

## ENG 2003: INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

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Section 5547  
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Course Website: <http://openlab.citytech.cuny.edu/goldpoetrysp2012/>

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

"Poetry is what gets lost in translation."  
— Robert Frost

What “gets lost” when words are translated from one language to another? The sounds and rhythms of the phrases, the musical nature of the expressions, and the contextual environment of the language all change. In his well-known definition of poetry, Robert Frost aligns the essence of poetry with exactly those qualities of language that cannot be translated from one tongue to another, with those linguistic elements that cannot be altered without the loss of some essential quality. If poetry is what gets lost in translation, then poems are not just made with language – they are *about* language.

Frost’s definition suggests that our attempts to interpret a poem are bound to be incomplete, for when we describe the meaning of a poem -- when we translate its words into our own -- we can offer only partial glimpses of the poem’s larger mysteries. While this might be unsettling, it is also liberating, for it suggests that there is no single "correct" interpretation of a poem. Rather, many interpretations are possible, and it is our job to find those interpretations that can be supported most plausibly with evidence from the text.

Because poems are like puzzles, we never stop trying to figure them out, to decipher how they work and what they mean. We try, over and over, not to lose the poem as we translate it, because the act of interpretation is itself (or should be) a pleasurable and edifying enterprise.

In this course, we will undertake a communal effort to understand, analyze, and interpret poetry written by authors from a range of historical periods, literary movements, and world cultures. As we seek to understand our course texts, we will consider poetic form, syntax, and meter. We will also explore the historical, biographical, and cultural contexts of the poets themselves.

We will read poems aloud and in silence; we will memorize poems; we will research the lives of the poets; we will read criticism of the poetry; and we will explore, together, the complex nature of poetic diction. But, above all, we will listen to the poems themselves. And, as we attend to them, we will experience language afresh, as if we are hearing its richness and beauty for the first time.

NOTE: This is a hybrid course; we will meet in person on Tuesdays and online on Thursdays. Some online sessions will be synchronous, which means that you will have to be at a computer at

during our class hours in order to participate. Other classes will be asynchronous, which means that you can participate in the discussions and assignments for the day at your own discretion (as long as you adhere to deadlines). We will be using City Tech's new platform for teaching and learning, the City Tech OpenLab, for our course (more about that below).

*Prerequisite:* ENG 1101/EG 101

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

#### Reading Goals

- Read slowly, actively, carefully, confidently, critically, and skeptically;
- Analyze the formal elements of a poem, such as rhyme scheme, tone, narrative mode, imagery, personification, and apostrophe;
- Demonstrate the ability to paraphrase, interpret, analyze, and evaluate poetic texts;
- Research, analyze, and interpret a range of poems by a single poet.

#### Writing Goals:

- Write clear and logical sentences using conventional spelling, grammar, punctuation, and syntax;
- Design reasonable, clearly articulated, well-organized essays that support persuasive arguments with textual evidence;
- Demonstrate the ability to perform research on poets, literary movements, and historical periods;
- Incorporate biographical, cultural, and historical information where this will help illuminate the works under consideration;
- Learn to perform "close readings" of poems or groups of poems.

#### Computing Goals:

- Gain basic familiarity with the use of online tools such as blogs and wikis;
- Acquire skills in information fluency

### **GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

- Students will demonstrate ability to analyze literary texts.
- Students will demonstrate proficiency in written discourse.
- Students will demonstrate proficiency with advanced multimodal digital content creation systems.
- Students will understand and use basic research techniques.
- Students will locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.
- Students will identify, analyze and evaluate arguments as they occur in their own and others work.
- Students will develop well-reasoned arguments.

### **REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS:**

- David Mason and John Frederick Nims, eds. *Western Wind*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. New York:

McGraw-Hill, 2006.

- A college-level dictionary, such as the *American Heritage Dictionary*.
- A sturdy folder with pockets to hold your work and course handouts.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES:**

- One formal essay (25%)
- Wikipedia Assignment (15%)
- Midterm exam (15%)
- Final exam (25%)
- In-class quizzes and writing assignments (10%)
- Regular attendance and active classroom participation (10%)

### **COURSE POLICIES:**

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory in this discussion-based course. Students who miss more than three classes for any reason other than a documented emergency will lose one-third of their final grade for each additional absence. Students who miss more than five classes are likely to fail the course. If you miss class, you must contact your classmates to find out what you've missed. In-class writing assignments cannot be made up. Arriving after roll has been taken will count as a lateness and one-third of an absence. To be counted as present for an online session, you must post a blog post or discussion-board response (depending on the assignment) by 5pm on the day of the class session.

**Participation:** The success of this course depends upon your regular and active participation in class discussions. To receive full credit for participation, you must make constructive contributions to our classroom discussions. This includes the completion of all reading and writing assignments.

Please do not read or write text messages in class unless asked to do so by Professor Gold, as this activity is distracting and disrespectful. If you need to communicate with someone outside of class, kindly leave the classroom.

**Deadlines:** You must adhere to your assigned dates and times. All assignments must be prepared prior to the class meeting, according to the due date and time, and fully complete. If you need an extension, you must contact me at least 24 hours before the assignment is due to explain why an extension is necessary. Late work will be penalized by one-third of a grade for each day it is late.

