

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 2202F (001)

Studies in Poetics

Fall 2026

Preliminary Outline

Instructor: J. Doelman
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Office Hours

Mondays 10:30-12:00

Wednesdays 10:30-12:00

or email jdoelman@uwo.ca for other times

Delivery: This is an in-person course.

Important Note A: While this is an in-person course, students *must* be able to access Owl online for some readings, assignments, and lecture videos. To allow sufficient class time for discussion and in-class writing assignments, some required lecture material will be offered as recording videos (available through Owl).

Important Note B: The general classroom experience in this course will be computer-free. Students will be required to work from physical copies of the texts and make hand-written notes. Full lecture notes will be posted by the professor on Owl.

Calendar Description: English 2202F/G Studies in Poetics

An introduction to important issues and concepts in the theory and analysis of poetry from different periods.

Prerequisites: Prerequisite(s): At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1000-1999, or permission of the Department.

Antirequisite: English 2230F/G; English 2232F/G

Longer Description

This course offers an introduction to the theory and techniques of poetry. Short readings from critical articles are combined with thorough use of Stephen Adams' *Poetic Designs* to establish a solid foundation for the understanding and academic discussion of poetry. We study such aspects as word choice, meter and stanzaic form, rhetorical structures, and figurative language; to capture the rich variety of English poetry, we draw on a wide range of poets, both canonical and lesser-known, from different historical periods.

Texts

Adams, Stephen. *Poetic Designs*. Peterborough: Broadview, 1997. (\$42.75)

Bookstore [link](#)

A web-posted package of poetry (on Owl), entitled "Primary Materials". This **must** be printed out by students and brought **to every class**.

Secondary readings will be available through the UWO library [links to come].

Methods of Evaluation

Assignments and quizzes	25%
Midterm Test (Mon. Oct. 26)	10%
Attendance/Participation in Discussion	10%
In-class Poetry Analyses	15%
Paper (Due: Wed. Dec. 2)	15%
Final Exam	<u>25%</u>
	100%

Prepared attendance at all classes is required (attendance will be taken).

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>.

Formal Documentation Designation statement

Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term. When a student receives academic considerations or academic accommodations which overlap with the built-in flexibility of the assessment, the longest period of accommodation will determine the deadline. The built-in flexibility of the assessment should not be taken to extend any considerations or accommodations.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course. However, the following assessments are excluded from this, and therefore always require formal supporting documentation:

- **Examinations scheduled during official examination periods (Defined by policy)**
- **Midterm Test (Mon. Oct. 26)**

Evaluation Scheme for Missed Assessments

As you will see in the schedule of classes below, the course features many brief reading quizzes and/or in-class writing assignments. These can only be written in-class on the scheduled day. However, in recognition that illness and emergencies are a reality, students may miss **two of these without penalty or explanation**.

Final Exam. When a student misses the **December or Final Exam** and their Academic Consideration has been granted, they will be allowed to write the Special Examination (the name given by the University to a makeup Final Exam). See the Academic Calendar (Special Examinations), especially for those who miss multiple final exams within one examination period.

OWL Brightspace

Students are responsible for checking the course site on a regular basis for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. Students may access the OWL Brightspace Learner Support site for assistance: <https://brightspacehelp.uwo.ca/> For IT related issues, they may contact Western Technology Services Helpdesk directly: <https://wts.uwo.ca/helpdesk/>.

Electronic Devices

No aids are permitted for the tests and exam of this course. Electronic devices of any kind (including calculators, cell phones and smart watches) are not permitted.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the unacknowledged use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Google Translate, Grammarly, etc. to create content that is submitted as one's own. In this course, the use of AI (automatic translation tools, grammar checkers, ChatGPT...) is prohibited. If AI use is suspected, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism of any kind is a serious academic offence. Be advised that electronic plagiarism-detection programmes will be used and essay banks checked, if the professor has any suspicion of plagiarism. Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing both in the body and at the end of the assignment. Any borrowings from secondary sources, whether wordings or ideas, must be acknowledged BOTH in the main body of your essay AND at the end in a bibliography or works cited! If you have any doubts about how to document your work correctly, check with your professor prior to handing in your essay.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>. Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students”

<http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Special Examinations

A Special Examination is any examination other than the regular examination, and it may be offered only with the permission of the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is registered, in consultation with the instructor and Department Chair. Permission to write a Special Examination may be given on the basis of compassionate or medical grounds with appropriate supporting documents. To provide an opportunity for students to recover from the circumstances resulting in a

Special Examination, the University has implemented Special Examinations dates. These dates as well as other important information about examinations and academic standing can be found [here](#).

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.

Schedule of Classes [slight adjustments may be made]

Sept. 9

Introduction

Preliminary skills and tools for poetic analysis:

The sense of a poem

Diction: Emily Dickinson, "There is no Frigate Like a Book", Edwin Arlington Robinson, "Richard Cory"

Using the *OED*

Other reference tools

Annotation Exercise (**to be submitted: Mon. Sept. 21**)

Week of Sept. 14

Reading: Margaret Ferguson, "Poetic Syntax" (cc) [Mon. Sept. 14, Short quiz or in-class writing]

The value and danger of paraphrase – In-class paraphrases exercises (Wed. Sept. 16)

Donne, "Sweetest love, I do not go"

The basics of prosody

[For further practice, try the Interactive website, "For Better for Verse" (<http://prosody.lib.virginia.edu/>)]

Reading: Adams, Chapter 1

Iambic tetrameter. Trochaic, anapestic and dactylic meters.

