

Exploring Poetry

Ian Cornelius

Spring 2024

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1 Basic information

1.1 Course details

- Course number: ENGL 271-002 (3307)
- Meeting time: TuTh 2:30PM – 3:45PM
- Location: Mundelein Center – Room 406

1.2 How to contact me

- Name: Ian Cornelius
- Pronouns: he | they
- Office location: Crown Center 411
- Office hours: TuW 10:00am–12:00pm and by appointment
- E-mail: icornelius@luc.edu

2 Course description and objectives

The word *poetry* derives from an ancient Greek word meaning ‘to make’. English and Scottish poets were once called *makers*. What do poets make and what is their material? In this course we approach poetry as artwork made from language. We read a selection of narrative and lyric poetry in English and we explore the ways poets create their art through selection, arrangement, and presentation of linguistic materials. Topics include English speech sounds, rhythm, meter, words, sentences, punctuation, visual presentation, and performance. Assessment is by quizzes, midterm and final exams, and a class presentation.

3 Schedule

The course schedule complies with the [Loyola University academic calendar](#). Assignments are due on the day listed. If there is need to revise the course schedule, I will announce the change in class and on Sakai and publish an updated version of this syllabus. See [Version Information](#).

Course introduction (week 1)

Tue Jan 16

Introductions (no reading assignment)

Thu Jan 18

- Lewis Carroll (1832–1898), “Jabberwocky”: [text](#), [audio1](#), [audio2](#)
- “[Getting started with the Oxford English Dictionary](#)”: view the videos “Site navigation,” “Quick search,” “Advanced search,” and “Entry display and navigation”

Unit 1: Materials of poetry

Sounds (week 2)

Tue Jan 23

- Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892–1950), “[Recuerdo](#)” (text and audio)
- Video introductions to the [International Phonetic Alphabet](#) and [modern English phonology](#)

Thu Jan 25

- Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872–1906), “We Wear the Mask”: [text](#), [audio1](#), [audio2](#)
- Syllable structure and phoneme repetition ([Sakai](#))
- A dialogue with ChatGPT about “We Wear the Mask” ([Sakai](#))

Words (week 3)

Tue Jan 30

- Gwendolyn Brooks (1917–2000), “[We Real Cool](#)”
- John Keats (1795–1821), “[When I Have Fears](#)”
- *Oxford Companion to the English Language*, entries for “[function word](#),” “[content word](#)” and “[morpheme](#)”

Thu Feb 01

- William Shakespeare (1564–1616), Sonnet 20 (“A woman’s face with nature’s own hand painted”) and Sonnet 81 (“Or I shall live your epitaph to make”): text and commentary in [Shakespeare 420–21, 542–43](#) (on [course reserve](#))

Lines (week 4)

Tue Feb 06

- Theodore Roethke (1908–1963), “[My Papa’s Waltz](#)”
- Dudley Randall (1914–2000), “[Ballad of Birmingham](#)”
- *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, entries for “[ballad metre](#),” “[iamb](#)” and “[spondee](#)”

Thu Feb 08

- Alexander Pope (1688–1744), *Essay on Criticism*, lines 337–383 ([Sakai](#))
- Millay, “[What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why]” ([Sakai](#))
- *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, entries for “[pentameter](#),” “[demotion](#)” and “[trochee](#)”

Constructions (week 5)

Tue Feb 13

- Judith Ortiz Cofer (1952–2016), “[The Latin Deli: An Ars Poetica](#)”
- Millay, “[I, being born a woman and distressed]” ([Sakai](#))
- *Oxford Companion to the English Language*, entries for “[phrase](#)” and “[clause](#)”

Thu Feb 15

- John Milton (1608–1674), *Paradise Lost*, book 1, lines 1–26 ([Sakai](#))
- *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, entries for “[periodic sentence](#),” “[enjambment](#),” “[epic](#)” and “[invocation](#)”

Punctuation and layout (week 6)

Tue Feb 20

- Langston Hughes (1902–1967), “[Harlem](#)”
- Shakespeare, Sonnet 126 (“O thou my lovely boy who in thy power”): [text1](#) (= [Shakespeare 632–33](#), on [course reserve](#)), [text2](#)

Thu Feb 22

- Emily Dickinson (1830–1886), Poem 479 (“Because I could not stop for Death”): [text1](#), [text2](#), [text3](#)
- Dickinson, Poem 1096 (“A narrow Fellow in the Grass”): [text1](#), [text2](#), [text3](#)

Review (week 7)

Tue Feb 27 No new reading

Thu Feb 29 Midterm exam

Spring break (week 8)

