thoughts about the Person from Porlock 1441; Jacobsen, The Primer 1491; Hayden, Paul Laurence Dunbar 1536; Berryman, from Homage to Mistress Bradstreet 1546; Wilbur, Cottage Street, 1953 1640; Hecht, The Dover Bitch 1668

Th 3 **Some Poets Born 1950 or Later:** Bernstein, why we ask you not to touch 1968; this poem intentionally left blank 1968; Carson, New Rule 1969; Sumptuous Destitution 1969; Graham, The Surface 1979; Dove, Dusting 1987; The Bistro Styx 1988; Hall, Mangosteens 1991; Erdich, The Butcher's Wife 2005; Birth 2006; Martinez, What the Men Talk About When the Women Leave the Room 2010; Zarin, The Ant Hill 2013; Armitage, Killing Time 2021; Williamson, Double Exposures 2024; New Year's: A Short Pantoum 2024

Monday, December 7: Final paper due, 3:00: 8-10 pp

This syllabus may be modified during the semester.

**Assignments:**

Students will write two shorter (5-6 page) papers and one longer (8-10 page) paper. The longer paper should engage with at least two critical or theoretical sources. Papers should be handed in as hard copy to the wallbox outside my office. Students will also memorize and recite a poem.

**Reading questions:**

For every class, students should bring in at least one question about that day's reading. Questions should be geared towards generating class discussion and paper topics.

**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; after that, each absence will result in a reduction of the final grade by one third of a letter grade. Excessive lateness will also result in a reduced final grade. This will be true even when students have legitimate reasons for missing class. Bear in mind that the participation grade is not based on attendance; it's based on how you behave (listening, contributing to discussions, handing in substantive reading questions) once you show up.

**Late paper policy:**

You may have one three-day extension (i.e., from Friday to Monday) on any assignment, no questions asked. Beyond that, late papers will incur a penalty of one third of a grade per day past deadline unless they are delayed by a very good reason. Most importantly, let me know if you're going to hand a paper in late. Failure to hand in any of the papers will automatically result in failure of the course.

**Grading percentages:**

Class participation and reading questions: 10%

Memorization: 5%

Paper #1: 25 %

Paper #2: 25%

Paper #3: 35%

**Revisions:**

Talk to me if you would like to revise the first and/or second paper. The grade for a revision will replace the grade for the original paper. Revisions must be substantive, based on careful reconsideration of the paper's argument. (Fixing a few small things I've marked is not a revision, it's proofreading.) If you wish to revise a paper, you must meet with me within one week of when I returned the original paper to you. In most cases, revisions should be handed in at least one week prior to the deadline for the subsequent paper. Please note that this is *not* an opportunity to treat the original deadline as a "draft" deadline; if what you hand in initially is clearly unfinished, I will consider it late until

you give me a finished product. For reasons of time, I cannot accept revisions of the final paper. I will also not accept revisions of papers which received an A-, because life is too short.

#### Honor Code:

Students are expected to abide by the Agnes Scott College Honor Code. Plagiarism—the unattributed use, in any form, of someone else’s work—is a very serious offence which can result in failure or even expulsion, so be scrupulous in your documentation, and always make clear the difference between your own ideas and those of others. Students convicted by Honor Court of plagiarism will, in addition to any penalties Honor Court may assign, automatically fail the class. Don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about citation, or if you run into trouble working on an assignment. If you’re having problems and the deadline’s approaching, don’t panic, just send me an e-mail and we’ll figure something out.

#### Course evaluations:

Toward the end of the semester, you will receive an e-mail asking you to submit an electronic evaluation of this course. Course evaluations are very important to me, to the department, and to the administration of the school as a whole. I take your feedback very seriously and will use it to improve both this course the next time I teach it and my teaching as a whole.

#### Office hours and how to reach me:

I will hold walk-in office hours every Monday and Wednesday 2:30-4:00 and Tuesday from 1:00-2:00. If you can’t make those times, I will be very glad to schedule extra appointments. Come talk about the papers, or about confusing texts, or to continue an argument we’ve started in class. To make an appointment, or to ask questions, the best way to reach me is by e-mail: [rtrousdale@agnesscott.edu](mailto:rtrousdale@agnesscott.edu).

#### Writing Center:

Use the writing center! Make an appointment online via the link at <http://www.agnesscott.edu/academics/centerforwritingandspeaking>. Their web site, [http://writing\\_center.agnesscott.edu](http://writing_center.agnesscott.edu), has useful information and handouts.