POETRY AND THE HUMAN

What is poetry and why do we do it? This three-quarter sequence examines the practice of poetry as a form of communication, linguistic innovation, and embodied presence. How is poetry as language and action different from other forms of activity? What is the role of poetry in society, in regard to memory, performance, storytelling, and history; ritual and creation; knowledge and formation of selfhood; institution and revolution? This course addresses these questions in the poetry of different eras and peoples, including works of Homer, Sappho, Catullus, Rumi, Gwendolyn Brooks, Louis Zukofsky, Robert Hayden, Dahlia Ravikovitch, Anne Carson, N. Scott Momaday, Claudia Rankine, Layli Long Soldier, and others. It provides students with skills in the close reading of texts and performance and a grasp of the literary, philosophical, and theoretical questions that underpin the humanities. In the Spring students may take a third quarter of Humanities and/or shift into a related Arts Core course (CRWR 18200).

HUMA 18000

Autumn: form, formation, transformation

In Autumn (form/formation/transformation), we closely analyze poetry to understand its distinctive qualities, looking at questions of form and rhythm, translation and adaptation, and experimentation with genre. We also explore argumentation, criticism, and the role of poetry in mapping creation through practices of language, image, and sound.

Books and Course Reader

The following books – in order of when we will be reading them – are available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore, 5751 S. Woodlawn Avenue or from amazon.com, and have also been put on reserve at the Regenstein Library.

• E. Weinberger, Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei (New Directions, 2016).
• A. Oswald, Memorial: A Version of Homer’s Iliad (W. W. Norton & Company, 2013).

All other readings can be found in your Course Reader and on Canvas. Please purchase the Course Reader from Auxiliary Services (Social Sciences, basement).

• Event:

Lecture on Song of Songs by Dr. Ilana Pardes, Katharine Cornell Professor of Comparative Literature and the director of the Center for Literary Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem Wednesday, November 2, 6pm: Logan Center Performance Hall

Attendance is mandatory.
Schedule

form

Week 1: on/you

class 1: Marianne Moore, “The Fish”
       W. H. Auden, “The Fall of Rome”
       Robert Hayden, “The Whipping”
       Lewis Carroll, “Jabberwocky”

class 2: Robert Burns, “To a Mouse”
       John Keats, “This living hand, now warm and capable”
       Gwendolyn Brooks, “the mother”
       “Apostrophe,” from The Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms
       Barbara Johnson, “Apostrophe, Animation, and Abortion” (read the poems at the end of the essay first, the ones by Baudelaire, Shelley, Sexton, Clifton and Rich)

Week 2: on structure

class 1: Emily Dickinson, select poems
       Paul Fussell, “The Historical Dimension”
       Lecture of Rosanna Warren (recording posted on Canvas)

class 2: Villanelles: select poems & guide to villanelles
       -see “Versification,” for reference (posted on Canvas)

Week 3: on images

class 1: Eliot Weinberger, Nineteen Ways of Looking at Wang Wei
       Ezra Pound, select poems & “A Retrospect”

class 2: HD, select poems
       William Carlos Williams, select poems
       Viktor Shklovsky, “Art as Technique”

Friday: Villanelle exercise and commentary due

formation

Week 4: on love 1

class 1: Sappho 1, 16 and 31 translated by Anne Carson
       Juliana Spahr, “Poem written from November 30 to March 27”
       Anne Carson, Ruse (on Sappho 31)

class 2: Catullus 1, 2, 3, 5, 51, 85 translated by Peter Whigham
       Catullus translations by Celia and Louis Zukofsky
Frank Bidart, “Catullus: Excrucior” and “In memory of Joe Brainard”

Friday: first essay due by 5pm

**Week 5: on creation**

class 1: *The Popol Vuh*

class 2: *The Popol Vuh*
    Edgar Garcia, “Birds”

**Week 6: on love II**

class 1: *Song of Songs* (and “To the Reader”)

class 2: Rumi, from *Swallowing the Sun*: Ghazals 5, 633, 1357, 2245, 332, 302, 553, 1393, 1855, 19, 2309, 395, 1759 (notes are posted on Canvas)

*transformation*

**Week 7: on re-creation**

class 1: N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

class 2: N. Scott Momaday, *The Way to Rainy Mountain*

Friday: second essay due by 5pm

**Week 8: on translation**

class 1: Homer’s *Iliad* 1, 9, 16, 22, 24, translation by Richmond Lattimore

class 2: Visit to Special Collections
    Homer, *Iliad* 24: George Chapman’s and Alexander Pope’s translations

*Thanksgiving break – no class*

**Week 9: on adaptation**

class 1: Alice Oswald, *Memorial*

class 2: Alice Oswald, *Memorial* (continued)
    Adrienne Rich, “Reading the Iliad (As If) for the First Time”

Friday: third essay due by 5pm
POETRY AND THE HUMAN

HUMA 18100

Winter: crisis, performance, politics

In Winter (crisis/performance/politics), we turn to questions of social rupture, breakdown, and reformation as we consider the ways that poetry revolts, reflects, and rebuilds in political crises. We will also look at poetry in performance, and performance as poetry, to consider how poetry is practiced in non-textual media such as spoken word, film, music, and dance.