Class does not meet

Unit 2: Poetry in translation (weeks 9–10)

Tue Mar 12

- Sappho (7th–6th cent. BCE), Poem 31: [Norton Translation Lab](#)
- Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), “[Archaischer Torso Apollos](#)”

Thu Mar 14

- Vergil (70–19 BCE), *Aeneid*, book 6, lines 264–702, translated by Seamus Heaney (1939–2013) ([Sakai](#))

Tue Mar 19

- Cædmon (active c. 670), “Hymn”: translation lab ([Sakai](#))
- Exeter Book, Riddle 47, translated by [Williamson](#) ([Sakai](#))

Thu Mar 21

- The Old English “Seafarer,” translated by [Williamson](#) ([Sakai](#))
- Ezra Pound (1885–1972), “The Seafarer” ([Sakai](#))

Unit 3: Two narrative poems

The Canterbury Tales (weeks 11–12)

Tue Mar 26

- Geoffrey Chaucer (c.1342–1400), *The Canterbury Tales*, General Prologue, lines 1–34 ([Sakai](#) and the [Harvard Chaucer Site](#))
- *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, entry for “[frame narrative](#)”

Thu Mar 28

- Chaucer, General Prologue, lines 118–164, 747–836
- “Chaucer’s Language” (pp. xv–xx in [Chaucer](#)) ([Sakai](#))

Tue Apr 02

- Chaucer, The Nun’s Priest’s Tale, lines 2808–3183 ([Sakai](#) and the [Harvard Chaucer Site](#))

Thu Apr 04

- Chaucer, The Nun’s Priest’s Tale, lines 3184–3462
- *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, entry for “[apostrophe](#)”

Paradise Lost, book 9 (weeks 13–14)

Tue Apr 09

- Milton, *Paradise Lost*, book 9, lines 1–403 ([Sakai](#))
- *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, entry for “[epic simile](#)”

Thu Apr 11

- *Paradise Lost*, book 9, lines 404–833

Tue Apr 16

- *Paradise Lost*, book 9, lines 834–1189

Thu Apr 18

- *Paradise Lost*, book 9, cont'd

Review (weeks 15–16)

Tue Apr 23

No new reading

Thu Apr 25

Class does not meet

Wed May 1

Review session (time and place tbd). No new reading

Sat May 4

final exam 4:15PM – 6:15PM

4 Assessment

4.1 Summary of grade components

| course component | percentage |
|--------------------|------------|
| participation | 10 |
| class presentation | 15 |
| quizzes | 30 |
| midterm exam | 20 |
| final exam | 25 |
| TOTAL | 100 |

4.2 Description of components

4.2.1 Participation

Students are expected to complete the reading assignments before each class meeting, as detailed on the course schedule, and be prepared to talk about them. Bring questions and observations. Any informal assignments, which may be announced from time to time, will count towards this grade component. Persistent unexcused absences will reduce your participation grade. See [attendance](#).

4.2.2 Class presentation

Each student will give a 5-minute presentation, supported by slides. This may be a group effort if you wish.

The first step is to sign up for a presentation date and, optionally, form a group. You will do this in the second and third weeks of class. You may claim a topic at this time or leave your topic undecided while you explore options.

Before your presentation, post slides (or a link to them) in the “Forums” section of Sakai. If you are posting a link, configure your document to be viewable by anyone with the link.

Usually a presentation will be followed by class discussion; the best presentations invite thoughtful response from your peers.

You may choose between two types of presentation, as follows.

Presentations on poems Select a poem not on our syllabus. Present the poem to the class by displaying the poem (or a passage from it) in a slide, reading the poem aloud twice, and drawing our attention to the features that, in your view, are most significant. Be guided by the instructions for “passage identification and critical commentary” quizzes.

Additional notes:

- You may present a poem in a language other than English. If you do, provide the text of the poem in both languages, read the poem in both languages, and describe some of the ways the original differs from the translation.
- You may present the lyrics of a song. If you do, treat them as a poem: provide us with the text and read the lyrics yourself, twice, even if you also play a sound recording of the musician performing.

Presentations on literary terms Select a literary term from the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. Your presentation has two parts. First, identify the literary term. Summarize the most important elements of the entry in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. How is the term defined? What illustrations are given? If there is a corresponding entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, compare it with the one in the *Princeton Encyclopedia*. (Entries in the *Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* are always shorter.) Second, use the term. Apply the term in analysis of a poem, song, movie, video game, or another verbal artwork, or compose your own illustration. Be creative.

