

511-01 Fall 2009 MW 6:10-8:00PM 21-204

SYLLABUS

Taught in the seminar style, English 511 is a graduate level survey of the most important American poems since EA Robinson. We will be considering broad trends in the poetry of the last 100 hundred years, and we will be engaging in close readings of key poems, including many of those by writers on the MA exam. The course will also provide critical background as well as practice in explication. Students are encouraged to participate in discussion every class meeting.

We will be reading poems from the *Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry* (third edition). Page numbers indicate the page in the Norton Anthology on which the assigned poem begins. If more than one poem begins on the page noted, please read the poem signified by the key word in parentheses. Poems and essays in quotation marks can be found in the supplemental booklet. While we will not concentrate on the poets in brackets, you are responsible for reading them and for being ready to respond to questions about them. Note dates for presentations as well as final paper theses and prospecti. All students are encouraged to attend literary readings.

A note on poetry readings: WriterSpeak, Poly's visiting writers series, presents excellent poetry readings from time to time. Every 3rd Sunday of the month, Linnea's Café on Garden Street hosts readings. In the Fall, the San Luis Obispo Poetry Festival offers nine days of readings.

Dates *Themes, topics, reading and other assignments*

Week One

September 23

Day One

first day
outline review of American poetry

ROBINSON 169 (Party)

FROST 203, 209, 213 (Seed), 214 (Woods),
215 (Once), 221 (Design), 224 (both)

“The Figure a Poem Makes” 984

POUND	351 (Metro), 352, 354 (HSM) "Preface" 926 "A Retrospect" 929
HUGHES	687, 688 (Weary), 702 (Theme) “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” 964
[McKay	501 (Dancer), 502 (Lynching)]
[Toomer	561]
[Cullen	729]
[H.D.	395 (Rose), 395 (Oread), 396 (Garden)]

Week Two

Sept 28, 30

Day One FURLOUGH DAY

Day Two

ELIOT	463, 466, 470, 472 "Tradition and the Individual Talent" 941 from “Hamlet” 947 from “The Metaphysical Poets” 949
pres:	“Preludes”

Week Three

October 5, 7

Day One

ELIOT	“The Waste Land” cont 472
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pres: "Gerontion"

Day Two

pres: "Little Gidding"

Sunday, October 11: Poetry reading at Linnaea's on Garden Street

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Week Four

October 12, 14

Day One

Day 1	ELIOT	catch-up
	WILLIAMS	286 (both), 291 (Spring)
	pres: "Tract"	

pres: "Spring and All"

Day 2	WILLIAMS	294, 295 (This), 298 (Yachts), 300 (Burning), 310 (II. Landscape)
	[Auden	797]
	[Jeffers	415, 416 (Hawks), 418 (Purse Seine),

419, 420]

pres: "Yachts"

Week Five

October 19, 21

Day One FURLOUGH DAY

Day Two

STEVENS 237, 242, 244 (Thirteen), 246 (Jar), 248 (Emperor)
249, 255, 258 (Metaphor)

[Moore 433 (Critics), 438]

[Millay 510 (Recuerdo), 512 (Woman)]

pres: "Of Modern Poetry"

STEVENS cont

pres: "The Idea of Order at Key West"

Week Six

October 26, 28

Day One

FINAL PAPER THESIS

GINSBERG

337, 344, 347

“Notes Written on Finally Recording *Howl*” 1074

pres: "A Supermarket in California"

Note on the Final Paper: The Final Essay is to be a research paper on the topic of your choice. You may not write about any work you previously written about or are currently writing about for another class. Otherwise, you may write about any of the work we read this quarter, including the poem you explicated. (But, unless you receive explicit permission from me, you may not simply explicate that poem.) If you receive explicit permission from me, you may also write about any poetry from 1917 forward. (Naturally, I will have to be familiar with the work.) If you wish to pursue this avenue, please see me *outside* of class or contact me by email.

I expect the final paper’s thesis to be an original idea. You should not simply repeat what we’ve discussed in class; for instance, if you are writing about” Eliot’s “Burnt Norton” or Rich’s “Diving into the Wreck,” then you must bring some new perspective to the discussion, one which was not considered during our class conversation. Students may simply delve deeply into a single poem of substance and find multiple layers of meaning. Others may focus on the particularly salient use of key poetic techniques.

