

**Backpacking in the Waste Land? Atheism and Dickinson? Communism and Ginsberg?
Architecture and Coleridge? Calculus? Journalism? Comic Books? Science Fiction?
*Yes! You Can Have All This and More in
Amazing Adventures in POETRY!***

Poetry Anthology and Final Essay (20%)—Preparation Guide

What in the world do organic chemistry, comic books, a representative republic, the Roman empire, photography, string theory, dancing, backpacking, certified public accounting, the Dalai Lama, Mohammed, Jesus, Janis Joplin, cyberpunk science fiction, horror films, terrorism, capitalism, socialism, spiritualism, Sufism, hedonism—you name the “ism”—have to do with reading poetry? That is what you get to show us.

For this creative option, you are asked to stretch your imagination and the grounds of academic studies in applying another profession, discipline, art form, or interest to a collection of poems, an anthology that is, that you put together. I have said many times in class that Introduction to Poetry is not just for English majors, so feel free to choose a theme based on your interests outside literary studies.

Goal: To bring together an anthology of poems, artwork, essays, quotes, and other . . . cultural phenomenon(?) . . . that demonstrates a lively and creative discussion about a theme of your choosing.

The **first step** will be to **choose your theme**. See the “Index of Major Themes,” 607-611 in Kennedy and Gioia, for some examples, but keep in mind you are your own boss here. While concerned with more scholarly approaches to reading literature, ch. 25 also may provide good ideas, and do not forget that all the chapters and many, many poems we have read thus far can give you your theme. What areas outside what is traditionally known as poetry and literary studies do you wish to explore? For example in the fine arts you may be interested in modern dance or ballet, painting or sculpture, photography or performance art. In the sciences you may be interested in biology or aerospace engineering, chemistry or physics. In cultural studies you may be interested in feminist critiques of the western canon or psychoanalytical interpretations of human behavior. From these other areas of academic and professional endeavors, you may draw essays, studies, experiments or photographs. The possibilities are many, and you may have further suggestions as well, so feel free to share them with the class and me.

The **second step** will be to **collect favorite poems**, at least eight to ten, that cover but are not limited to the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. In addition to the poems you will **collect other forms of expression** that address the same theme, which may include songs (burned on homemade CDs if you like), artwork, back alley graffiti, movies, aphorisms, websites (maybe you can create your own), philosophical treatises, an essay you are writing for another class, political speeches, scientific experiments, a Dow Jones report, you name it. Think of this project as a conversation among people unlikely to meet at a party. “William Wordsworth, meet Jay-Z. He too thinks poetry must be a language spoken by the common man, and, by the way,” (whispering) “your pal Coleridge could learn a thing or two from him. Mr. Z does his best work without getting high.”

The **third step** will be to **write a rationale** inviting your readers to experience and appreciate poetry and your area of interest in a new and creative way. It should be imaginative and intelligent, playful and thoughtful.

Core Requirements:

_____ at least eight to ten poems that cover but are not limited to the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries

_____ other selections that address the same theme as the poems

_____ discipline, approach, area of study or interest outside literary studies evidenced by inclusion of other materials

_____ thesis-driven rationale that identifies and explains a claim or argument about the theme; in other words, a theme with a point (meaning not simply a topic like “childhood”; i.e. what do the poets, your area of study or interest, and you have to say about “childhood”?)

_____ MLA Works Cited page

ALL THE ABOVE are required at the time of our final exam, neatly organized and bound (no loose pages and I highly recommend a folder). No exceptions, so please do not bother to ask if you may “email the bibliography as soon as you get home.” Of course, some art objects may defy being bound, so make sure you clearly sign them. Other materials such as CDs must be placed in a folder along with the printed material.

Grading rubric:

A work all of B and more; outstanding creativity and originality, for example, with use of original artwork and/or connections; clearly stands out as your project and no one else’s; rationale manages to identify how it is said as well as what is said (in poetry, that is, poetic devices and theme) or with a philosophy essay (logical, academic argument and theme)

B work meets all core requirements; expresses imaginative involvement in its conversation with poems and other materials; extra-literary approach reveals insightful connections to other areas in art and culture, professional and academic life; illustrates your active engagement with the theme and invites the audience to do likewise; rationale offers unique, challenging, provocative thesis; Works Cited is complete and correct; rationale contains few if any surface errors and does not detract from your credibility as a writer

C work meets most core requirements; rationale offers a convincing college-level thesis; illustrates adequately an imaginative engagement with the poems and other materials beyond the typical classroom analysis and interpretation; interdisciplinary approach reveals interesting connections between poems and other materials; Works Cited is mostly complete and correct; rationale contains some surface errors that may detract from your credibility as a writer

D work misses some core requirements; rationale offers an unconvincing or undeveloped college-level thesis; rationale most likely falls back on typical classroom analysis and

interpretation; illustrates lack of imaginative engagement with poems and other materials; may lack original insight and be a bit dull because not challenging or provocative

F work does not meet core requirements, have a thesis-driven rationale, or offer an imaginative response; fails to meet many basic requirements