You will be responsible for all assignments and deadlines regardless of absences. Hence, I strongly recommend that you have a contact person in the class from whom you can get assignments and notes in the event of an absence.

**Paper Format:** All papers must be typed and double-spaced. Use a legible 12-point font such as Times New Roman, and format your papers with 1" margins on all sides. Give your paper a creative title that sums up your argument. Citations and title formatting should

conform to the MLA guidelines that we will discuss in class.

**Personal Conferences:** Meeting with me during office hours is one of the most important things you can do to improve your work. If you cannot make it to my office hours, we can set up an appointment at a mutually convenient time. Email is the best way to reach me; I will attempt to respond to all messages within 24 hours.

**Email Etiquette:** In your email messages to me, please observe the rules of formal letter-writing etiquette: begin each message with a greeting (“Dear Professor Gold”) and end each message with a closing (“Sincerely, Albert Einstein”). Avoid texting language (“yo whattup prof. g? How r u?”). Use standard punctuation and capitalization. Messages that do not comply with this etiquette will be deleted.

**Incompletes:** Incomplete grades will not be given except under extraordinary circumstances, and even then, the student must have completed course work at a passing level and must complete a written agreement with me regarding the completion of the work.

**New York City College of Technology Policy on Academic Integrity:** Students and all others who work with information, ideas, texts, images, music, inventions, and other intellectual property owe their audience and sources accuracy and honesty in using, crediting, and citing sources. As a community of intellectual and professional workers, the College recognizes its responsibility for providing instruction in information literacy and academic integrity, offering models of good practice, and responding vigilantly and appropriately to infractions of academic integrity. Accordingly, academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and at New York City College of Technology and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion. The complete text of the College policy on Academic Integrity may be found in the catalog.

**Plagiarism:** If you are confused or have any questions about what plagiarism is and how you might avoid it, please contact me before your paper is due.

**Students With Disabilities:** Any student who has a need for accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss the specific situation as soon as possible. I will work with the Student Support Services Program (Atrium 237 – 718-260-5143) to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Syllabus Disclaimer:** Any part of this syllabus may be revised during in the semester at the sole discretion of the instructor.

#### **COURSE RESOURCES:**

**City Tech Learning Center:** Atrium G-18, (718) 260-5874

The Atrium Learning Center provides a wide range of free academic support services to City Tech students, including computer facilities, tutoring assistance, and workshops.

Tutors in the Learning Center can help you focus and develop your papers; please visit the center as often as possible this semester.

**The Ursula C. Sherwin Library:** Atrium Fourth Floor, (718) 260-5485

It is my hope that you will become intimately familiar with the library this semester. During the semester, we will meet with a librarian for a session on the effective use of online resources and literary databases.

**COURSE SCHEDULE (Online classes marked with +):**

T 1/30	Introduction to the course. What is poetry?
TH 2/2+	<i>Western Wind (WW):</i> “Before We Begin” Theodore Roethke, “My Papa’s Waltz” (227)
T 2/7	WW: “Where Experience Starts”
TH 2/9+	WW: “What’s It Like? Simile, Metaphor, and Other Figures”
T 2/14	<b>Imagery Quiz</b> Simile, Metaphor Discussion Continued
TH 2/16+	WW: “The Broken Coin: The Use of Symbol”
T 2/21	NO CLASS (Monday Schedule)
TH 2/23+	WW: “Binocular Vision: Antipoetry, Paradox, Irony, the Withheld Image”
T 2/28	<b>Poetic Term Quiz</b> In-Class Writing Assignment
TH 3/1+	Paradox and Irony Discussion
T 3/6	WW: “Machine for Magic: The Fresh Usual Words” <b>Poem Memorizations Group 1</b>
TH 3/8+	WW: “Gold in the Ore” <b>Poem Memorizations Group 2</b> <b>Poetic Term Quiz</b>
T 3/13	WW: “Working With Gold” <b>Wikipedia Draft Due</b>
TH 3/15+	WW: “The Dancer and the Dance” <b>Wikipedia Post Due</b>
T 3/20	<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>
TH 3/22+	WW: “Different Drummers”
T 3/27	Rhythm Discussion continued <b>Rhythm Quiz</b>
TH 3/29+	WW: “The Shape of Thought”

T 4/3	WW: "Golden Numbers"
TH 4/5+	No Class – Spring Recess
T 4/10	No Class – Spring Recess
TH 4/12+	No Class – Spring Recess
T 4/17	WW: "A Head on Its Shoulders"
TH 4/19+	WW: "Adam's Curse"
T 4/24	Single Poet Studies: Walt Whitman
TH 4/26+	Single Poet Studies: Emily Dickinson
T 5/1	<b>Paper #2 Draft Due</b>
	<b>Draft Workshop</b>
TH 5/3+	Single Poet Studies: T.S. Eliot
T 5/8	Single Poet Studies: Jay-Z
TH 5/10+	Single Poet Studies: Class Choice
	<b>Paper #2 Due</b>
T 5/15	Review for Final
TH 5/19	Final Exam, Part I
T 5/22	Final Exam, Part II
TH 5/24+	Closing Ceremonies/Favorite Poem Readings