

“Poetry is what in a poem. . . makes you know that you’re alone and not alone in the unknown world, that your bliss and suffering is forever shared and forever all your own.”

–Dylan Thomas, “A Few Words of a Kind”

Poetry and Drama
English 131, Section 001
Fall 2013, MWF 1:30-2:20
Oglebay Hall 106

Instructor: Phillip Zapkin
Office: Colson Hall G07

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Office Hours: MF 12:15-1:15

Course Description

During our semester together we will begin to study poetry and drama as dynamic types of literature and performance. Our work will focus on formal and generic elements of poetry (sonnets, elegies, free verse, etc) and drama (tragedy, comedy, the absurd, etc). We will also explore some of the themes, histories, problems, and meanings that make literature such a fascinating art form. But perhaps most importantly, we will engage with poetry and drama as performative, living arts.

Course Goals

- Increase your intellectual curiosity about literature, particularly poetry and drama
- Learn about poetry and drama as performance as well as literature
- Develop a formal understanding of poetry and drama
- Learn to ask perceptive and critical questions and compose logical and well-supported analytical responses to literature

Required Texts and Materials

Poetry: *101 Greatest American Poems*. Dover Thrift Editions.
Strowbridge, Clarence C. Ed. *100 Favorite English and Irish Poems*. Dover Thrift Editions.
Drama: Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot*. Grove Press.
Hwang, David Henry. *M. Butterfly*. Dramatists Play Service.
Ives, David adapted from Pierre Corneille. *The Liar*. Dramatists Play Service.
Ruhl, Sarah. *In the Next Room (or the Vibrator Play)*. Theatre Communications Group.

Graded Work

Participation	10 Points
Poetry Portfolio (Midterm)	
• Poem	10 Points
• Poetry Reading and Performance Report	10 Points
• Poetry Paper Proposal	5 Points
• Poetry Paper	20 Points
Drama Portfolio (Final)	
• Theatre Response	10 Points
• Play Performance and Performance Report	10 Points
• Drama Paper Proposal	5 Points
• Drama Paper	20 Points

“Drama is not merely life reproduced (cameras and recorders can do that), but life interpreted more intensely.”

–The Longman Anthology of Drama and Theater

Participation, Attendance, Late Work

Learning and developing a scholarly community require dialogue, so I place a high value on in-class discussion. We each have unique points of view, ideas, and insights into the texts we read and the ideas we are trying to work through. Therefore, active participation is expected during every class period. Participation will be worth 10 points.

You are allowed to miss three classes (1 full week) without penalty. A fourth and fifth absence will reduce your course grade a full letter, and with a sixth absence you will automatically fail the class. Turning in assignments late is unprofessional and unacceptable. Because all assignment due dates will be announced well in advance late assignments will not be accepted.

Performances and Performance Reports

This class requires two performances: an individual poetry reading, and a short group performance from a play. You will sign up to come to my office and read a poem you find interesting, evocative, or important. We will briefly discuss the poem and why you've selected it.

With a small group you will develop a short (10 minute) performance to convey an understanding of one of the plays we will read. These performances need not be memorized. Both performances will be worth 5 points.

After each performance you will write a 1 page double spaced response (roughly 250 words), discussing the experience of reading/performing, and what new insights you've gained through the experience. Each response will be worth 5 points and due with the Poetry or Drama Portfolio.

Poem

Based on our discussions of various poetic forms—sonnets, elegies, stanzas, etc.—you will write your own original poem using a form of your choice.

Theatre Response

You will need to attend a performance at WVU Theatre or M.T. Pockets and write a 1 page double spaced (roughly 250 word) response to the show and/or the experience of going to the theatre.

Poetry and Drama Papers and Proposals

During the first half of the semester you will develop and answer a critical question about a poem or a pair of poems. During the second half of the semester you will develop and answer a critical question about a play. In a roughly 200 word proposal you will present each question and begin considering an answer.

In the paper, which will be 2-3 full pages (roughly 500-750 words), you will develop an answer to the question, and formulate a critical argument reading the poem(s) or play.

