ENGL 451: Modern Poetry
Dr. Lynn Marie Houston
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Email: lmhouston@csuchico.edu

REQUIRED TO PURCHASE:


COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES
This course is designed and taught to provide an overview of modern and contemporary poetry written by a variety of poets who employ a range of poetic devices and techniques and who come from a variety of backgrounds. While the subject matter is far-reaching, the class discussions, lectures, and assignments are guided by attention to the following course learning objectives:

- Students will identify the formal techniques used by poets and use appropriate terminology when discussing their work critically.

- Students will practice analyzing poetry through class discussions and through writing assignments that employ a thesis statement and supporting evidence to generate an argument out of a close reading of one or more texts.

- Students will develop a sensitivity to language and to how poems manipulate definitions and histories of words to make meaning and social/political commentary.

- Students will foster an appreciation of poetry and recognize the major themes and trends of the social, cultural, and historical contexts out of which modern and contemporary poetry is produced.

- Students will identify how poetic technique is harnessed to comment on issues of gender, race, and class.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS
Online Postings (20%): due Sunday night by midnight. I do not write lengthy responses to your posts (or even, sometimes, respond at all); however, I will tailor my classroom lectures around the ideas you have presented in your posts. If you are completely missing the point of the posts and are not providing responses that are worth credit, I will email you individually. Here is a key to possible response symbols: ☺ = excellent, /neutralface = good, /frownface = could be better. If you receive a symbol from me in response to your post and you need clarification, it is your job to email me with a specific question about why you received that symbol.
If you miss a posting and want to submit it late, I may give you some credit for it, but your response will have to show twice as much work/thought as the other students’ responses and it will have to be exceptionally brilliant.

**Friday Freewrites (5%)**: On Fridays, I will ask you to take a few minutes toward the end of class to reflect on the week. These cannot be made up, so you must be in class to complete them. I am looking for you to tell me what is working well to help you learn the material and also things you are having trouble with. This is an opportunity for you to check in with me and guide me in best adapting the course to your learning needs and aiding you in your academic success. I hope these freewrites will help you have the best possible experience in this class. I will write a weekly response to the collected freewrites and address it as a letter to the whole class.

**2 Critical Papers or Creative Writing Submission (40%)**: You will do two of these. For the critical paper, you will submit a 3-4-page paper in which you present an argument of literary interpretation. If you receive a grade of B+ or lower on the first paper, you are invited to submit one revised version of the paper for an improved grade (I will split the difference between the original grade and the grade earned by the revised paper). The revision is due anytime before the due date for the 2nd paper.

If you are in the creative writing tract and have studied with one of the poetry professors in our department, you can do a creative writing submission for 1 of these assignments (not both).

**Final Exam (15%)**: Your final exam (comprehensive) will include poetry identification and definition of poetic terms from the entire course.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Online postings</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday Freewrites</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical Papers (or creative project)</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparedness for class/Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**GRADING:**

Things that will negatively affect your grade:
- incomplete assignments
- late or missed assignments
- poorly realized assignments
- disrespectful attitude
- excessive absences (over 2 for a T/TH class, over 3 for a M/W/F class)
- coming late to class
- leaving class early
- disrupting class in any other way
- being unprepared for class (you should bring your book to class)
plagiarism (any suspicion of plagiarism will be turned over to Student Judicial Affairs and could result in your failure of the course and/or expulsion from the university)

* I do not calculate student grades until the end of the semester, once all assignment due dates have passed. However, I am always open to having a discussion with you about how you are doing in the course.

Grading scale:

A: Work of this quality is superior and represents an achievement normally attained by only a small amount of students.

B: “B” level work is better than adequate and shows strong competence in the subject matter/skill.

C: “C” quality work shows adequate or satisfactory mastery of the subject/skill.

D: “D” level work barely meets the minimum requirements for the course or assignment.

F: Failing grades are reserved for work that falls below the minimum requirements for the course.

Attendance Grade:

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<th>Absences</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>A-range</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>B-range</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>C-range</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>D-range</td>
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<tr>
<td>over 6</td>
<td>automatic failing grade</td>
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There are no excused absences (unless you are on official university business and have the properly signed paperwork to turn in to me before you miss class). I will call roll at the beginning of each class. I expect you to raise your hand, look at me, and say “here” or “present.” It is your responsibility to make sure that I have you on the attendance roll. If you come to class late (which you should not make a habit of), you need to see me after class has ended to be sure that I have marked you present.

NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY:
According to the University Catalog, California State University does not discriminate on the basis of sex, sexual orientation, disability, race, color, or national origin. If you have a disability and need reasonable accommodation for equal access to education and services at CSU Chico, you must register with Disability Support Services V/TTY: 898-5959.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

Reading a poem requires thought, concentration, and oftentimes multiple readings. If you are reading correctly, you will read the poem more than once and you will frequently have to stop and look up words in the dictionary or encyclopedia. As you read, you should also make notes in the margins or in a separate notebook.

This schedule is subject to change. We may move slower or faster than this schedule indicates. If we have to make substantial changes to the schedule, I will update this document. Otherwise, I will make announcements in class as to what exactly we will cover each session.

Mon 8/27  Intro to course, poetic devices and terminology, and Modernism; in-class reading of Pablo Neruda
Wed 8/29  movie
Friday 8/31 movie

Mon 9/3  NO CLASS – Labor Day
Wed 9/5  Walt Whitman pp.1-2 (“One’s Self I Sing,” “I Hear America Singing,” “For You O Democracy”); Emily Dickinson 9-11 (258, 280)
Friday 9/7  Emily Dickinson 11-12 (465), 17 (1129); Friday Freewrite

Mon 9/10 Robert Frost pp. 84-85 (“Mending Wall”), 90 (“The Road Not Taken”), 100 (“Stopping By Woods”), 102 (“Desert Places”)

POSTING DUE

Fri 9/14 William Carlos Williams pp. 167-168 (“The Great Figure,” “Spring and All”), 170 (“The Red Wheelbarrow”); Friday Freewrite

Mon 9/17 William Carlos Williams 191 (“This is Just to Say”), 200-201 (“Landscape with the Fall of Icarus”); Marianne Moore pp. 251-252 (“Poetry”)

POSTING DUE

Fri 9/21 Langston Hughes pp. 515-517 (“Let America”), 523 (“Harlem”); Friday Freewrite


POSTING DUE

Wed 9/26  Randall Jarrell pp. 713 (“Death of Ball Turret Gunner”), 714-715 (“A Front,” “Losses”)
Fri 9/28 Richard Wright p.584 (“We of the Streets”), John Berryman pp. 723-728 (14, 22, 29, 40, 45, 46, 55, 76, 382, 384); Friday Freewrite

Mon 10/1  Allen Ginsberg pp. 848-873 (“Howl”)
POSTING DUE
Wed 10/3 Denise Levertov pp. 807-808 (“The Ache”), 813-814 (“What Were They Like”)
Fri 10/5 John Ashbery pp. 905 (“Paradoxes”); Philip Levine pp. 925-926 (“The Horse”); Friday Freewrite
Mon 10/8 Anne Sexton pp.921-922 (“Her Kind,” “The Truth The Dead Know”), 924 (“The Room of My Life”)

POSTING DUE
Wed 10/10 Adrienne Rich pp. 934-935 (“Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers”), 943-945 (“Diving Into the Wreck”)
Fri 10/12 Philip Levine 932-933 (“On the Meeting”); Friday Freewrite
Mon 10/15 Amiri Baraka pp.998-999 (“Black Art”); Lucille Clifton pp. 1029 (“I am Accused”)

POSTING DUE
Fri 10/19 Martín Espada pp. 1210-1213 (“Bully,” “The Lover of a Subversive,” “Federico’s Ghost”), 1214; Friday Freewrite; Paper 1 due

Mon 10/22 Rita Dove pp. 1172-1174 (“Parsley”)

POSTING DUE
Fri 10/26 MOVIE Sylvia

Mon 10/29 MOVIE Sylvia
Wed 10/31 MOVIE Sylvia
Fri 11/2 MOVIE Sylvia

Mon 11/5 Szymborska (Readings TBA)

POSTING DUE
Wed 11/7 Szymborska
Fri 11/9 Szymborska; Friday Freewrite

Mon 11/12 NO CLASS – Veteran’s Day
Wed 11/14 Szymborska

POSTING DUE
Fri 11/16 Szymborska; Friday Freewrite

Mon 11/19 – Friday 11/23 NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Break

Mon 11/26 Szymborska

POSTING DUE
Wed 11/28 Szymborska
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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 11/30</td>
<td>Szymborska; Friday Freewrite</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 12/3</td>
<td>Szymborska</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 12/5</td>
<td>Szymborska</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 12/7</td>
<td>Szymborska; Friday Freewrite; 2nd PAPER due</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 12/10</td>
<td>Szymborska</td>
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<td>Wed 12/12</td>
<td>Szymborska</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 12/14</td>
<td>Review for final</td>
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<td>Mon 12/18</td>
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