Byron, "She walks in beauty"

Tolkien, selections from *The Lord of the Rings*

Week of Sept. 21

Housman, "On Wenlock Edge"

Charles Wolfe, "The Burial of Sir John Moore" (and the parody "Not a sou had he got" by Thomas Ingoldsby)

Annotation Exercise Due Mon. Sept. 21

Felicia Hemans, "Casabianca"

The performance of poetry

Reading: Peter Hall's *Shakespeare's Advice to the Players*, pp. 24-42 [Wed. Sept. 30 **Short quiz or in-class writing**]

Week of Sept. 28

First scansion quiz: Mon. Sept. 28

Iambic Pentameter

Anna L. Barbauld, "Washing Day"

Rhyme, Meters and Forms

Pentameter couplets: Dryden, "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham", Frost, "A Brook in the City"

Reading: W.K. Wimsatt, "One Relation of Rhyme to Reason" [Wed. Sept. 30, Short quiz or in-class writing]

Week of Oct. 5

Thomas Gray, "Fatal Sisters"

P.B. Shelley, "The Cloud"

Reading: Adams, Chapter 2 [quiz; Mon. Oct. 7]

Burns, "To a Mountain-Daisy"

Second scansion quiz: Wed. Oct. 7

John Crowe Ransom, "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter"

Week of Oct. 12 Fall Reading Week

Week of Oct. 19

Reading: **Adams, Chapter 3 [quiz, Wed. Oct. 21]**

The sonnet: Edna St. Vincent Millay, "What lips my lips have kissed, and where, and why,";
Carol Ann Duffy, "Prayer",

Narrative Poetry:

Bobbie Gentry, "Ode to Billie Joe"

Josh Ritter, "The Curse"

Week of Oct. 26

Midterm Test: Mon. Oct. 26

Dramatic Poetry and the question of voice

Browning, "The Bishop Orders his Tomb"

Sylvia Plath, "The Mirror"

[from Oct. 28 through Nov. 30, poetry performances or memorization]

Week of Nov. 2

Wed. Nov. 4 In-class Poetry Analysis #1

Rhetorical Analysis/Figures of Speech

Reading: Adams, Chapter 4 (to p. 132)

Tolkien, "The Song of Durin"

Christina Rossetti, "No thing is great"

Week of Nov. 9

Herbert, "Sin's Round", C. Rossetti, "Mirage"

Reading: Adams, Chapter 4 (pp. 132 to 147) [quiz on all of Adams, ch. 4, Wed. Nov. 11]

Mon. Nov. 9: Statement of Intent and Preliminary Bibliography for Paper due Diction and
Non-figurative imagery

Tennyson, "Calm is the morn" and "Tonight the winds" (from *In Memoriam*)

Week of Nov. 16

Browning, "Meeting at Night"

Eliot, "Preludes"

Metaphor and simile

Wed. Nov. 18 In-class Poetry Analysis #2

Frost, "The Silken Tent"

Richard Wilbur, "A Simile for her Smile" (read also the brief commentary at

[https://www.google.ca/search?q="A+Simile+for+her+Smile"&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&gws_rd=cr&ei=u1VgVv-lJMH2-AGqz5aYCQ](https://www.google.ca/search?q=))

Week of Nov. 23

Joy Davidman, Sonnet XVII

Symons, "In the Wood of Finvara"

Reading: George Lakoff & Mark Turner, "Life, Death and Time" from *More than Cool Reason*
[Wed. Nov. 25, Short quiz or in-class writing]

H. King, "The Dirge"

Week of Nov. 30

Reading: Adams, Chapt. 5 [quiz Mon. 30]

Free Verse

Whitman, "To a Locomotive in Winter"

Sylvia Plath, "Black Rook in Rainy Weather"

(Wed. Dec. 2 Paper due: at beginning of class)

Week of Dec. 7

Walter McDonald, "The Winter They Bombed Pearl Harbor"

Molly Fisk, "Hunter's Moon"

*Changes may be made to the order of works studied, and some short works may be added to the list. The poems listed above will be our principal examples for a variety of poetic elements and techniques; however, in class I will also draw freely on other examples.

Course Goals (a selection)

The major overarching goal of the course is for students to develop as rich, broad, and deep an understanding of the techniques, dynamics, and theory of poetry as is possible within the limits of a 4-month course.

The second goal would be to inspire students to do much further reading of poetry, both in and out of the classroom.

Under those broad aspirations, some specific objectives can be identified: successful students will be able to

1. Understand and paraphrase a passage of poetry, however dense.
2. Correctly scan passages of verse in a wide variety of meters.
3. Recognize a variety of the rhetorical figures frequently used in poetry.
4. Articulate the history of ideas on what poetry is, and how it should be discussed.
5. Identify a wide variety of poetic forms and genres, and explain how poets use, manipulate, extend and combine these forms and genres.
6. Analyse in well-written prose how the elements of a poem work together to achieve a cohesive effect.
7. Evaluate the overall effectiveness of an individual poem.
8. Perform poetry orally, with proper attention to its sense and sound.
9. "To follow knowledge like a sinking star,/Beyond the utmost bound of human thought." (Tennyson)