Course Reader

All readings can be found in your Course Reader and on Canvas. Please purchase the Course Reader from Auxiliary Services (Social Sciences, basement).

• Event:

Reading by Ito Hiromi and Jeffry Angles
Thursday, February 23, 6pm: location TBA
Schedule

crisis

Week 1: poetry and manifestos

class 1: Gwendolyn Brooks, “Boy breaking glass,” “kitchenette building,” “The Bean Eaters,” “RIOT”
Audre Lorde, “Poetry is not a luxury”

class 2: Adrienne Rich, “Serve” (epigraph), “Tonight no poetry will serve”
Slavoj Žižek, “The Poetic Torture-House of Language”

Week 2: poetry and the corrupted world

class 1: Charles Baudelaire, “To the Reader,” “Spleen (I),” “Spleen (II),” “Spleen (III),” “Spleen (IV),” “Obsession,” “The Seven Old Men”

class 2: T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land

Week 3: poetry and the fragmented world

class 1: T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land (continued)

class 2: Paul Celan, “Death Fugue,” “Psalm,” “Mandorla,” “Breathcrystal,”
from “The Meridian Speech”

Week 4: poetry and the conflicted world

class 1: Yehuda Amichai, “My child has the fragrance of peace,” “Wildpeace,” “An Arab shepherd is searching for his goat on Mount Zion”
Mahmoud Darwish, “On this earth,” “I belong there,” “Other barbarians will come,” “They would love to see me dead,” “Identity Card”

class 2: Dahlia Ravikovitch, “A little woman made the world,” “Delight,” “Hovering at a low altitude,” “A deadly fear”
Taha Muhammad Ali, “Warning,” “Fooling the killers,” “The bell at forty: the destruction of a village”

Friday: first essay due by midnight.

performance

Week 5: poetry and film

class 1: Walt Whitman, “I sing the body electric,” “Mannahatta,” “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry”
Paul Strand, Manhatta
class 2: Walter Benjamin, from *One-Way Street*
Maya Deren, *Ritual in Transfigured Time*

**Week 6:** *poetry and art*

class 1: W. H. Auden, “In memory of W. B. Yeats,” “September 1, 1939,” “Musée des Beaux Arts”
Marianne Moore, “The Octopus,” “An Egyptian pulled glass bottle in the shape of a fish”, “Poetry” (1924) and (1967)

class 2: Frank O’Hara, “For Grace, after a party,” “Meditations in an Emergency,”
“Why I am not a painter,” “Having a Coke with You,” “The Day Lady Died”
Allen Ginsberg, “Howl,” “Footnote to howl,” “A supermarket in California”

**Week 7:** *poetry and music*

class 1: Bessie Smith, “*Young Woman’s Blues*”
Billie Holiday, “*Strange Fruit*”
Nina Simone, “*Mississippi Goddam*,” “*Strange Fruit*,” “*Images*”
W. E. B. Du Bois, from *Souls of Black Folk*
Langston Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers,” “Theme for English B,”
“Weary Blues,” “Spirituals,” and “Song for Billie Holiday”

class 2: Robert Hayden, “Middle passage”

Friday: second essay due by midnight.

**politics**

**Week 8:** *poetry and protest*

class 1: Janice Mirikitani, from *We, the Dangerous*

class 2: Cathy Park Hong, from *Dance Dance Revolution*
Ito Hiromi, from *Killing Kanoko*

**Week 9:** *poetry and new forms*

class 1: M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!* (excerpts)

class 2: Tracie Morris, *It all started, Two black, Project Princess, ICE, Children*

Friday: third essay due by midnight
POETRY AND THE HUMAN (HUMA)

HUMA 18200

Spring: myths and ecologies

The Spring Humanities course (myths and ecologies) looks at how humans tell stories through the poetry of the world: from ancient myths reconfigured voices feminist, queer, and indigenous, to ecologies that draw on the history and geography of the earth, to imaginings of a world without boundaries, and finally to how our pasts and futures merge in the poetic word. Students will be asked to formulate a research project over the course of the quarter that handles one of these themes.

