

ENG 106: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE: POETRY

Spring 2015

Instructor: Paul Hawkwood
Office: NSH 201
Office Hours: Wed 1-2 and by appointment
Telephone: 917-4570
E-Mail: paul.hawkwood.4496@mail.linnbenton.edu
Texts: *The Discovery of Poetry* by Frances Mayes
In the Palm of Your Hand by Steve Kowit

Introduction to Poetry

by Billy Collins

I ask them to take a poem
and hold it up to the light
like a color slide

or press an ear against its hive.

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

I want them to waterski
across the surface of a poem
waving at the author's name on the shore.

But all they want to do
is tie the poem to a chair with rope
and torture a confession out of it.

They begin beating it with a hose
to find out what it really means.

Course Description – an invitation to enjoy poetry

Hi Everyone –

Welcome to this course! Don't worry – I'm not accusing you of being poetry-beaters! I think Billy Collins is pointing out how many students are taught in school to approach poetry as a struggle to get the "right interpretation" from it. Yuck – what fun is that??

The goal of this course is to bring poetry to life. We WON'T torture confessions out of poems or beat them with a hose! This course is all about the humane treatment of poems and people. You'll come to understand the elements of a poem: *sound* (musical devices, rime, rhythm, meter, patterns, etc) and *sense* (tone, language, voice, figurative language, allusion, imagery, form, etc). You'll practice reading poems in many different ways – to discover a story in them, or music, a dance or a light show, question or a celebration, and so on.

You'll collect your favorite poems into your own anthology, write your own poems, listen to online readings and performances of poetry, and look for “found poetry” around you. You'll sharpen your conscious and unconscious experiences of poetry through patient reading and thoughtful analysis. You'll learn how poetry reflects, deepens, and enhances our own lives.

If at any time you feel confused, discouraged, overwhelmed, disinterested, etc, please feel free to email me and let me know. I'll see what I can do to help!

warm regards,
Paul

Important!!– Please read the “**How to succeed in this class (or not!)**” link at the top of our Moodle page to see 10 important keys to succeeding in this class.

Learning Outcomes: When you successfully complete ENG 106, you should be able to:

1. Analyze poems using the major elements and structures of poetry (literal and figurative imagery, language, rhyme, meter, free verse, traditional and open forms, etc.).
2. Interpret and evaluate poems based on analysis of their aesthetic, figurative, and formal elements.
3. Recognize, interpret, and evaluate the different experiences created by reading poetry silently and by reading or listening to it performed aloud.
4. Articulate how reading poetry affects their understanding of themselves and the range of human experiences and questions that poetry explores.

Course Learning Activities

Weekly Homework Assignments and Discussions (25 x 10 points = 250 points)

Each week you'll write 2-3 homework assignments in which you practice critical reading, interpretive, and analytic skills; experiment with writing poems yourself; and write about your

experiences of listening to recordings of poems read aloud. You'll also respond to some of your classmates' writings.

The point of these assignments is to give you informal practice with all the skills you'll be learning in this class, and to help you begin developing your Annotated Anthology.

Quizzes (3 x 25 points – 75 points)

I want to ensure that you have a strong understanding of the technical aspects of poetry – the words and concepts we use for describing different sound patterns, rhythm patterns, rime patterns, imagery and metaphor, themes, etc. There will be 3 quizzes that will test your ability to define and apply these words and concepts. Does this sound daunting? It only seems that way until you start learning. Then you'll realize that it's like any human form of "play" – sports, music, cooking, movies, games, art, war, politics, etc. Each has specialized rules, terms, concepts, and "moves" that it's important to understand if you want to play along.

An Annotated Anthology of Poems (2 x 100 points – 200 points)

Your "midterm" and "final" will each consist of a collection of 10 poems that you have selected and written about. I'll give you more details later, but in general I'll ask you to write about why you responded to the poem strongly enough to include it in your personal collection, and to explain/analyze some of the craft elements of the poem that contributed to your enjoyment and understanding of it.

A= 90+% of points plus 90-100% average on anthologies and quizzes.

B= 80+% of points plus 80-89% average on anthologies and quizzes.

C= 70+% of points plus 70-79% average on anthologies and quizzes.

Explanation: You cannot get an A, B, or C on points alone, since I often give 80-100% credit for completion of the informal weekly assignments, and I want your grade to reflect the overall quality of your anthologies and quizzes. To receive an A, you must earn 90% of points possible **and your anthologies and quizzes must have a 90% average or higher.** For a B, **80% of points and your anthologies and quizzes must have an 80% average or higher.** For a C...etc.

Revisions: Your first anthology may be revised for a higher grade. It must be turned back in for grading one week after being returned to you.

Late work: Late anthologies will lose half a grade, late homework assignments will lose 20% credit, and both kinds may be turned in up to a maximum of a week late unless you contact me about your circumstances.

Communication - I understand that occasionally health, work, and personal situations arise that make it hard to complete work on time. Please call and let me know when something is making it impossible for you to get your work done, or when you have questions or difficulties.

Plagiarism Policy: All work must be your own. You must document all appropriate quotations, paraphrases, data, images, etc. using the MLA or Chicago format. Failure to cite and document your sources will result in a loss of credit, ranging from a drop of one grade to an F, depending on the severity of the plagiarism.

Disability statement: If you have emergency medical information for your instructor, need special arrangements to evacuate campus, or have a documented disability, please meet with me no later than the first week of the term to discuss your needs and present your ODS accommodation letter.