

## ENGLISH 205: WRITING ABOUT POETRY

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Office Hours: MW 9-10, Friday 2-3 and by appointment

Course objectives: What is poetry? What is good poetry? How has poetry in English been transformed over time? In this class, we will be studying these and other questions, and I will be encouraging you to come up with your own answers in response to the works that we read and to the arguments of literary scholars that we will study. We will begin with Beowulf, the first epic in English, reading the whole poem carefully and also exploring the range of literary approaches to the poem. Then, working roughly chronologically, we will study the basic elements of poetic interpretation: diction, structure, form, meter, and poetic techniques and traditions. By the end of this course, you should be able to read a wide range of poets and literary scholars, create and support an original, intelligent interpretation of a poem, and identify and discuss the variety of literary techniques used in English poetry.

### Course Requirements:

- 1) Write four essays.
- 2) Write a formal research paper.
- 3) Prepare two oral presentations, one group and one individual.
- 4) Attend a poetry reading and write a response
- 5) Participate fully in all classroom work, including written exercises and quizzes.

There will be no makeups for missed classes.

- 6) Complete the midterm and the final examination.

### Required:

The Norton Anthology of Poetry

Beowulf tr. by Seamus Heaney

### Policies:

Attendance: You should be present for every class and prepared to participate. If you are absent, you are responsible for informing yourself about any missed assignments or announcements, and for material covered during that class. All absences should be for good reason; however, you may miss two classes without explanation. I will lower your grade for every unexcused absence after these two. Excessive absences (more than five) may be cause for dropping you from the class.

Class Participation: This will count for 10% of your grade. For full credit, you will need to attend every class ready to participate. This means not just responding when called on, but coming to class with questions from the reading and topics for discussion, responding

to other students' comments on the text, and taking active responsibility for the liveliness and pertinence of discussion.

Plagiarism: In this course, as in all other courses, you are bound by the Honor Code. Therefore, the work you submit for this class must be your own. If you use any outside sources in your writing for this course, you must acknowledge them by using the MLA system of documentation. **All Websites or other Internet sources must be acknowledged and documented.** If you have any questions regarding the Honor Code as it applies to this course, please consult me or pages 99-101 of the Oxford College catalog.

Grade breakdown:

Essays	40%
Oral presentations	10%
Research Paper	15%
Class Participation	10%
Poetry reading response	2%
Midterm	8 %
Final Exam	15%

All grades for this course will be recorded using the plus/minus scale described on page 34 of the Oxford College catalog.

Weekly Outline of Topics to be covered:

Wed Jan 18 Introduction and Objectives

Jan 20 *Beowulf* 1-189

Jan 23 lines 190-490;

Jan 25 "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics"

Jan 27 lines 491-830

Jan 30 lines 831-1061 Beowulf and Myth

Feb 1 lines 1062-1250 Beowulf and the Anglo-Saxon World

Feb 3 lines 1251-1441 Christian and Pagan Elements

Feb 6 lines 1442-1812

Feb 8 lines 1813-2199 Beowulf as Hero

Feb 10 lines 2200-2541

Feb 13 lines 2542-end of poem (3182).

Feb 15	Beowulf: Structure and Unity of the Poem; Chaucer "The General Prologue" lines 1-310 Homework: write a short description of each of the characters in the selections from the General Prologue
Feb 17	Chaucer "The General Prologue" lines 447-860, "Complaint to His Purse" Beowulf paper due.
Feb 20	The Lyric: Wyatt "Madam, Withouten Many Words," "They Flee From Me" Marlowe "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love," Raleigh "The Nymph's Reply"
Feb 22	Shakespeare Sonnets 18,29,55,73,116,130
Feb 24	No class
Feb 27	John Donne, "The Sun Rising" "The Canonization" "The Flea" Elegy XIX, Holy Sonnets 7
Mar 1	Mary Wroth "In this strange labyrinth how shall I turn," "Is to leave all and take the thread of Love," "He may our prophet, and our tutor prove" Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress," "The Garden"
Mar 3	Midterm
Mar 6	Romantics
Mar 8	Romantics
Mar 10	no class
March 13-17 Spring Break	
Mar 20	Romantics
Mar 22	Romantics Essay #2 due
Mar 24	Modernists
Mar 27	Modernists
Mar 29	Modernists
Mar 31	Modernists Essay #3 due
Apr 3	Postcolonial poetry
Apr 5	Postcolonial poetry
Apr 7	Postcolonial Poetry
Apr 10	Research paper due/Contemporary Poets
Apr 12	Contemporary Poets
Apr 14	Contemporary Poets
Apr 17	Heaney (at Emory)
Apr 19	Heaney

Apr 21	Formal Poems
Apr 24	Poetry of Place
Apr 26	Love Poems
Apr 27	e-poetry Essay #4 due
May 1	Review

Exam: Monday, May 8 2PM