

English 210: Introduction to Poetry
Spring 2011

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Course Description (I)

Poetry

*I too, dislike it: there are things that are important beyond all this fiddle.
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers
that there is in
it after all, a place for the genuine.
--Marianne Moore (see Kennedy and Gioia 486)*

If you are looking to get something of material value from your third and final required English course, you should not take Introduction to Poetry. If on the other hand you are interested in supplementing or complimenting your material concerns with the pleasure of reading, then you have chosen well.

In this course we will explore and experience poetry as a viable, energetic, and creative force in our lives rather than as a dead art of the past or occasion for greeting card sentiment. At a time when many think of poetry as outdated and impractical, a quaint form of play that offers nothing of serious value to those of us pursuing highly skilled and lucrative professions, I intend for this class to offer something that is . . . intangible, yes, probably impractical, and definitely idealistic, yet no less important.

As you can tell, Introduction to Poetry is not about teaching or learning easily definable skills for your selected professions, and I will add here that it is not about turning you into English majors either. If you like, you may breathe a sigh of relief. But this class is about asking ourselves what, other than our jobs and material possessions, will sustain us and enrich us (emotionally and intellectually, religiously and spiritually, philosophically and politically, socially and individually—you fill in the blank) _____.

This class will be of some practical value as well, and in order to address the concerns above, you will be asked to apply the skills acquired in English 101 and 102 to your reading, writing and thinking while pursuing the new 210 goals (see *CAL* course goals). I intend for the English Department goals to serve you, no matter what your major, in 1) appreciating poetry as art that affects the way we live our lives, and 2) asking yourselves “how do we intend to live our lives?”.

Course Description (II)

On the other hand, if you are looking to get something practical out of your third and final required English course, maybe you should take Introduction to Poetry after all because here you may look forward to further developing and refining your reading, writing, and critical thinking skills.

In this course you can be sure that we will give you every opportunity to practice and expand on those skills learned in 101 and 102 that are meant to help you grow in an academically disciplined yet creative way. At times you will even have some fun. Guaranteed. All disciplined writing is creative, whether you are writing an analytical essay or a poem. Do not let anyone tell you otherwise.

Perhaps Introduction to Poetry really is about learning easily definable skills for your selected professions. Sure most of you are not English majors, but you will quickly discover just how important it is to present yourself well in writing when composing term papers for other classes, applying for scholarships, and making that first, all important impression on a potential employer. You are entering an incredibly competitive job market because of the current economic recession, so why would you not want to stand out from your competition by presenting yourself as intelligent, articulate, and creative?

Required Texts

You will need to have the following textbook by the second day of class.

**An Introduction to Poetry*. Thirteenth Edition. X.J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia. Pearson Longman, 2007.

**Here, Bullet*. Brian Turner. Alice James Books, 2005.

**The Brief Penguin Handbook*. Third Edition. Lester Faigley. Pearson Longman, 2009.

**Composition & Literature*. Department of English, 2010-2011.

Course Work

Formal Essays: You will write three formal essays worth 50% of your total grade. These papers will be evaluated according to the standards described in *Composition and Literature* and will be discussed in the first week of classes. The two shorter essays (one written out of class and one in class) will be three to four pages while the one longer essay will be four to six pages, due in units one, two, and four. Instead of writing an essay for unit three, you will participate in a collaborative group presentation. All formal essays must be submitted in hard copy, in MLA format and stapled.

Participation/Informal Assignments: I will ask you to write in and out of class frequently, often on some topic from the day's assigned reading. Other in-class work will include individual and group exercises and may include responses to other students' writing, workshop activities, and a variety of group projects. Other out-of-class work will include attending at least one live poetry reading and writing a poem or two of your own. By the end of the semester you will have accumulated 15 or so informal assignments that, along with your class participation, accounts for 20% of your semester grade. Among the out-of-class work will be short, **informal essays**, still

typed, of one to two pages, that are intended to prepare you for writing the more substantial formal essays.

I evaluate these quickly according to the following scale: + = very good (extra credit), √ = good (full credit), — = needs improvement (1/2 credit), and 0 = inadequate or not completed (no credit). Throughout the semester, you are responsible for keeping track of your assignments and the marks you earn. I suggest you do not lose them.