There are, in fact, many ways to approach your final essay. You may compare and contrast two poems (including the poem you explicated), or you may write about an entirely different subject concerning our reading. I have often received excellent papers on cross-disciplinary subjects. For example, some students may be fluent in a foreign language and thus be equipped to discuss the influence of translation choices on our understanding of key poems. Other student’s may be able to apply certain principals from the psychological disciplines to their subject. Still other students may know something about musical theory and apply their knowledge to the poetry under discussion. Some students are especially familiar with specific types of critical theory and can bring a specialized perspective to the work at hand. Recently, one student successfully related the work of a visual artist to a poet who had studied that artist’s paintings.

Because the essay is a “research paper,” I expect each student to research a *minimum* of five secondary sources. These may *not* include sources found on the web. (As good as it may be, Wikipedia is off limits. J-STOR is fine.) The sources are to provide some kind of context for your paper. The secondary sources may offer support for a particular idea or may suggest a view from which you diverge. Please note: The secondary sources are *not* to be the source of your main idea.

The papers will be graded on the significance of the thesis, the comprehensiveness of the support for the thesis, and the level of expression. Because this is a 500-level

English class, I expect excellent grammar. I recommend that students draft their essays well in advance of the due date and that they revise them thoroughly.

Day Two

GINSBERG cont'

LOWELL 121, 126, 127, 130, 132, 134, 136

[Berryman 93, 95 (Three), 96, 100 (Understanding)]

[Roethke 843, 852]

[Stafford 83 (Dark)]

[Jarrell 87 (Death)]

pres: "Commander Lowell" (Lowell)

pres: "America" (Ginsberg)

Week Seven

November 2, 4

Day One

BROOKS 145, 146

HAYDEN 62

BARAKA 634
from "The Myth of 'Negro Literature'" 1077

pres: "An Agony. As Now." (Baraka)

Day Two

BISHOP 23, 26, 30, 31, 34

PLATH 602(Blackberrying), 605, 606, 608,
609, 611 (both), 612, 614

pres: "The Armadillo" (Bishop)

pres: "Fever 103"

<p>November 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, and 15, 2009 The Annual San Luis Obispo Poetry Festival / Corners of the Mouth in conjunction with Cal Poly University WriterSpeak are pleased to announce the 26th Annual San Luis Obispo Poetry Festival. All events start at 7:00 p.m. Tickets are \$5.00 general and \$3.00 students/senior</p>

Week Eight

November 9, 11

Day One

LEVERTOV 248, 250 (both)
"Some Notes on Organic Form" 1082

SEXTON 432, 433 (both), 435 (Night)

pres: "The Applicant" (Plath)

pres: "The Blackstone Rangers" (Brooks)

Day Two	Academic Holiday: Veterans Day
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**Highly recommended — November 13th Poetry Reading:
poet Hannah Stein, author of *Earthlight*
7PM, Philips Hall at the PAC.**

Week Nine

November 16, 18

Day One

FINAL PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE

RICH 459 (Snapshots), 465, 467, 470, 481
 "When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision" 1086

ASHBERY 391, 394, 395, 407 (both)

SONG 1019-1025 (all)

[Dickey 235, 237, 238]

[Kinnell 382 (Footsteps)]

[Wright 416-421 (all)]

[Harper 699 (We), 703]

[Cervantes 1012]

pres: "Snapshots of a Daughter-In-Law" (Rich)

pres: "Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror" (Ashbery)

Note on Prospectus: Your prospectus should contain the thesis, predict the structure of your argument, and—in bibliographic form—provide the key secondary sources you will be citing.

Day Two

SONG cont

KOMUNYAKAA 860, 861

HARJO 948

HASS 786, 787

pres: "Beauty and Sadness" (Song)

Wendell Harris: "Canonicity"

Week Ten

November 23

No Class this week: FURLOUGH DAY and THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Week Eleven

November 30, December 2

Day One

Day 1 LEE 1040, 1041

DUBIE 856-857 (all)

[Ai 876 (both)]

[Forche 916 (Clothes), 918]

[Doty 994, 995]

[Moss 1001 (Frost)]

pres: "Persimmons" (Lee)

pres: "Elizabeth's War with the Christmas Bear" (Dubie)

Day Two

catch-up, review and class party

FINAL PAPER DUE

Friday, December 4th

Final Paper due in my office between 9:00am and 12:00PM.
