
English 11

Introduction to Poetry

Texts

- R. S. Gwynn & April Lindner, *Contemporary American Poetry*, Pearson, 2005
- Ellen Bass, *Like a Beggar*, Copper Canyon, 2014
- David Denny, *Some Divine Commotion*, Shanti Arts, 2017
- Juan Felipe Herrera, *Notes on the Assemblage*, City Lights, 2015

Required Materials

- Notebook, blue or black ink pens, paper
- 2 large (8 ½ x 11”) Exam Bluebooks

Course Description

This course is divided into two nearly-equal halves. The first half is spent building competency as readers in the literary genre of poetry. We do this very systematically by studying the basic elements of poetry (imagery, rhythm, form, etc.). To reinforce this learning, we'll also engage in a survey of literary movements in contemporary American poetry (Deep Image, Confessionalism, Regionalism, etc). At the midpoint of the quarter (weeks 6 & 7) we'll take a midterm exam and reflect upon our study with Oral Presentations of individual poems chosen from our anthology.

During the second half of the course, we'll build upon that foundation by examining three contemporary American poets in depth. We'll respond to these poets by writing analysis essays on the structure and function of their work. We'll finish the quarter by watching two movies about contemporary poets. In this way, we'll expand our study to explore the role of the poet in society. All along the way we'll keep a class Journal that includes both creative and analytical responses to the poetry we study. At the final exam, we'll turn in those Journals.

Assignments

- *Midterm Exam*—a short answer and/or short essay examination on major concepts, terminology, and theory covered in the first half of our course. 100 points possible.
- *Oral Presentation*—performance and explication of a poem chosen from our Gwynn & Lindner anthology. 100 points possible.
- *Analysis Paper*—a 3-5 page paper that analyzes the structure and function of one of the three contemporary collections. 100 points possible.
- *Final Exam*—a short answer and/or short essay examination on major concepts, terminology, and theory covered in the second half of our course. 100 points possible.

- *Participation*—I will call upon you regularly to read aloud poems, to discuss their structure and function, and to read your journal entries. 100 points possible.
- *Journal*—a collection of exploratory writings and in-class assignments, both assigned and self-generated, that reflect upon our reading. 100 points possible.

Grades

573-600	A+	410-436	C+
546-572	A	383-409	C
519-545	A-	356-382	D+
492-518	B+	329-355	D
465-491	B	301-328	D-
437-464	B-	0-300	F

Policies

Classroom Behavior Expectations: Please set your cell phones on “silent” while you are in class. For obvious educational reasons (not to mention common courtesy) you may not play games, listen to music, or text message during our class session. If you receive an emergency call during class, please walk outside to take the call. Also, please limit your private conversations during our class sessions. Food is prohibited; however, water is OK. I expect you to bring your personal copies of our texts to class with you to every class session, as well as a notebook, pens, and paper. I also expect you to be a fully engaged, active participant in this class while you are enrolled in it.

Participation: This is a very important part of this class. I really expect you to be reading and thinking actively, critically, and creatively. This is not a class in which you can cruise along in neutral gear for long. I will call on you regularly and keep track of your responses. When you’re in class, be prepared, focused, on task. As part of your participation in this class, you will read aloud on a regular basis, both from our texts and from your Journal. When called upon to read, speak loudly and clearly.

Academic Integrity: Representing someone else’s work as your own, whether accidental or intentional, will result in a grade of ‘0’ on that assignment and possible disciplinary action under the guidelines of De Anza College’s statement on academic integrity (www.deanza.edu/studenthandbook/academic-integrity.html).

Paper Business: You must have regular access to the internet to be successful in this class, including a working email address. Paper topics will be announced and described on my web site in advance of the due dates. Check the web site regularly for details. Late assignments will receive a 5-point deduction per day. There are no rewrites for poorly-written papers; do it right the first time.

Turnitin.com: You will submit your Analysis paper for this class to this web site. Visit the site ASAP and click on the “Training” link on the top gray banner. Then click on “Student Training” and watch the four video tutorials on how to set up your account and upload papers. If you’re already familiar with Turnitin.com, you may go straight to the “Student Quickstart Guide” button near the bottom of the page for a quick review of the

process. Our course ID number and password can be found on the Analysis paper assignment instructions on my De Anza web site.

After you have set up your account, scroll down to the gray bar at the bottom of the page and click on the “Plagiarism.org” link for a definition of plagiarism, tips for preventing it, and guidelines and suggestions for proper citation methods, etc. I will hold you responsible for the information found there. Among other things, Turnitin.com will search the web for language matches with your paper once you upload it, issuing an “originality report” to me, which tells the percentage of language your paper shares with other similar writings found on the internet. A certain low-level amount of shared language is possible, considering brief quotes, etc., within your papers. But whether intentional or accidental, if your originality report on any given paper that you submit to this class climbs above 25%, you will receive a ‘0’ on that assignment.

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If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know that is poetry.

--Emily Dickinson

Poetry is prose bewitched.

--Mina Loy

[Poetry is] the clear expression of mixed feelings.

--W. H. Auden

[Poetry is] an angel with a gun in its hand . . .

--Jose Garcia Villa

[Poetry is] the language in which man explores his own amazement.

--Christopher Fry

[Poetry is] a way of remembering what it would impoverish us to forget.

--Robert Frost

Poetry is a sound art.

--Joy Harjo

[Poetry is] things that are true expressed in words that are beautiful.

--Dante