

**English 120H, “The Pleasures of the Imagination”: Reading and Writing Literature  
Spring 2006 Mon., Wed. 2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. Blaustein 212**

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**Course Description:**

This course will explore what it means to be readers of (and writers about) literature. In the process, it will serve as a broad introduction into some of the major genres of modern English literature (such as poetry, prose fiction, drama, and graphic narratives) and the characteristics that constitute these different genres (such as conceit, imagery, particular stances in regards to audience, visual experimentation, etc.). By looking across a historical spectrum, students will examine not just how literature is created and what it does (and does not do) to readers, but also the way that literature has transformed. The course will focus on works that experiment with poetic, narrative, and visual techniques so as to help us better understand the imaginative relationship between authors and readers, and the intellectual responsibilities inherent in these different positions. With that in mind, this course will often focus on the changing nature of “reading,” the relationship between politics and art, and on the role of memory and testimonial in writing.

**Required Texts:**

*Norton Anthology of Poetry* (Shorter Fifth Edition only) Eds. Ferguson et al.

M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Eighth Edition)

*MLA Handbook* (Fifth Edition)

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford, 2004)

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest and Other Plays* (Penguin, 2001)

Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale* [Boxed Set] (Pantheon, 1993)

120H Course packet

(All texts are available at the Connecticut College book store. Please be sure to get the proper edition of these works. Other editions will have different pagination and will make it impossible for you to follow in class. The course packet is available at the print shop. I may provide additional readings throughout the semester.)

## Course Policies and Requirements

**Attendance and Participation:** This course is driven by your ideas about literature; therefore, coming to class prepared to discuss the readings is an essential part of this course. Be sure to read all of the assigned material before you come to class. Read poems more than once. Students will also be asked to read some of the poems aloud in class. **Four or more absences in the course may result in failing the course.** Excessive lateness or leaving early may be counted as absences, so please come to class on time. If you are unable to attend class, contact me before the class.

**Papers:** You will be required to write **four original papers** for the course. Each paper will be 5 pages in length (double-spaced). I will provide assignments for the papers that will introduce possible topics. The first three papers will be revised. (There will be no opportunity to revise the final paper.) The paper due dates, and their revision due dates, are listed on the syllabus. Be certain that your revisions are profound and substantive. Late assignments (including revisions) will be deducted  $\frac{1}{2}$  letter grade for each class that it is late.

**Grading:** Your grade for the course will be calculated as follows: **your written work will account for 75% of your grade (averaged across the four papers); attendance and participation will account for 25% of your grade.** You must complete all of the written work for the course to receive a passing grade.

**Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is not tolerated in this course, but is easy to avoid. Cite all sources appropriately. If you have any doubts about whether or how to cite a source, consult with the *MLA Handbook* or ask me individually.

## Syllabus

### 1/23 Introduction and What is Poetry?

Archibald MacLeish, "Ars Poetica" \*

Ishmael Reed, "beware : do not read this poem" \*

### 1/25 Audience and Address

Abrams, "Persona, Tone, and Voice"; "Figurative Language"

Anne Bradstreet, "The Author to Her Book" (285)

John Keats, "This Living Hand" (588)

Langston Hughes, "Theme for English B" (915)

Sylvia Plath, "Daddy" (1145)

### 1/30 Class cancelled

### 2/1 Conceit

Abrams, "Conceit"; "Rhetorical Figures"

John Donne, "The Flea" (202)

Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" (293)

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, "The Disabled Debauchee" (323)

Theodore Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz" (955)

### 2/6 Diction and Tone

Abrams, "Poetic Diction"

[Abrams, "Persona, Tone, and Voice"]

Robert Burns, "To a Mouse" (452)

Emily Dickinson, "There's a certain Slant of light" (723)

Frank O'Hara, "Ave Maria" \*

Sterling Brown, "Slim in Atlanta" (910)

Philip Larkin, "High Windows" \*

### 2/8 Images

Abrams, "Imagery"

William Blake, "The Sick Rose" (446)

William Carlos Williams, "The Red Wheelbarrow" (829)

Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" (846)

Jean Toomer, "Reapers" from *Cane* (898)

Robert Frost, "The Wood-pile" \* (800)

## **2/13            Rhythm, Rhyme, Meter, and Sound**

Read “Rhythm,” “Meter,” “Rhyme,” and “Forms” from the section entitled “Versification” at the end of the *Norton Anthology*, (1251-1273)

