

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

**Voyage:** Spring 2014  
**Discipline:** English Literature  
**Course Title:** ENSP 1559-102 - Studies in Poetry  
**Division:** Lower  
**Faculty Name:** John N. Serio

**Prerequisites:** None

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

“If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry,” writes Emily Dickinson. As one of the most compressed art forms, poetry relies on rich and sensuous imagery to convey meaningful experiences that have the power to evoke in us both genuine feeling and deep, often philosophical, thought. As with all art, poetry provides a mechanism to explore the complexities of our own existence as well as to step outside ourselves to understand others. This is especially important in our voyage around the world, as students will be asked to utilize their imagination to relate to foreign cultures, customs, and beliefs. Students will learn the art of reading—and enjoying—poetry. They will be exposed to a rich and diverse selection from many cultures, countries, and ethnicities. As students attend to the nuances of context, tone, imagery, metaphor, symbol, form, and diction, they will expand their sensibilities and sharpen their imaginative capabilities. Through class discussion and various writing assignments, they will also improve their critical thinking and writing skills.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

To teach students an appreciation of the many and lasting pleasures of poetry.

To demonstrate how poetry, in exercising the imagination, teaches readers not only to peer deeply within themselves, but also to step outside themselves to increase their awareness and understanding of others.

To introduce students to the formal elements of poetry, such as diction, imagery, tone, figurative language, symbol, rhythm, arrangement, as a means to elucidate not only the meaning of a poem but also the “how” of it, the way in which its form expresses its content.

To introduce students not only to American poets, but also to a spectrum of international voices.

To hone students’ critical thinking and analytical skills through discussion and expository writing.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS**

**AUTHOR:** X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia  
**TITLE:** *An Introduction to Poetry*  
**PUBLISHER:** Longman/Pearson  
**ISBN#** 978-0-205-68612-4  
**DATE/EDITION:** 2010 13<sup>th</sup> edition

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

<b>B1 January 13</b>	Ch. 18 What Is Poetry? (327–330)
<b>B2 January 15</b>	Ch. 01 Reading a Poem (5–18)
<b>B3 January 18</b>	Ch. 02 Listening to a Voice: Tone, Persona (19–32)
<i>January 17 Hilo, United States</i>	
<b>B4 January 21</b>	Ch. 02 Listening to a Voice: Irony (33–47)
<b>B5 January 23</b>	Ch. 03 Words (48–71)
<b>B6 January 26</b>	Ch. 04 Saying and Suggesting (72–83)
<b>B7 January 28</b>	Ch. 05 Imagery (84–91)
<i>January 29–February 3 Yokohama, Transit, Kobe, Japan</i>	
<b>B8 February 5</b>	Ch. 05 Imagery: Haiku (91–103)
<i>February 6–11 Shanghai, Transit, Hong Kong, China</i>	
<b>B9 February 13</b>	Ch. 06 Figures of Speech: Metaphor and Simile (104–113)
<i>February 14–19 Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam</i>	
<b>B10 February 21</b>	Ch. 06 Figures of Speech: Other Figures of Speech (113–123)
<i>February 22–23 Singapore</i>	
<b>B11 February 26</b>	<u>Examination</u>
<i>February 27–March 4 Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar)</i>	
<b>B12 March 6</b>	Ch. 08 Sound (144–162)
<b>B13 March 8</b>	Ch. 09 Rhythm (163–182)
<i>March 9–14 Cochin, India</i>	
<b>B14 March 16</b>	Ch. 10 Closed Form (183–192)
<b>B15 March 19</b>	Ch. 10 Closed Form (192–203)
<i>March 21 Port Louis, Mauritius</i>	
<b>B16 March 22</b>	Ch. 11 Open Form (204–215)
<b>B17 March 24</b>	Ch. 11 Open Form (216–225)
<b>B18 March 27</b>	Ch. 12 Symbol (226–239)
<i>March 28–April 2 Cape Town, South Africa</i>	
<b>B19 April 4</b>	Ch. 13 Myth and Narrative (240–260)
<b>B20 April 6</b>	Ch. 14 Poetry and Personal Identity (261–278)
<b>B21 April 9</b>	Ch. 17 Recognizing Excellence (305–323)
<i>April 10–14 Takoradi, Tema, Ghana</i>	
<b>B22 April 16</b>	Ch. 19 Two Critical Casebooks—Emily Dickinson (331–347)
<b>B23 April 18</b>	Ch. 19 Two Critical Casebooks—Langston Hughes (348–365)
<b>B24 April 21</b>	Ch. 21 Poems for Further Reading (selections)
<i>April 23–27 Casablanca, Morocco</i>	
<b>B25 April 29</b>	B Day Finals: <u>Examination</u>
<i>May 2 Arrive in Southampton, England</i>	

*Note* There will be several out-of-class essays, format and due dates to be announced as well as possible quizzes.