Books and Course Reader

The following books – in order of when we will be reading them – are available at the Seminary Co-op Bookstore, 5751 S. Woodlawn Avenue or from amazon.com, and have also been put on reserve at the Regenstein Library.

- Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest* (Theatre Communications Group, 2002)
- Derek Walcott, *Omeros* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1992)

All other readings can be found in your Course Reader and on Canvas.

Please purchase the Course Reader from Auxiliary Services (Social Sciences, basement).

- Event: TBA
Schedule

myths

Week 1:  poetry and world-creation
Tuesday:  William Shakespeare, The Tempest  
          readings from Norton Critical Edition of The Tempest  
Thursday:  Aimé Césaire, A Tempest  

Week 2:  poetry and metamorphosis  
Tuesday:  Sophocles, Oedipus Tyrannos  
          readings from Norton Critical Edition of Oedipus Tyrannos  
Thursday:  Rita Dove, The Darker Face of the Earth: A Verse Play  
Friday:  assignment 1: proposal due for extended paper  

Week 3:  poetry in transformation  
Tuesday:  Anne Carson, Autobiography of Red: A Novel in Verse  

Week 4:  poetry as epic I  
Tuesday:  Derek Walcott, Omeros  
Thursday:  Derek Walcott, Omeros  
Friday:  first draft of extended research paper due by midnight.  

Week 5:  poetry as epic II  
Tuesday:  Derek Walcott, Omeros  
Thursday:  Derek Walcott, Omeros  

ecologies

Week 6:  prophecy, fable, thought  
Tuesday:  Wordsworth, “Tintern Abbey”  
          Aldo Leopold, from A Sand County Almanac  
          Ed Roberson, select poems; “We must be careful”
Thursday:  Lorine Niedecker, “Traces of Living Things,” “Wintergreen Ridge” [more?]
Arthur Sze, “The Angle of Reflection Equals the Angle of Incidence”

Week 7:  poems without borders
Tuesday:  Solmaz Sharif, from Look: Poems
Thursday:  Javier Zamora, from Unaccompanied
Friday:  second draft of extended research paper due by midnight.

Week 8:  poetry and our past
Tuesday:  Layli Long Soldier, from Whereas
Thursday:  Joy Harjo, A Map to the Next World: Poems
Friday:  final draft of extended paper due by midnight

Week 9:  poems and our future
Tuesday:  Joy Harjo, A Map to the Next World: Poems (continued)
Thursday:  research presentations
POETRY AND THE HUMAN (ARTS)
CRWR 18200

This spring-term Arts course is intended as a potential sequel to the first two quarters of the Humanities sequence “Poetry and the Human,” but can also be taken as a freestanding course. Through a combination of seminar discussions and creative writing workshop sessions, it focuses upon literary arts practice (form, material, and voice) as a way of approaching many of the questions raised over the Autumn and Winter terms. It considers the role of poetry in different traditions (Japanese, English, Persian, etc.) from aesthetic, philosophical, and performative angles. Students in the PATH sequence (Hum) will have priority registration for this course; other students may register for any remaining seats.

Books and Course Reader

- Matsuo Basho, *Narrow Road to the Interior*, trans. Sam Hamill (Shambhala)

All other readings can be found in your Course Reader and on Canvas.
*Please purchase the Course Reader from Auxiliary Services (Social Sciences, basement).*

- Event: TBA

Schedule

WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Review syllabus and in-class writing ‘warm-up’ exercises

WEEK 2: JAPANESE HAIBUN

Reading: Matsuo Basho, *Narrow Road to the Interior* and selected haiku

In-class writing exercise (haiku)

WEEK 3: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN HAIKU

Reading: James Merrill, “Prose of Departure”

In-class writing exercise (haiku/haibun)

WEEK 4: WORKSHOP
Creative writing workshop on students’ haibun

WEEK 5: EARLY MODERN SONNETS
Reading: Selected sonnets by William Shakespeare and John Donne
In-class writing exercise (sonnet)

WEEK 6: CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN SONNETS
Reading: Selected sonnets by Wanda Coleman and Terrance Hayes
In-class writing exercise (sonnet 2)

WEEK 7: WORKSHOP
Creative writing workshop of students’ sonnets

WEEK 8: CLASSICAL & CONTEMPORARY GHAZAL
Reading: Hafez, selected ghazals; Dick Davis, introduction to *Faces of Love*
         Agha Shahid Ali, *Poetry Call Me Ishmael Tonight: A Book of Ghazals*
In-class writing exercise (ghazal)

WEEK 9: WORKSHOP
Creative writing workshop of students’ ghazals