Fall 8-15-1997

ENG 2011C-001

Michael Leddy

Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall1997

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Recommended Citation

http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall1997/64

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 1997 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 1997 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
"It is difficult to get the news from poems," wrote poet William Carlos Williams. And as he remarked elsewhere, "you got to try hard." The principal purpose of this course is to get the news from a wide range of poems. Our concerns are not primarily historical or technical--the course is not a survey or an exercise in memorizing literary terminology. Rather, we will consider poems as what philosopher and critic Kenneth Burke called "equipment for living" and examine the ways in which poets explore language to engage the deepest questions of meaning, identity, and action in the world. Because it is difficult to get the news from poems, we will read slowly and closely. Work under discussion will range from the 17th century to the present, from poets already familiar to you to some who are not. If you'd like to know why poetry matters (or if you already believe that it does), you'll enjoy the course.

TEXTS

Margaret Ferguson et al., eds. The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 4th edition

Paul Hoover, ed. Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology

A college-level dictionary is a necessary reference for the work of the course. (I'd recommend Merriam-Webster's Collegate Dictionary, 10th edition.)

REQUIREMENTS

Dedicated reading, dedicated participation in the daily work of the course, quizzes (not announced in advance), a number of short writing assignments, two essays, a final examination.

POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance is essential: you should attend class at least as often as I do. You will be lost otherwise.

You are responsible for all assignments, whether or not you are in class when they are announced. If you miss a class, you should get in touch with me before the next class to find out what you missed. This is not a class in which to fall behind.
Late Work and Make-Up Work
Late work is acceptable only if you have my prior approval. Because the purpose of a quiz is to determine whether you have done the work for that day's class, missed quizzes due to lateness or absence cannot be made up. If you have a properly verified absence (illness, emergency, participation in an official University activity), I will record a blank rather than a zero.

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

Office Hours
Feel free to come in to talk--about a question that you didn't get to ask in class, an assignment, a writing problem, a grade, whatever. Oftentimes it is very easy to clear up questions and dissolve anxieties by talking about them. Don't hesitate to arrange another time if office hours aren't workable for you. If you are not able to keep an appointment, try to let me know in advance.

Decorum
Our purposes here are serious--not grim or morbid, but genuinely intellectual. No hats, food, talking, doing work for other classes, or other private business. No sitting in the back row unless necessary due to limited space.

Grading
Your grade will be based on your essays (15% each), shorter writing assignments (25%), final examination (25%), quizzes (15%), and participation (5%).

Essays receive letter grades. An essay that is missing receives a zero. Shorter writing assignments receive grades of 100 (complete and great), 85 (complete and very good), 75 (complete and adequate), 50 (incomplete and/or inadequate), 0 (largely incomplete or missing). Quizzes receive numerical grades. A quiz average of, say, 100% counts as a 100 and not as an A (95); a quiz average of, say, 40% counts as a 40 and not as an F (55). Participation in the course receives one of four grades: 100 (consistent well-informed participation), 85 (frequent well-informed participation), 70 (less frequent participation or less well-informed participation), 55 (only occasional participation), 0 (little or no participation). You may check on quizzes and participation at any time.

To calculate semester grades, I use the following numerical equivalents for letter grades:

A 95  A- 92  B+ 87  B 85  B- 82  C+ 77  C 75  C- 72  D+ 67  D 65  D- 62  F 55

For semester grades, 90 or above is an A; 80 or above, a B; 70 or above, a C; 60 or above, a D; below 60, an F.
English Department Statement 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 the representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)--has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course.

Academic Integrity
Any breach of academic integrity--from cheating on a quiz to submitting a "borrowed" essay--will get you an F for the course and a file in the Judicial Affairs office. You will also be required to participate in an ethics workshop organized by Judicial Affairs. You should be familiar with Eastern's statement on academic integrity (posted in classrooms) and should ask if you have any questions about quoting from and/or documenting sources. Since the work of the course is to be an expression of your own ideas in your own words (aside from words and ideas derived from properly acknowledged sources), questions of plagiarism and collusion should never arise. Do not "borrow" work or have someone "go over" your work or give your work to anyone (allowing someone else to make use of your work is also a breach of academic integrity and will get you a semester grade of F).
WEEK 1: THE CONTEXT OF POETRY

Poetry as a distinct form of discourse, a realm of language use involving varied conventions and expectations that shape the kinds of meanings a reader might find in poems.


Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken"
William Carlos Williams, "This Is Just to Say," "Young Woman at a Window"

WEEKS 2-4: FINDING THE LANGUAGE

A consideration of some of the problems of representing the world in language.

Questions: What kinds of power are invested in the act of representing the world in words? How can language bring one closer to reality? How can language distance one from reality? What makes one style of representation different from another? Is there such a thing as an objective language of fact? Is all representation inherently partial and subjective? Are there experiences that lie beyond the possibility of representation in language?

Guillaume Apollinaire, "Lundi Rue Christine"
John Ashbery, "The Instruction Manual"
Margaret Atwood, "You Begin"
Thomas Campion, "There Is a Garden in Her Face"
Richard Crashaw, "To the Infant Martyrs," "Upon the Infant Martyrs"
Emily Dickinson, 510
Barbara Guest, "An Emphasis Falls on Reality"
Lanston Hughes, "Harlem Sweeties"
John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"
Kenneth Koch, "Permanently"
Bernadette Mayer, "Corn"
William Shakespeare, Sonnets 18 and 130
Gertrude Stein, selections from Tender Buttons
Wallace Stevens, "Study of Two Pears," "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"
Jean Toomer, "Face"
William Carlos Williams, "Portrait of a Lady"
WEEKS 4-6: POETRY AND MEANING

A consideration of sources of meaning in the world, with special emphasis on the country and the city.

Questions: Why do poets again and again seek to find meaning in the natural world? What are typical settings in such poems? To what extent do such poems exclude or include the social, political, industrial world? Do poems depict an already ordered world, or do they create such worlds? Is the poet the discoverer of design or, rather, the designer? How do poets humanize the natural world? Can the natural world serve as a mirror of human concerns? How do poets approach the task of putting the modern urban world into words?

William Blake, "Ah Sun-flower," "The Sick Rose"
Edwin Denby, [Neighbor sneaks refuse to my roof]
John Donne, "The Flea"
Larry Eigner, [trees green the quiet sun]
Robert Frost, "Design"
Allen Ginsberg, "Sunflower Sutra"
Thomas Hardy, "An August Midnight"
Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Spring and Fall"
Langston Hughes, from Montage of a Dream Deferred
Frank O'Hara, "Les Etiquettes Jaunes"
Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar"
William Carlos Williams, "Spring and All," "To Elsie"
William Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely As a Cloud"
William Butler Yeats, "The Wild Swans at Coole"

WEEKS 7-10: POETRY AND IDENTITY

A consideration of poems as self-portraits, as ways of articulating or performing a sense of individual identity.

Questions: How does one present the self in words? Does one say who one is or show who one is? How does one define a sense of self? By action? By gender? In relation to another person? In relation to history? In relation to a social or ethical code? In relation to a culture? What risks do self-portraits entail? How can one trust one's own sense of self? How can words betray one's sense of self? How can the aim to be "sincere" create problems?

Guillaume Apollinaire, "Hotel"
Rae Armantrout, "Traveling through the Yard"
Ted Berrigan, "Red Shift"
Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool"
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight"
Gregory Corso, "Marriage"
Robert Creeley, "Bresson's Movies"
Emily Dickinson, 199, 754
Paul Laurence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask"
T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
Lyn Hejinian, from My Life
Linda Hogan, "The Truth Is"
Philip Larkin, "Annus Mirabilis"
David Lehman, "The Difference Between Pepsi and Coke"
Lorine Niedecker, [I married]
Frank O'Hara, "The Day Lady Died," "Meditations in an Emergency," "A Step Away from Them"
Ron Padgett, "Joe Brainard's Painting Bingo"
David Schubert, "It is Sticky in the Subway"
William Stafford, "Traveling through the Dark"

WEEKS 11-15: POETRY AS ACTION

A consideration of poems as actions, as speech acts addressed to a specific implied audience.


Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach"
W. H. Auden. "Funeral Blues"
Ted Berrigan, "A Final Sonnet"
Emily Dickinson, 288, 640
John Donne, Holy Sonnet 14
Allen Ginsberg, "America"
George Herbert, "Discipline," "Love (III)"
Gerard Manley Hopkins, [Thou art indeed just, Lord]
Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B"
Kenneth Koch, "Variations on a Theme by William Carlos Williams"
Christopher Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"
Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"
W. S. Merwin, "Elegy"
Lorine Niedecker, [You are my friend]
Ezra Pound, "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter"
Sir Walter Ralegh, "The Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"