## **FIELD WORK**

### **Wednesday, 2 April 2014, Cape Town, South African Poets**

In the morning, we will travel to the Book Lounge, a popular bookstore located in City Centre that hosts numerous literary events throughout the year. We will meet with several practicing South African poets, who will read from their work and discuss both their own poetry and South African poetry in general. In the afternoon, we will travel to the University of Cape Town where we will have lunch with some University students interested in creative writing. Then we will attend a poetry reading/workshop with renowned South African writer and poet Joan Hambridge. She will read from her poetry and discuss her sources of inspiration and the various techniques of composition. She will then conduct a brief poetry workshop.

## **ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES**

1. To learn about and meet practicing South African poets
2. To discover their sources of inspiration, methods of composition, struggles, and rewards
3. To gain an appreciation not only of their poetry, but also of South African poetry in general
4. To benefit personally from this encounter, especially through a question-and-answer session and workshop

## **FIELD ASSIGNMENT**

Since the Field Lab constitutes 20% of the coursework, students will be required to write a critical essay on their experience. In particular, they will be asked to select several works by the poets we have met and to discuss critically their response to their work, especially in light of what they, as students, have learned both during the Field Lab and in the course. What modes of expression have the poets chosen and why are they appropriate? How has the social and political background of South Africa affected their poetry? How well do these poets employ the various elements of poetry we have studied, such as diction, imagery, rhythm, closed or open form, metaphor, simile, irony, and/or symbol? How well do their poems attain a universal level of expression?

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC**

- 20% Class participation/attendance (the Socratic method of teaching will be employed and students will be encouraged to volunteer their contributions to class discussion, and not simply respond when called upon)
- 30% Two in-class essays and/or examinations
- 30% Two formal critical essays
- 20% Field-Lab Assignment

## **RESERVE LIBRARY LIST**

AUTHOR: J. D. McClatchy, Editor  
TITLE: *The Vintage Book of Contemporary World Poetry*  
PUBLISHER: Knopf Publishing Group  
ISBN #: 9780679741152  
DATE/EDITION: 1996

## **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

None

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

None

## **HONOR CODE**

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus they bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: "On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment." The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed "[signed]."

Introduction To Poetry. Rating: 4.4. Autoplay Next Video. I ask them to take a poem and hold it up to the light like a color slide. or press an ear against its hive. I say drop a mouse into a poem and watch him probe his way out, or walk inside the poem's room and feel the walls for a light switch. I want them to waterski across the surface of a poem waving at the author's name on the shore. But all they want to do is tie the poem to a chair with rope and torture a confession out of it. They begin beating it with a hose to find out what it really means. "Introduction to Poetry" can be found in the 1988 volume *The Apple That Astonished Paris*. Expand. The Apple that Astonished Paris (1988). Billy Collins. 2. Walking Across the Atlantic. 13. An introduction to poetry. The macmillan company. New York Boston Chicago Dallas. Introduction to Poetry is intended for the college. freshman or sophomore as well as for the general reader. Its chief aims are two: first, to offer in a natural and interesting manner the technical apparatus, the criticism, and the examples needed for a good elementary knowledge of English poetry; second, to offer a convenient opportunity for a comparison of the new and the older English and American poets. The twelve chapters approach poetry from various angles type, meter, subject, and period. Each chapter includes enough poems to illustrate well the points brought out in the text. An Introduction to Poetry. (from "Fields of Vision" by Denis Delaney, Ciaran Ward, Carla Rho Fiorina). One modern poet, when asked the question "What is poetry?" replied that poetry, unlike prose, is a form of writing in which few lines run to the edge of the page! The American poet Robert Frost contended that "poetry is the kind of thing poets write". While these replies, at first, may not seem serious, they inadvertently reveal two important aspects of poetry: the first quotation indicates the arrangement of the words on the page as an important element of poetry, while the second Billy Collins, "Introduction to Poetry" from *The Apple that Astonished Paris*. Copyright 1988, 1996 by Billy Collins. Reprinted with the permission of the University of Arkansas Press. Dubbed "the most popular poet in America" by Bruce Weber in the *New York Times*, Billy Collins is famous for conversational, witty poems that welcome readers with humor but often slip into quirky, tender, or profound observation on the everyday, reading and writing, and poetry Read Full Biography. More About this Poet.