Here are some terms suitable for a presentation:

abecedarius, aleatory poetics, alliteration, allusion, aporia, apostrophe, archaism, asyndeton, blason, cacophony, catachresis, chiasmus, commonplace, dead metaphor, defamiliarization, ekphrasis, hendiadys, hyperbaton, litotes, macaronic verse, metaphor, metonymy, nonsense verse, objective correlative, onomatopoeia, oxymoron, paradox, paralipsis, parallelism, paronomasia, periphrasis, refrain, ring composition, simile, syncope, synecdoche, tmesis, topos, xenoglossia, zeugma

4.2.3 Quizzes

There are regular quizzes, usually on Tuesdays, beginning in second week. It is usually not possible to make up a missed quiz. Exceptions are made for absences on account of a sponsored university event (for instance, mock trial) or illness: see [Attendance](#) and [Public health](#). To qualify for a make-up quiz, notify me by email in advance of class. Your lowest two quiz scores will be dropped, i.e., not counted towards your course grade.

There are two basic formats for quizzes. Some quizzes will have five questions, worth one point each. Questions may be multiple choice, true-or-false, or short answer. These quizzes test your reading comprehension and understanding of lectures and class activities. Literary terms introduced by peers in the [presentation](#) are eligible to appear on quizzes.

Other quizzes will ask you to identify and comment on a short passage of poetry. Here are some possible topics for discussion:

- Who is the author and what is the title of the poem?
- What is the form, genre, or type of writing illustrated in the passage?
- What is the context of the passage, and who (if relevant) is the speaker? If there is a pronoun, identify its antecedent.
- How do specific details of language contribute to the meaning of the passage? Identify significant details of sound, rhythm and meter, word choice, syntax and word order, figurative language, and other relevant literary conventions.
- What themes or issues are raised by the passage and its context?
- How does the passage contribute to the meaning of the poem as a whole?

Use your judgment and write about details that repay the investment of attention you give them.

Points are assigned according to the following rubric:

1. Correctly identifies the author and poem.
2. Vague or diffuse commentary; possible significant errors in identification of speaker or context, or understanding of the passage, or handling of materials introduced in lecture or discussion.
3. Adequate answer.
4. Strong answer; responds to most questions above and uses relevant materials introduced in lecture or discussion; possible minor flaws in clarity or focus, or in handling of course materials.
5. Clear, accurate, precise observations about the passage; observations are organized into a concise and persuasive argument about the construction and meaning of the poem.

4.2.4 Exams

There is a midterm exam and final exam, as shown on the schedule. Details will be supplied in due course. The final exam must be taken on the date set by the university.

4.3 Grade schema

This course employs the quintile system, as follows:

| letter grade | minimum percentage |
|--------------|--------------------|
| A | 86.6 |
| A- | 80 |
| B+ | 73.3 |
| B | 66.6 |
| B- | 60 |
| C+ | 53.3 |
| C | 46.6 |
| C- | 40 |
| D+ | 33.3 |
| D | 20 |
| F | 0 |

5 Policies

5.1 Attendance

If you must miss a class, or if you must arrive late or leave early, inform me in advance by email. This course makes special provision for absences due to illness: see [Public Health](#).

5.2 Texts

Readings are drawn from these kinds of sources:

1. On-line resources linked from the course schedule
2. Books on electronic [course reserve](#) (marked ‘course reserve’ in the course schedule)
3. PDF documents posted to the [resources folder](#) on Sakai (marked ‘Sakai’ in the course schedule)

Readings distributed as PDF documents should be printed. Students are reminded that most course readings are protected by copyright and should not be shared outside this course without written permission of the copyright holder.

We also use several on-line reference works. Here are the most important:

- [Harvard University’s Geoffrey Chaucer Website](#)
- [The Middle English Dictionary](#)
- [The Oxford English Dictionary](#)
- [Seeing Speech: An Articulatory Web Resource for the Study of Phonetics](#)

These are available at no additional cost to you. Some have been purchased by Loyola University Libraries for your use (for these you will be prompted to authenticate with your UVID); others are served out on the open web by their creators.

5.3 Communication

Students are invited to speak with me during regular **office hours**. No appointment is required. If a schedule conflict prevents you from visiting regular office hours, email me to request an alternative time.

Outside of office hours email is the best way to reach me. I aim to respond to email messages within 24 hours on weekdays and within 48 hours on weekends. I ask that you also respond promptly to any messages I may send.

5.4 Diversity, inclusion, and equity

Loyola University provides equal opportunities in education without regard to, and does not discriminate on the basis of, age, color, disability, family responsibilities, familial status, gender identity or gender expression, marital status, national origin, personal appearance, political affiliation, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, source of income, veteran's status, or any other factor prohibited by law. Practicing respect for others is an important part of education. Each member of our course has a responsibility to create an environment in which all may flourish.