Letter Grades

A+ (97-100); A (96-93); A- (92-90); B+ (89-87); B (86-83); B- (82-80); C+ (79-77); C (76-73); C- (72-70); D (69-60); F (59 or below)

- A=Excellent/Outstanding. This grade indicates that the student has engaged with the course materials and completed assignments consistently, thoroughly, and thoughtfully. To earn an A students' work will well exceed the basic course requirements.
- B=Very Good/Good. This grade indicates good engagement with course materials and assignments. To earn a B students' work will meet or surpass the course requirements.
- C=Average/Competent. This grade indicates acceptable engagement with course materials and assignments. To earn a C students' work will frequently meet course requirements.

- D=Poor/Consistent Difficulties. This grade indicates insufficient engagement with course materials and assignments. To earn a D students will occasionally meet course requirements.
- F=Failure. This grade indicates an unacceptable engagement with course materials and assignments. To earn an F students will rarely meet course requirements.

Academic Integrity Policy

The English department assumes that you will approach academic work honestly, and you will turn in your own original work. Failure to do so will result in a failing grade for the project, a failing grade for the course, or more serious penalties.

It is your responsibility to become fully familiar with the Student Conduct Code, which can be found at http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code or on eCampus. Please note that even if you do not intend to plagiarize, it is still a violation of the academic integrity policy. If you are at all confused about what counts as plagiarism, please ask.

Electronics

Although electronics are an important part of both modern research and modern life, it is important that personal electronics—cell/smart phones, laptops, the internet, etc.—do not interfere with class. If these devices become a distraction for you, me, or other class members, you will be asked to put them away. Please set your phone to silent or turn it off.

Social Justice Policy

West Virginia University and I are committed to social justice. In English 131 we actively support that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and nondiscrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. Please make suggestions about how to further such a positive and open environment.

Writing Center

The Writing Center is a service your tuition dollars have already paid for. The tutors are your fellow undergraduates, and they are trained to help with all aspects of the writing process. More info about the Writing Center can be found on eCampus.

The Writing Center is in Colson Hall G02, near my office.

The phone number to schedule an appointment is 304-293-5788, or you can stop by the center. Their hours are 10-5 MTWR, and 10-3 F.

Accessibility Services

If you have a documented learning disability, a serious hearing or vision problem, or any other special need that might affect your performance and participation in class, please be sure to inform me. Also, please be aware of the support services available to you through Accessibility Services at 1085 VanVoorhis Rd. Their phone number is 304-293-6700, their e-mail is access2@mail.wvu.edu, and their website is <http://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>.

University Counseling Services

The Carruth Center provides resources to help manage stress, improve relationships, make healthy lifestyle choices, and face new challenges and transitions. For more information about its hours, services, and location, see its website at <http://well.wvu.edu/ccpps>.

Course Schedule

Please note: this schedule is subject to change by me. I will notify you as early as possible of any and all changes.

All readings will be due the day we discuss them.

► Week 1

◇M 19 Aug: Introduce Class, Syllabus, and Policies

◇W 21 Aug: How to Read Poetry, Origins of Poetry

◇F 23 Aug: Discuss “She Walks in Beauty” and “Song: To Cecilia” in *EIP* pages 34-35 and 14-15, and the lyric

► Week 2

◇M 26 Aug: Discuss “Sonnet 75” and “Love and Sleep” in *EIP* pages 4-5 and 59, and the sonnet

◇W 28 Aug: Discuss “Ozymandias” and “Remember” in *EIP* pages 37 and 56

◇F 30 Aug: Discuss “To My Dear and Loving Husband” and “Recuerdo” in *AP* pages 1 and 72, and heroic couplets

► Week 3

◇M 2 Sept: *Labor Day, No Class*

◇W 4 Sept: Discuss Robert Frost; “Fire and Ice,” “Nothing Gold Can Stay,” “The Road Not Taken,” and “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” in *AP* pages 48 and 49-50

◇F 6 Sept: Discuss “O Captain! My Captain!” in *AP* page 25 and “Daddy” on eCampus, and the elegy

► Week 4

◇M 9 Sept: Formulating Critical Questions and Written Responses; “Tips for Writing a Critical Essay” on eCampus

◇W 11 Sept: Guest Speaker Andi Stout; Discuss “Portrait of a Hometown” and “Twilight in West Virginia: Six O’Clock Mine Report” on eCampus, and Appalachian literature

◇F 13 Sept: Discuss “Her Lips Are Copper Wire” and “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” in *AP* pages 74-75 and 77-78, and African American Literature

