ENGLISH 92: READING AND WRITING POETRY

FALL QUARTER
MON & WED 1:15 – 3:05 PM

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OFFICE HOURS: MON. 3:10-4:10; WED 3:10-5:10

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Every angel’s terrifying”—Rainer Maria Rilke

What gives a poem the power to move us, to haunt us, to leave itself burned in our brains? How can a handful of words create feeling? Are poets magicians, practitioners of dark sorcery? Or is there something more human, more commonly learned through a basic attention to craft? In this introductory class we’ll be investigating poetry, all aspects of it. We’ll be writing poetry, reading poetry, workshopping frequently, and immersing ourselves in the strange orchestration of words. Anyone with a beating heart is welcome.

REQUIREMENTS

Attend every class
Complete assignments on time
4 poems for workshop
Attend 3 readings outside of class
3 page written response to poetry book of your choice (see list)
Written response to every work-shopped piece (1 copy to author, 1 copy to me)
Journal response to 1 poem per week (from assigned readings)
2 revisions to be handed in at the end of the semester (with originals and my comments)

GRADERS

You will be graded on your attendance, your participation in class, your journal assignments, and your eagerness to improve. I will grade your development as a writer and the extent to which you are engaging with the material. You will receive an unofficial midterm grade and a final grade for the course. Grades will be roughly imagined as follows:

40% homework / 20% revisions / 40% participation

ATTENDANCE

Attendance in class is mandatory. You are allowed to miss one day of class without affecting your grade. I expect you to be on time and to complete the assigned readings. Three or more tardies will result in an unexcused absence. It is imperative that you attend all the days of class in which your work is being work-shopped. Failure to do so may result in a failure of the class.

TEXTS

Course Packet
A Poetry Handbook—Mary Oliver
Blank Journal
**STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES**

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL:http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oae).

**HONOR CODE**

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work:

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;

2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.

3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.

4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

All work must adhere to the University’s policies on academic integrity. Failure to cite work that is not your own constitutes plagiarism.
TIMELINE

September 23  Why We Write: Introduction

September 25  Storytime

September 30  Oh Captain, My Captain: Hearing the Muse, the Voice

- from Song of Myself (1-6)—Walt Whitman
- The Dislocated Room—Richard Siken
- Lady Lazarus—Sylvia Plath
- How I Get My Ideas—Dean Young
  Essay: Writing the Australian Crawl—William Stafford

October 2  What the Heart Knows: Creating Emotional Tone

- A Blessing—James Wright
- Let Evening Come—Jane Kenyon
- Wild Geese—Mary Oliver
- Slow Dance—Matthew Dickman
  Letter: from Letters to a Young Poet (Intro, 1, 2)

October 7  The Mind’s Eye: Using Image

- Red Wheelbarrow—William Carlos Williams
- A Martian Sends a Postcard Home—Craig Raine
- Laundry and Cigarettes—Dorianne Laux
- A Supermarket in California—Allen Ginsberg
  Chapter: Image—Mary Oliver
  MOCK WORKSHOP

October 9  Full Fathom Five Thy Senses Lie: Sensory Detail

- Mock Orange—Louise Gluck
- Facing It—Yusef Komunyakaa
- Traveling Through the Dark—William Stafford
- Seeing Whales—Michael Dickman
  WORKSHOP

October 14  Out of Hopeful Green Stuff Woven: Form

- Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird—Wallace Stevens
- In a Dark Time—Theodore Roethke
- since feeling is first—e. e. cummings
- First Fig—Edna St. Vincent Millay
  Essay: A Personal Encounter—Eavan Boland
  WORKSHOP
October 16  

**Form Continued**

One Art—Elizabeth Bishop  
To Autumn—John Keats  
What lips my lips have kissed—Edna St. Vincent Millay  
In a Station of the Metro—Ezra Pound  
*Chapter: Some Given Forms—Mary Oliver*  
*WORKSHOP*

October 21  

**Don’t Stress:** Understanding Meter

I Felt a Funeral in My Brain—Emily Dickenson  
The Lake Isle of Innisfree—William Butler Yeats  
That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire—Gerard Manly Hopkins  
Diving Into the Wreck—Adrienne Rich  
*Chapter: Line—Mary Oliver*  
*WORKSHOP*

October 23  

**The Dancer’s Dance:** Rhythm

Duino Elegies (1-3)—Rainer Maria Rilke  
Lines Written Before the Day Shift—Mike McGriff  
*Chapter: Sound—Mary Oliver*  
*WORKSHOP*

October 28  

**Only the Lonely:** Thoughts About Sound

Morning Song—Sylvia Plath  
Song—Brigit Pageen Kelly  
Persimmons—Li Young-Lee  
Three Kinds of Pleasures—Robert Bly  
*Chapter: More Devices of Sound—Mary Oliver*  
*WORKSHOP*  
*CONFERENCES*

October 30  

**In a Language Strange:** Syntax

hoopsnake—Rebecca Wee  
Sometime During Eternity—Lawrence Ferlinghetti  
When I Heard the Learned Astronomer—Walt Whitman  
Tonight I Can Write—Pablo Neruda  
*WORKSHOP*  
*CONFERENCES*

November 4  

**Scene Setting:** Landscapes

Lying in a Hammock……—James Wright  
The Colonel—Carolyn Forche  
Fred Had Watched a lot of Kung Fu Episodes—Tony Hoagland  
Something Whispered in the Shakuhachi—Garrett Hongo  
*Letter: from Letters to a Young Poet (4, 8)*  
*WORKSHOP*
November 6  **Drinking The Milk of Paradise**: Dreamscapes

After a Death—Tomas Transtromer  
*Kubla Khan*—Samuel Taylor Coleridge  
Car Crash While Hitchhiking—Denis Johnson  
The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock—T.S. Eliot  
WORKSHOP

November 11  **Unlocking the Vault**: Memory

In 1967—Larry Levis  
What the Living Do—Marie Howe  
The Spirit and the Soul—Jack Gilbert  
Gradations of Blue—Matthea Harvey  
*Essay: Poetry and the Mind of Concentration*—Jane Hirshfield  
WORKSHOP

November 13  **Or So the Story Goes**: Narrative Strategies

“Out, Out”—Robert Frost  
Married—Jack Gilbert  
The Race—Sharon Olds  
A Story About the Body—Robert Hass  
WORKSHOP

November 18  **Straight, No Chaser**: Style

The Tyger—William Blake  
A Dark Thing Inside the Day—Linda Gregg  
Workshop—Billy Collins  
Meditation at Laguinitas—Robert Hass  
WORKSHOP

November 20  **Kill the Mother, Save the Children**: Revision

Rose—Li-Young Lee  
ESSAYS DUE

December 2  **Revision Continued**

Howl—Allen Ginsberg  
JOURNALS DUE

December 4  **Pizza Party**

FINAL REVISIONS DUE