Please note that it is unhelpful because inaccurate to apply letter grades to the marks above, that is + = A, √ = B, and so on, before also considering other areas of participation. I use this quick marking system to track your active, or inactive, participation and can see at a glance exactly how many small, informal assignments you complete. I then consider your contributions to class discussion, office visits, and other indications of a serious commitment to working on and improving your reading, writing, and critical thinking. In order to earn an A in participation, which means exceptional academic work at the college level, a student must perform exceptionally well in informal assignments, class attendance and participation, and out-of-class effort as evidenced, for example, by office visits and writing center visits.

1__ 2__ 3__ 4__ 5__ 6__ 7__ 8__ 9__ 10__ 11__ 12__ 13__ 14__ 15__

Short Tests: These short tests are intended to assure you can “effectively use critical terminology relevant to the genre or theme” (see statement of goals for 200-level English courses in the *Composition and Literature* handbook).

1__ 2__ 3__ 4__

Policies and Expectations

Grading: Your final grade for the course will be based on the percentages below. Please keep in mind I use the standard 100% scale as a *guide* for determining final grades but not the sole determining factor. In other words, I reserve the right, especially in the case of borderline grades, to depend on my better judgment and a holistic evaluation of the student’s performance over the semester.

		<u>Record grades here</u>
Two shorter essays (one in-class)	15% and 20%	_____
One longer essay	20%	_____
Group presentation project	10%	_____
Two to four short tests	15%	_____
Participation and informal assignments including homework, in-class writing, possible quizzes, a few poems by you, and other activities	20%	_____

Grading Policy: In this course we will be using the new +/- grading scale, approved by the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences to describe intermediate levels of performance between a maximum of A and a minimum of F. Intermediate grades represented by plus

or minus shall be calculated as .3 units above or below the corresponding letter grade.

Late Work: It is important to complete the assigned work on time in order to gain the fullest benefits from doing the work. Check your schedule for potential conflicts well ahead of due dates, and speak with me ahead of time if you will have trouble meeting a deadline. If you contact me *in advance* about turning in a **formal essay** after the due date, I will make exceptions for exceptional cases. Otherwise, the paper may be turned in with a reduction of ½ letter grade for every day late, weekends counting as one day. As for **participation/informal** assignments, the in-class work may NOT be made up or turned in late while the out-of-class work may be turned in (emailed if you like) by the next day for ½ credit.

Attendance: Attending a class requires not only being physically present but also being prepared--having read the assignment well enough to be able to talk about it and having completed any preparatory homework--and participating in whatever activity class entails, so your grade will suffer from any absences by missing in-class work.

What we do in class is important for meeting the goals listed above, and many of our class sessions will depend on your participation in activities. Therefore, attendance is required, but you are allowed **four absences** before your grade is adversely affected. Excused and unexcused absences are the same, but please keep in mind that flu season could affect many of us; in other words, use your free absences wisely. If you miss 5 classes, you may not earn higher than a B for the semester; if you miss 6 classes, you may not earn higher than a C; if you miss 7 classes, you may not earn higher than a D; and, finally, if you miss 8 or more classes, you will fail the course. Furthermore, I consider tardiness rude and disruptive to class, so every three tardies will count as an absence. 20 minutes late will be counted as half an absence. Leaving early will also be counted accordingly, depending on the time. Make sure you see me after class if you are late so I can count you as present. If you often leave class early or develop a habit of leaving the room for extended periods of time, you will be counted absent. Attending a class requires not only being physically present but also being prepared--having read the assignment well enough to be able to talk about it and having completed any preparatory homework--and participating in whatever activity class entails. Your grade will suffer from any absences by missing in-class work. Of course, speak with me if you have a medical or other crisis that will make you miss several classes.

A final note on absences: **You will not be allowed to make up in-class work.** Out-of-class work due for that day will be graded according to the policy stated above. Furthermore, you are fully responsible for finding out what you missed, what was assigned, and what will be due. While most of what we do will be posted on Bb, I strongly encourage you to make a friend in class, someone from whom you can get missed information because it is only fair to warn you that I have little patience or sympathy for those with excessive absences and do not consider it my responsibility to conduct an entire class all over again for a chronically absent student.