An additional note on names and gender pronouns: using appropriate names and gender pronouns honors and affirms individuals of all gender identities and gender expressions. Misgendering and heteronormative language excludes the experiences of individuals whose identities may not fit the gender binary, and/or who may not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth. During our first class, as we introduce ourselves, you may choose to share your name and gender pronouns. If you do not wish to be called by the name listed on the roster, please inform us. If you prefer to introduce yourself by name only, without pronouns, that is also fine. The goal is to create an affirming environment for all students.

By giving my pronouns as “he | they”, I mean to leave you free to use the pronouns that come naturally to you in reference to me. The pipe character means “or”.

5.5 Academic integrity

Loyola University Chicago takes seriously the issues of plagiarism and academic integrity. This course abides by the relevant policies of the university's [Undergraduate Studies Catalog](#).

Plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the plagiarized exam or assignment and the incident will be reported to your dean. If you are uncertain what constitutes plagiarism, consult the Writing Center's guide on [Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism](#). If you are still uncertain, please ask me.

Plagiarism includes submitting, as you own work, text derived from a generative artificial intelligence application.

5.6 Extra credit

Students in this course may earn extra credit by attending certain on-campus events and writing an event report on the Sakai blog. Eligible events will be announced periodically during the semester. Event reports should be about 150 words in length. Extra credit from event reports will not exceed 5% of the total possible points in the course.

5.7 Accommodations and assistance

Loyola University Chicago provides reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. Any student requesting accommodations related to a disability or other condition is required to register with the Student Accessibility Center (SAC). Professors must be supplied with an accommodation notification from SAC, preferably within the first two weeks of class. Students are encouraged to meet with their professors individually to discuss their accommodations. All information will remain confidential. For more information about registering with SAC or questions about accommodations, please contact SAC at 773-508-3700 or SAC@luc.edu or visit the [SAC website](#).

Please note that SAC sometimes grants individual students permission to record class sessions. Such recordings may be made only as directed by SAC. Students approved for this accommodation use recordings for their personal study only and recordings may not be shared with other people or used in any way against the faculty member, other lecturers, or students. Recordings must be deleted at the end of the semester.

Additional assistance is available from the following campus offices:

- [Coordinated Assistance & Resource Education \(CARE\)](#) 773.508.8840
- [Wellness Center](#) 773.508.2530

5.8 Privacy

The instructor of this class will not record class sessions. Any change to this policy will be announced and properly documented. Students may record class sessions only with formal written approval from the Student Accessibility Center. See the section [Accommodations and Assistance](#).

5.9 Public health

Masks are not presently required in this classroom. Students are invited to mask at any time and requested to do so if they have contact with someone who has COVID-19, the flu, or another airborne illness. Your professor will mask if, for instance, their domestic partner contracts a cold. Do not be alarmed by this.

Please get tested regularly. If you contract COVID-19 you should not attend class meetings during the [isolation period](#) defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The CDC has similar advice for the [flu](#). If you are isolating due to illness, notify me at the earliest

opportunity; I will help you get caught up. Absences due to illness are not charged against your participation score.

In response to changes in COVID-19 infection rates and following guidance of national, state, and city authorities, the university may re-institute a universal masking requirement. We will comply with university regulations in this and all other matters of public health.

5.10 Statement of intent

By remaining in this course, students agree to accept this syllabus and abide by its policies. Students will be informed of any changes to the syllabus.

6 Version information

Last updated March 12, 2024

File histories for this syllabus are available on [GitHub](#).

7 Selected bibliography

This bibliography supplies details for items on course reserves and excerpted on Sakai.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Canterbury Tales: Seventeen Tales and the General Prologue*. Edited by V. A. Kolve and Glending Olson, 3rd ed., W. W. Norton, 2018.

Greene, Roland, editor. *The Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*. 4th ed., Princeton University Press, 2017.

McArthur, Tom, et al., editors. *The Oxford Companion to the English Language*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Millay, Edna St Vincent. *Selected Poems of Edna St. Vincent Millay*. Edited by Timothy F. Jackson, Yale University Press, 2016.

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Edited by David Scott Kastan and Merritt Y. Hughes, Hackett, 2005.

Pope, Alexander. *Poetical Works*. 1966. Edited by Herbert Davis, Oxford University Press, 1978.

Shakespeare, William. *The Complete Sonnets and Poems*. Edited by Colin Burrow, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Williamson, Craig, translator. *The Complete Old English Poems*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017.