

Spring 1-15-2007

## ENG 2003-002: Creative Writing: Poetry

Miho Nonaka  
*Eastern Illinois University*

Follow this and additional works at: [http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english\\_syllabi\\_spring2007](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2007)



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Nonaka, Miho, "ENG 2003-002: Creative Writing: Poetry" (2007). *Spring 2007*. 58.  
[http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english\\_syllabi\\_spring2007/58](http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2007/58)

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2007 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2007 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

**English 2003-002: Creative Writing: Poetry**

Dr. Miho Nonaka

Time: 2-2:50 p.m. MWF      Class Location: 3159 Coleman Hall  
 Office: 3821 Coleman Hall      Phone: 581-6972      Email: mnonaka@eiu.edu  
 Office Hours: MW 3:30-5 p.m., F 11 a.m.-12 p.m., and by appointment

**Course Objectives:** This is an introductory course for writing poetry. We will begin the class by reading the works of established poets and investigating their methods and motivations. It will involve learning how to describe certain features of language (voice, imagery, rhythm, stanzas, line breaks, etc.). Then we will workshop your poems by applying what we have learned from the reading. We will explore each poem carefully by discussing what works (for example, showing rather than telling, specific feelings conveyed through concrete images), what doesn't work (rhyming, preaching, generalizing, the use of abstract language or clichés), and how to make the poem clearer, stronger. We will seek to create a workshop climate that is supportive and encouraging, yet at the same time, allows for pointing out potential improvements and directions for future growth. I hope for animated and wide-ranging discussions based on both respect and honesty.

**Texts:**

Vendler, Helen, *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*  
 Xeroxed handouts and electronic resources

**Policies:**

- \* You are expected to attend all classes. If you miss 4 classes, for whatever reason, I will lower your final grade by a letter. There is no excused absence. If you miss 5 or more classes, you will either drop the course or accept an F for the semester.
- \* I expect you to arrive ready to participate in discussion. The quality as well as the frequency of your contributions affect your participation grade. Your written comments (must be typed) on your peers' works are also important for this grade.
- \* If you are absent, you are still responsible for knowing the material, completing all of the readings and turning in any assignments for that day. I recommend getting several classmates' phone numbers and email addresses so that you can keep up. Do not email me to ask for an "update" on missed assignments, or to explain an absence. Instead, I ask that you stop by my office during office hours or make an appointment so that we can talk.
- \* Later comers (who arrive after 10 minutes) will receive partial absences, and must see me after class so I can mark their attendance. Every 2 instances of tardiness will count as 1 absence. Leaving the class early will be treated in the same manner.
- \* There are no late assignments. I will not accept assignments via email. Those who do not bring their assignments to class or conferences will be told to drop the course. Attendance at workshops and conferences is crucial.
- \* In-class writing assignments and quizzes must be turned in by the end of class, and cannot be made up at a later date.

\* All assignments must be typed and printed in black ink. You are responsible for saving copies of any work turned in for grading. Make sure to keep the old drafts of any work you do for the course. You will have to include the earlier version of every poem in your final portfolio, along with the revised version, so that I can grade your progress in poetic technique. Save all work in some kind of folder, dated and labeled.

**Assignments:**

Over the semester, along with completing writing exercises and quizzes, you will compose poems, a number of which you will present to the class and revise.

You will be assigned a presentation in which you will choose a poem by a contemporary poet, provide background about the poem and lead the class in discussion. The poem has to have been published in the last 20 years, in a book or a nationally recognized literary magazine.

A midterm exam will cover basic terms and poetic concepts from reading assignments and class discussions.

There will be no final exam; at the semester's end, you will instead submit a portfolio which should include 6-8 of your best revised poems with previous drafts to show your progress.

Note: I reserve the right to alter or revise class policies and requirements for the course.

**Grading:**

Participation (your attendance, participation in class discussion, and both spoken and typed comments on your peers' poems): 20%

Writing Assignments (may include quizzes): 20%

Presentation: 15%

Midterm exam: 15%

Portfolio: 30%

Note: I do not keep a running tally of your current grade from day to day, so please don't ask. You should keep your own record of your participation and all of your assignments.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. I will follow the English Department policy on plagiarism:

“Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism—‘The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one’s own original work’ (*Random House Dictionary of the English Language*)—has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including a grade of “F” for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.”

**Students with Disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

**Course Calendar**

This is a tentative schedule, which will evolve as the class progresses. Changes will be announced in class. All the readings come from Vendler's *Poems, Poets, Poetry* unless otherwise specified.

### Week 1

M Jan 8: Introduction

Assignment for Wednesday: Read Emily Dickinson's "I heard a Fly buzz - when I died," "A Narrow Fellow in the Grass," "After great pain, a formal feeling comes -," "There's a certain Slant of light" and write down your observations.

W Jan 10: Discussion

Assignment for Friday: Write a poem in Dickinson's style.

F Jan 12: Emulating a style

Assignment for Monday: Read chapter 1

### Week 2

M Jan 15: No class; M. L. King's Birthday

W Jan 17: "The Poem as Life"

Assignment: Read chapter 2

F Jan 19: "The Poem as Arranged Life"

### Week 3

M Jan 22: "The Poem as Arranged Life"; writing exercise

Assignment: Read chapter 3

W Jan 24: "Poem as Pleasure"

F Jan 26: "Poem as Pleasure"

Assignment: Prepare your own poems (2-3) to be submitted on Monday.

### Week 4

M Jan 29: Discussion; writing exercise; sign up for individual conferences

Assignment: Prepare typed questions about your poems for the conference. These questions will count as exercises. During the conference, the student will make the initial evaluation of his/her poems. I will respond to the student's evaluation and questions.

W Jan 31: Conferences

Assignment: Start reading chapter 4; revise your poems

F Feb 2: Conferences

Assignment: Finish reading chapter 4; revise your poems

### Week 5

M Feb 5: Conferences

Assignment: revise your poems

W Feb 7: "Describing Poems"; distribute the xeroxed copies of your revised poems to everyone

F Feb 9: "Describing Poems"; sign up for workshop and presentation

Week 6

M Feb 12: Workshop

W Feb 14: Workshop

F Feb 16: No class; Lincoln's Birthday