Disabilities: Students with disabilities that may interfere with completing your course work should consult with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodating your needs. You should also contact the Office of Disability Resources in 22 Strong Hall or contact them at 785-864-2620 (v/tty) or consult the website at <http://www.achievement.ku.edu/disability/>.

Academic Dishonesty: Stealing and passing off as your own someone else's ideas or words, or using information from another's work without crediting the source, is called "plagiarism." Some specific examples of actions that constitute plagiarism include pasting together uncredited information or ideas from the Internet or published sources, submitting an entire paper written by someone else, submitting a paper written for another class (and thus not original work), and copying another student's work (even with the student's permission). In order to avoid unintentional plagiarism and to represent your work honestly, you will need to be meticulous about giving credit to any and all sources, whether directly quoted (even a few words) or paraphrased.

Because one of the goals of this course is to help you improve your writing, plagiarism hurts you as much as it does anyone. If you plagiarize another's work, you will not be receiving the needed feedback to improve your own writing. There will be a zero tolerance policy for any type of plagiarism in this class. All incidents of plagiarism will be penalized, reported, and kept on file in the English Department, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the University Provost's Office.

Student Academic Creations: Since one of the aims of this course is to teach students to write for specific audiences, ungraded student-authored work may be shared with other class members during the semester in which you are enrolled in the class. Please do not submit materials on sensitive subjects that you would not want your classmates to see or read, unless you inform the instructor in advance that you do not want your work shared with others.

Other uses of student-authored work are subject to the University's Policy on Intellectual Property and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. If your instructor desires to use your work outside of this class (e.g. as a sample for another class or future classes), you will be asked to fill out and sign a written form authorizing such use.

Other Policies: Be sure to read *Composition and Literature* thoroughly, which you still should have from your English 101 and 102 classes, for all other Departmental policies.

Other Resources: For help with your writing, I strongly encourage you to contact the KU Writing Center. At the Writing Center you can talk about your writing with trained tutors or consult reference materials in a comfortable working environment. You may ask for feedback on your papers, advice and tips on writing (for all your courses), or for guidance on special writing tasks. Please check the website at <<http://www.writing.ku.edu/students/>> for current locations and hours. The Writing Center welcomes both drop-ins and appointments, and there is no charge for their services. For more information, please call (785) 864-2399 or send an e-mail to <writing@ku.edu>. The website is loaded with helpful information about writing of all sorts, so even if you consider yourself a good writer, check it out!

Prerequisite: Admission to English courses numbered 300 and above is limited to students who have completed the freshman-sophomore English requirements or their equivalents. All students are required to enroll in ENGL 101 and to remain continuously enrolled in ENGL 101 or ENGL 102 until ENGL 102 (or ENGL 105) has been completed. All CLAS students, as well as students from several other schools, are also required to complete a 200-level English class.

Enrollment: (from University timetable)

Students may neither add nor change sections in any English course after **January 27**, without departmental permission. For courses numbered above 200, instructor's permission is required to add or change sections. The last day to add classes **with permission** is **February 17**.

The Department of English reserves the right to terminate administratively the enrollment of any student who misses two consecutive class meetings during the first two weeks of the semester.*

Should an emergency situation cause the student to miss two consecutive class meetings, the student should contact the instructor(s) or the English Department, 864-4520, immediately.

Students who decide to drop English classes should do so promptly so that other students may enroll in the class. The last day to drop classes online is **February 10**. The last day to withdraw from classes under any circumstances is **April 21**.

*Note: To enforce this policy as an instructor, you will need to contact Anna

Neill. Administrative disenrollment is intended only for classes that are completely full and need extra spaces for students on a waiting list. Please do **not** ask to have students disenrolled if your class has not met the enrollment ceiling.

Cell Phones and Electronic Devices: Cell phones and laptops may be brought to class as long as 1) rings or buzzers do not go off, 2) I may reserve the right to call on anyone—especially those who appear not to be paying attention and participating, and 3) you will not try to turn homework in by showing it to me on your laptop. In class, homework will only be collected in paper form.

Encountering the Strange and Familiar Alike in Poetry

First Grade

Until then, every forest
had wolves in it, we thought
it would be fun to wear snowshoes
all the time, and we could talk to water.

So who is this woman with the gray
breath calling out names and pointing
to the little desks we will occupy
for the rest of our lives?

--Ron Koertge