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ENG 2011G-021: Literature, the self, and the World: Poetry

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ENG 2011G: Literature, the self, and the world: Poetry
Prof. Guzlowski, Summer 2004

Office: 320 Coleman Hall
Phone 581-6973
Hours: M-F 9-1030 and 1230-130, and by appointment at other times

Special Needs: Students with special needs who require academic accommodations should contact Martha Jacques at Disabilities Services (581-6583).

Course Objectives: The main purpose of this course is to give students a chance to deepen their understanding of and appreciation for poetry. I’m hoping that among the poets we read you’ll find one or two that you really connect with, and that you leave class likely to keep reading poetry in the future.

The title of the course implies that reading poetry will also help locate yourself more clearly in relation to the world. Throughout the semester, we’ll be looking at American poets and talking and thinking about how they see themselves and how they see other Americans and how they see the world. We’ll be thinking about questions like: What do these poets tell us about how they see themselves, life, the world and how they see American culture, American life, and the American self? What are Americans really like? How do we see ourselves? How do we see others? How do we view the world around us? How do we view the poems that are written about us?

Somebody once said that Americans are unique because they are always asking, “What is An American?” The French don’t wonder about what it means to be French, and the Italians don’t wonder what it means to be Italian? But Americans are always wondering what America is and What they are? And who they were? And what they will be tomorrow and the day after?

Course Requirements: Reading of Assigned Poems
Writing Component (either electronic journal or essay) 100 points
Quizzes 100 points
Mid Term 100 points
Final Exam 100 points
Involvement/participation 100 points

Grades: 450 - 500 points = A
400 – 449 points = B
350 – 399 points = C
300 - 349 points = D
0 - 299 points = F

Because I grade on a 100 point scale, missing an assignment affects a grade tremendously.

Writing Component: You can choose either to write an essay or participate in the electronic journal.

A. Essay: You'll write one paper, at least 2000 words long. This paper must be argumentative (proving some significant point). The papers will be graded on both form and content according to the English Department's Guidelines for Evaluation Writing Assignments. Highest grades will go to papers that are most insightfully, thoughtfully, energetically and
gracefully written. The paper is due during class on August 2. Late papers will be accepted without penalty if there is a valid excuse (death, illness, and some act of God). If the excuse is unacceptable, the paper grade will be dropped 2 grades for each calendar day it is late. More information regarding every aspect of this assignment later in the semester.

B. **Electronic Journal:** We learn about literature not only by reading and talking about it but also by writing about it. During the course of this session, each student will participate in a WebCT discussion group. The group site is available at the university’s WebCT cite under the following course title ENG2001GJZG. The site is located under the course category: College of Arts and Humanities. You can also go to the WebCT cite. It’s one of the menu items at the EIU site.

During the semester and before the final day of classes, you will submit 10 **analyses** to the egroup about the poems we'll be reading and 20 responses to other students' analyses.

What should you write about in your 10 **analyses**? Each one should begin with an important question about the poem you are analyzing. This important question should be about an important issue in the work you are analyzing, or the question should focus on an important quote. Your analysis should answer the question that you raise.

How long should these **analyses** be? The length of a well-developed paragraph: at least 100 words each.

To make certain that these 10 analyses are equally spaced out (this will benefit both you and me), no more than 4 analyses will count each week toward the total. You can write as many of these as you want but I will only count 4 analyses per week toward your grade.

Also, write your analyses of a poem before we start talking about the poem.

**Responses** to other students' entries should be thoughtful and respectful and substantive. You might want to write about why you agree with a student’s analysis of a poem, or why you don’t. You might write about something in the analysis that you would like to think about further.

How long should the **responses** be? About 2 or 3 thoughtful and substantive sentences.

The **responses** should also be spaced out. No more than 7 responses per week will count toward the final grade. But feel free to respond more often.

If you have trouble getting on-line, see me. You can always post analyses or responses through my computer.

**Exams:** The mid-term and final exams will be comprehensive and will contain objective and subjective components. You will be asked to 1) identify characters, situations, images from the poems, 2) identify and explain quotations from the poems we will be reading, 3) explain in short essay answers important issues as they relate to the poems, and 4) answer longer essay questions about them.

**Quizzes:** There will be 20 quizzes during the summer session. The quizzes will pretty much be reading quizzes. I’ll ask questions about characters or images or scenes or ideas in the poems.
Each quiz will be worth 5 points. If I offer to give extra credit points, please remind me that I shouldn’t do that. Thank you.

**Class participation/involvement:** It’s nearly impossible to read a poem alone. Reading well requires rereading, reading aloud, discussing and interacting with others. It’s crucial that you read the assigned poems before coming to class: carefully, more than once, aloud, with a dictionary. To encourage such careful reading, a substantial portion of your grade is based on class participation and on-line responses to the poems. Class participation is hard to evaluation, but here’s my advice:

- For a 100 points: comment frequently in ways that advance the conversation. This could be bringing up some aspect of the poem we’ve forgotten, disagreeing with a student or with me, or asking a question of a student or me. Hardly ever miss class. Be a leader in group discussions when we have them.
- For 80 points: attend consistently, look alert, and speak occasionally during each class.
- For 70 points: speak every couple of days and skip class occasionally.
- For 60 to Zero points: skip class often and contribute nothing.

**Academic Misconduct:** Note the English Dept.’s statement about 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 original work' (Random House Dict.)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course."

I have zero tolerance for plagiarism or handing in work that was not done originally for this class or cheating of any kind. I will fail any student who plagiarizes or cheats (even on a quiz!), and I will also notify the Judicial Board.

**Tentative Syllabus: This syllabus might change depending on the pressures of time and discussion.**

**July 12:** Introduction
**July 13:** Whitman, “Song of Myself” sections 1-14, sec. 46-52.
**July 14:** Whitman, “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” and “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed.”
**July 15:** Dickinson, 49, 214, 249, 258, 280, 303, 328
**July 16:** Dickinson, 341, 435, 465, 585, 632,712, 754, 1129
**July 19:** Edgar Lee Masters and Carl Sandburg: All of the Masters’ selections and Sandburg’s “Chicago.”
**July 20:** Frost, “Mending Wall,” “Home Burial,” “The Road Not Taken,” “Out, Out”
**July 22:** **Mid-term Exam**
**July 23:** Hughes, poems on pages 687 to 696
**July 26:** Hughes, poems on pages 696-704
**July 27:** Eliot, “Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” and “Preludes”
**July 28:** Eliot, “Journey of the Magi” and “Little Gidding”
**July 29:** William C. Williams, “Young House Wife,” “Tract,” “Portrait of a Lady,” Spring & All,” July 30: Williams, “To Elsie,” “The Redwheel Barrow,” “This is just to say,” “The Ivy Crown”
**August 2:** Sylvia Plath, “Metaphors,” “Morning Song,” “The Applicant,” “Daddy,” “Lady Lazarus”
**August 4:** **Final Exam**