Abrams, “Alliteration” [Also recommended: “Meter” and “Rhyme”]

Ben Jonson, “A Fit of Rhyme Against Rhyme” (215)

William Blake, “The Tyger” (446)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Break, Break, Break” (631)

Lewis Carroll, “Jabberwocky” (736)

Dylan Thomas, “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” (991)

## **2/15            The Speaking “I”**

[Abrams, “Persona, Tone, and Voice”]

Thomas Wyatt, “They Flee from Me” (104)

William Cowper, “Lines Written during a Period of Insanity” (433)

Walt Whitman, “Song of Myself” (679)

Emily Dickinson, “My Life Had Stood—a Loaded Gun—” (728)

Randall Jarrell, “The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner” (981)

## **2/20            Writing Workshop**

### **Paper #1 Due in class**

## **2/22            Blank Verse**

Abrams, “Blank Verse”

John Milton, from *Paradise Lost*, Bk. IX, lines 192-289 \*

William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey” (458)

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses” (629)

## **2/27            Dramatic Monologue**

Abrams, “Dramatic Monologue”; “Soliloquy”

[Abrams, “Persona, Tone, and Voice”]

[Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Ulysses” (629)]

Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess” (643)

T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (862)

## **3/1            Free Verse**

[Review the section entitled “Open Forms and Free Verse” in the *Norton Anthology*, 1272-1274]

Abrams, “Free Verse”

Christopher Smart, “For I will consider my Cat Jeoffry” (417)

Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Black Bird" (820)  
Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" (999)  
Allen Ginsberg, selections from *Howl* (1061)

### **3/6 Spoken Word**

Bob Holman, "Congratulations. You Have Found the Hidden Book" \*  
Paul Beatty, "Darryl Strawberry Asleep in a Field of Dreams" \*  
David Antin, "a private occasion in a public place" \*

### **3/8 The Page**

Abrams, "Concrete Poetry"  
Robert Herrick, "The Pillar of Fame" (230)  
George Herbert, "The Altar" (235); "Easter Wings" (236) (Please be sure to look at both versions of "Easter Wings")  
Guillaume Apollinaire, "Heart Crown and Mirror"; "Mandolin Carnation and Bamboo";  
"Postcard" \*  
Edwin Torres, "i.e. seducer" \*  
Robert Grenier, "my heart is beating / i am a beast"; "two owls hoot" \*  
Barbara Kruger, "Untitled (You Rule by Pathetic Display)" \*

### **3/10 - 3/26 Spring Break**

### **3/27 Writing Workshop**

### **Paper #2 due**

### **3/29 Figurative Language?**

[Abrams, "Figurative Language"]  
Gertrude Stein, "Roast Beef" from *Tender Buttons* \*  
Craig Raine, "A Martian Sends a Postcard Home" (1207)  
James Tate, "Wheelchair Butterfly" \*  
Lyn Hejinian, "A pause, a rose, something on paper" \*  
Tan Lin, "More Fun Cow"\*  
Paul Hoover, "Poems We Can Understand" \*

### **4/3 Drama: Decadent Comedy**

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*  
(Read entire play for class)

### **4/5 Drama: Decadent Comedy**

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

**4/10            The Short Story**

Ernest Hemingway, “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”; “A Clean Well-Lighted Place”  
Stacy Richter, “Goal 666”

**4/12            The Novel**

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 1-79

**4/17            The Novel**

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 79-164

**4/19            The Novel**

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 164-228

**4/24            The Novel**

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 228-298

**4/26            Writing Workshop**

**Paper #3 due**

**5/1              Graphic Narratives**

Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale: My Father Bleeds History*,  
(Read all of Part I for class)

**5/3              Graphic Narratives**

Art Spiegelman, *Maus: A Survivor’s Tale: My Father Bleeds History*,

**5/8              Graphic Narratives**

Art Spiegelman, *Maus II: A Survivor’s Tale: Here My Troubles Began*,  
Marianne Hirsch, “Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory” \*  
(Read all of Part II for class)

**5/10            Graphic Narratives**

Art Spiegelman, *Maus II: A Survivor’s Tale: Here My Troubles Began*,  
[Marianne Hirsch, “Family Pictures: *Maus*, Mourning, and Post-Memory” \*]

**Final Paper due**