HW: ***Poetry Paper Proposal***

► Week 5

◊M 16 Sept: Discuss “Prayer to Masks” and “Inside My Zulu Hut” on eCampus, and African literature

Due: **Poetry Paper Proposal on eCampus**

◊W 18 Sept: Discuss “My Heart’s in the Highlands” and “Easter 1916” in *EIP* page 29 and 70-72, and Celtic Nationalist Poetry

◊F 20 Sept: Discuss Dylan Thomas; “Do Not Go Gentle into That Goodnight” in *EIP* page 84 and “Fern Hill” on eCampus

► Week 6

◊M 23 Sept: *Poetry Readings in Colson 305, No Class*

◊T 24 Sept: *Poetry Readings in Colson 305*

◊W 25 Sept: Discuss “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” in *AP* pages 66-70 and “The Second Coming” on eCampus, and Modernist Poetry

◊F 27 Sept: Discuss William Carlos Williams; “The Great Figure,” “The Red Wheelbarrow,” and “This Is Just to Say” in *AP* pages 60-61

HW: **Draft of Poetry Paper**

► Week 7

◊M 30 Sept: Peer Review Workshop

Due: **Draft of Poetry Paper**

HW: **Poetry Portfolio**

◊W 2 Oct: *Optional Conferences in Colson G07, 12-3 PM; No Class*

HW: **Poetry Portfolio**

◊F 4 Oct: *Mid-Semester*; How to Read Drama, Origins of Drama

Due: **Poetry Portfolio on eCampus**

HW: Begin reading *M. Butterfly*

► Week 8

◊M 7 Oct: Discuss Formal Tragedy; “Classic/Aristotelian Tragedy” in Drama Packet

◊W 9 Oct: Discuss *M. Butterfly* Act 1

◊F 11 Oct: Discuss *M. Butterfly*

► Week 9

◊M 14 Oct: *Fall Recess, No Class*

◊W 16 Oct: Discuss *M. Butterfly*

HW: *Performance Rehearsals*

◊F 18 Oct: *Performance Rehearsals, Only Students Performing M. Butterfly must Attend*

HW: **Performances**; Begin Reading *The Liar*

► Week 10

◊M 21 Oct: **Performances of *M. Butterfly***

◊W 23 Oct: Discuss Classical Comedy; “Classical Comedy” in Drama Packet

◊F 25 Oct: Discuss *The Liar* Act 1

► Week 11

◊M 28 Oct: Discuss *The Liar*

◊W 30 Oct: Discuss *The Liar*

HW: *Performance Rehearsals*

◊F 1 Nov: *Performance Rehearsals, Only Students Performing The Liar must Attend*

HW: **Performances**; Begin Reading *In the Next Room*

► Week 12

◊M 4 Nov: **Performances of *The Liar***

◊W 6 Nov: Discuss *In the Next Room* Act 1

◊F 8 Nov: Discuss *In the Next Room*

► Week 13

◊M 11 Nov: *Veteran’s Day, No Class*

◊W 13 Nov: Discuss *In the Next Room*

HW: *Performance Rehearsals*

◊F 15 Nov: *Performance Rehearsals, Only Students Performing In the Next Room must Attend*

HW: **Drama Paper Proposal; Performance**, Begin Reading *Waiting for Godot*

► Week 14

◊M 18 Nov: **Performances of *In the Next Room***

Due: ***Drama Paper Proposal***

◊W 20 Nov: Discuss 'Theatre of the Absurd'; "Theatre of the Absurd" in Drama Packet, and *Waiting for Godot*

◊F 22 Nov: Watch and Discuss *Waiting for Godot* Film Clip

M 25 Nov: *Thanksgiving Break, No Class*

W 27 Nov: *Thanksgiving Break, No Class*

F 29 Nov: *Thanksgiving Break, No Class*

► Week 15

◊M 2 Dec: Discuss *Waiting for Godot*

HW: **Draft of Drama Paper**

◊W 4 Dec: Peer Review Workshop

Due: **Draft of Drama Paper**

◊T 5 Dec: *Optional Conferences in Colson 130, 12-3 PM*

◊F 6 Dec: Discuss *Waiting for Godot*; Course Evals

HW: ***Drama Portfolio***

► Week 16

◊M 9 Dec: *No Class*

Due: ***Drama Portfolio* on eCampus**