

ENGLISH 5337

POETIC THEORY & PROSODY

Spring 2018
6:00 – 8:50 PM, Tuesday
Evans 320

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Office Hours: Thursday, 2:30 – 5:30 PM
& by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW

What makes poetry a distinctive mode of thought, expression, and knowledge? This question will guide us as we focus on the core principles of poetic technique and form, explore the history of the genre, and delve into the rich and varied theories of poetic literature.

As we discuss what makes a poem a poem, our readings and discussions will focus on: the line, music, syntax, prosody, the image, beginnings, endings, and more. We will read books and selected essays on poetic theory as well as poems from our anthology and elsewhere. You will also choose a single volume of poetry to read and examine in light of what you have learned in this class. There will be a small creative component to the class, as well.

Should you have any questions about the class at any time, do not hesitate to contact me.

TEXTS/COURSE MATERIALS

Structure & Surprise: Engaging Poetic Turns, Ed. Michael Theune
Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End, Barbara Hernstein Smith
The Art of Syntax: Rhythm of Thought, Rhythm of Song, Ellen Bryant Voigt
The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide, Robert Pinsky
The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Poetry, edited by J.D. McClatchy

Essays that will be distributed in class or posted on Blackboard. Many of these are located at the Poetry Foundation's website. I will provide you with specific links.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/learn/essays>

A single volume of poetry that you choose. You will need to check in with me about this; we'll discuss in class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance and Participation (15%)

Attendance. Attendance is not only required, but it's imperative for doing well in this course. Missing one class is acceptable; missing two classes puts your passing grade in jeopardy. If you have three absences or more, you will not pass this course. Since I do not distinguish between "excused" or "unexcused" absences, there is no need to show me doctor's notes. Regular attendance also means coming to class on time and not leaving early. Please note that three late arrivals or early departures equal one absence.

If an ongoing emergency or issue is affecting your attendance or work, you should explain the situation to me and submit documentation to the Dean of Students office: <http://www.shsu.edu/dept/dean-of-students/documents/AbsenceRequest.pdf>.

If you miss a class, you are responsible for finding out what you missed from a classmate.

Important: When you come to class, be sure to turn off your phone.

Participation. I cannot stress to you enough how important it is that you attend class. Please be alert and ready to engage. I will expect you to act with respect and tolerance towards your peers, and to offer disagreement and criticism constructively.

LAPTOP POLICY: Unless you are working on an in-class writing exercise, your laptop should be off your desk during class.

Assigned Readings, Reading Responses, and Mini-Papers (45%)

For your assigned readings, I'm going to ask that you write a reading response every few weeks. Each response should be 1 ½ - 2 pages in length. These assignments will be announced in class. You will turn these in on Blackboard. We'll talk more about my

expectations for these reading responses. You will also have two mini-papers due. Each should be about 5 pages in length.

Creative Responses (15%)

There is a creative component to this course, and this will be discussed in class.

Craft Paper and Craft Talk (25%)

You will write an 8-10 page craft paper toward the end of the semester. You will also deliver a craft talk (based on your craft paper) of about 30 minutes.

Extra Credit: Public Readings

You may attend public readings for extra credit. You will write a two-page response for each reading you attend. The reading may be in poetry, fiction, or nonfiction. We'll talk more in class about all the opportunities you'll have to attend readings this semester.

ADDITIONALLY

Late Work

Any late work will be penalized one full grade for each class period it is late. Extensions will be granted only in advance and only in cases of emergency.

Formatting

Everything you turn in should be typed, double-spaced, and in a 12-point font. You should follow MLA formatting guidelines.

Religious Holidays

Students are allowed to miss class and other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. Students remain responsible for all work. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>).

Academic Dishonesty and Plagiarism

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, or collaboration, consult the course instructor. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>).

Disabilities Policy

Also note: It is the policy of Sam Houston State University that individuals otherwise qualified shall not be excluded, solely by reason of their disability, from participation in any academic program of the university. Students with disabilities that might affect their academic performance are expected to visit with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities located in the Counseling Center. See Student Syllabus Guidelines (<http://www.shsu.edu/syllabus>)

Visitors in the Classroom

Only registered students may attend class. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis by the professor. In all cases, visitors must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. Students wishing to audit a class must apply to do so through the Registrar's Office.

The Writing Center

Sam Houston Writing Center, located in Farrington 111, is open from 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. on Friday, and 2 - 7 p.m. on Sunday. Writing tutors will work with you one-on-one at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, generating a draft, organizing a draft, or revising a draft) for any written assignment. The Writing Center operates on an appointment system, so please call (936) 294-3680 to schedule a session with a writing tutor. In addition to offering one-to-one writing conferences, the Center also offers a computer lab, handouts, style manuals, dictionaries, thesauruses, and handbooks for client use.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

(subject to change)

Week 2 (Week 1 of Class)

1/23: Introductions. Chapters 1-2 of Richard Hugo's *The Triggering Town*. Mary's Oliver's "The Artist's Task."

Week 3

1/30: *The Sounds of Poetry*, pages 3-49.

Reflection Due (2-3 pages)

Week 4

2/6: *The Sounds of Poetry*, pages 50-116. Reading from *VBCAP*. Essays TBA in class.

Reading Response Due on Blackboard

Week 5

2/13: *The Art of Syntax*, Preface-page 62. Reading from *VBCAP*.

Reading Response Due on Blackboard

Week 6

2/20: *The Art of Syntax*, pages 63-146. Reading from *VBCAP*. Essays TBA in class.

Creative Response Due

Week 7

2/27: *Structure and Surprise*, pages 1-98. Reading from *VBCAP*.

Reading Response Due on Blackboard

Week 8

3/6: *Structure and Surprise*, pages 99-146. Essays TBA in class.

First Mini-Paper Due

3/13: NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Week 9

3/20: *Poetic Closure*, pages 1-138. Reading from *VBCAP*.

Reading Response Due

Week 10

3/27: *Poetic Closure*, pages 139-260. Reading from *VBCAP*.

Week 11

4/3: Essays TBA in class.

Creative Response Due
Craft Talks

Week 12

4/10: Essays TBA in class.

Craft Talks

Week 13

4/17: Essays TBA in class.

Second Mini-Paper Due
Craft Talks

Week 14

4/24: Essays TBA in class.

Craft Talks
Final Craft Papers Due

Week 15

5/1: Reflection. Final Thoughts. Last Day of Class.