

ENGLISH 205: WRITING ABOUT POETRY

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Office Hours: MW 1:30-2:30 Th 12:30-2 and by appointment

Course objectives: We will be reading a variety of poems in English, beginning with the first epic in English, Beowulf. In this class, we will work on understanding the range of literary scholarship, first through a careful study of Beowulf and its scholarly tradition, and then through a selection of readings and scholarly articles. We will also work on the basic elements of poetic interpretation: diction, structure, form, and literary 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 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
- 3) Participate fully in all classroom work.
- 4) Complete all other class assignments, including written exercises and quizzes. There will be no makeups for missed classes.
- 5) Complete the midterm and the final examination.

Required:

The Norton Anthology of Poetry

Beowulf tr. by Seamus Heaney

Recommended:

Dictionary (strongly recommended: American Heritage)

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 94-97 of the Oxford College catalog.

Grade breakdown:

Essays	40%
Oral presentations	10%
Research Paper	15%
Class Participation	10%
Midterm	10%
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:

Thurs Aug 30th Introduction and Objectives

Sep 4	<i>Beowulf</i> 1-189
Sep 6	lines 190-490 and "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics"
Sep 11	lines 491-885
Sep 13	lines 886-1157 <i>Beowulf</i> and Myth
Sept 18	lines 1158-1441 Christian and Pagan Elements
Sep 20	lines 1442-1931 <i>Beowulf</i> and the Anglo-Saxon World

Sep 25	lines 1932-2199 Beowulf as Hero
Sep 27	lines 2200-end of poem (3182). Beowulf: Structure and Unity of the Poem
Oct 2	Chaucer
Oct 4	Shakespeare Beowulf paper due.
Oct 9	Donne
Oct 11	Marvell, Mary Wroth
Oct 16	Fall Break
Oct 18	Midterm
Oct 23	Romantics
Oct 25	Romantics Essay #2 due
Oct 30	Romantics
Nov 1	Modernists
Nov 6	Modernists
Nov 8	Modernists Essay #3 due
Nov 13	Southern Poetry
Nov 15	Southern Poetry
Nov 20	Research paper due/Southern Poetry
Nov 22	Thanksgiving
Nov 27	Adrienne Rich
Nov 29	Contemporary Poets
Dec 4	Heaney
Dec 6	Contemporary Poets Essay #4 due
Dec 11	Review

Exam: Thursday, Dec 13 2-5 PM