

## **Adventures in Poetics – 9174B**

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Office: UC 2422

Office hours: Thurs 10:30-1:00, or by appointment

Room: UC4415

Course hours: Wed 3:30-6:30

**Description:** We will be seeking a rigorous insight into some of the central terms and debates in poetics, from the classical period to the contemporary. We will cover formalism, structuralism, deconstruction, and recent returns to form in “new lyric theory,” ecopoetics, and posthumanism. Throughout we will ask what happens to core terms of poetics when pushed to their limits – can these terms also be re-engaged to provide a future for poetry and poetics in a time of planetary limits? Poems are primarily from major American poets.

### **Grading**

60% final essay

15% oral presentation

15% class participation

10% new poetics term (3 pages)

**Essay:** The essay is a research paper of 20 pages on a topic pertaining to the course. A one-paragraph abstract will be due on March 6.

**Oral presentation:** The presentation is a 15-20 minute overview of the key issues of a chosen text. I want you to generally structure your presentation by highlighting three important concepts or themes from the reading and then applying or guiding these through a close reading of **one** poem. Please point to specific quotes in the text. Throughout the presentation, you should be raising questions for the class and outlining how you think we can get the most out of this reading.

**Statement on 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, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)

**Graduate Course Health and Wellness:** As part of a successful graduate student experience at Western, we encourage students to make their health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your graduate degree.

Information regarding health- and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>. Students seeking help regarding mental health concerns are advised to speak to someone they feel comfortable confiding in, such as their faculty supervisor, their program director (graduate chair), or other relevant

administrators in their unit. Campus mental health resources may be found at [http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental\\_health/resources.html](http://www.health.uwo.ca/mental_health/resources.html).

**Statement on Student Accessibility Services:** Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program. Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counseling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction. For more information, see <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>

**Western University Land Acknowledgment:** Western University is situated on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Lunaapeewak and Attawandaron peoples, who have longstanding relationships to the land and region of southwestern Ontario and the City of London. The local First Nation communities of this area include Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, Oneida Nation of the Thames, and Munsee Delaware Nation. In the region, there are eleven First Nation communities and a growing Indigenous urban population. Western values the significant historical and contemporary contributions of local and regional First Nations and all of the Original peoples of Turtle Island (North America).

**Required Texts:**

Walt Whitman – *Leaves of Grass: 1860 Edition*

Emily Dickinson, ed. Christanne Miller -- *Emily Dickinson's Poems: As She Preserved Them*

H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) – *Trilogy*

Ezra Pound – *Selected Poems* (New Directions)

Martin Heidegger – *Poetry, Language, Thought*

Robert Duncan – *The Opening of the Field*

I will provide digital copies of essays and most of these texts in a dropbox folder. It is preferable to print them out and bring them to class. Computers are not recommended in class.

Week 1 – January 9 – Formalisms

“Classical Poetics,” “Poetics, Western,” “Poetry,” “Artifact, Poetry As,” “Poiesis,”

*Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*

Aristotle, *Poetics*, excerpts, 33-39, 52-62, in *Classic Writings on Poetics*, ed. Harmon

Philip Sydney, "The Defense of Poesy," in *Classic Writings on Poetics*, ed. Harmon  
William Wordsworth, "Observations Prefixed to *Lyrical Ballads*," in *Classic Writings on Poetics*, ed. Harmon

Week 2 – January 16 – Formalisms

"Form," "Formalism," "Figura," "Figuration," "Trope," "Lyric" *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*

W. K. Wimsatt, "The Concrete Universal"

Paul de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," *Lyric Theory Reader*

Theodor Adorno, "Lyric Poetry and Society," *Lyric Theory Reader*

Virginia Jackson and Yopie Prins, "General Introduction," "Section 1: Genre Theory," *Lyric Theory Reader*

Jonathan Culler, "Lyric, History, and Genre," *Lyric Theory Reader*

Recommended: Richard Eldridge, "Truth in Poetry: Particulars and Universals," *Blackwell Companion to Philosophy and Literature*

Week 3 – January 23 – Metaphor – Whitman

Whitman, "Song of Myself [Walt Whitman]"

"Metaphor," "Cadence," "Catachresis,"

"Catalog," "Parataxis," "Polysyndeton," "Ecstatic Poetry," *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*

Derrida, "White Mythology"

Ted Cohen, "The Talent for Metaphor"

Jason Stacy, "Introduction," in Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass: 1860 Edition*

Recommended: Mark Johnson "Philosophy's Debt to Metaphor," *Cambridge Handbook of Metaphor and Thought*

Week 4 – January 30 – The Poet – Whitman

"Transcendentalism," "Personification," "Persona," "Prosopopoeia," "Deixis," "Epanalepsis" *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The Poet"

Jay Grossman, "Rereading Emerson/Whitman"

Virginia Jackson, "American Romanticism, Again"

Kenneth Price and Cynthia Bernstein "Whitman's Sign of Parting: 'So Long!' as L'Envoi"

Week 5 – February 6 – The Poetic Text – Emily Dickinson

"Textual Criticism," "Artifact," "Ballad Meter," "Devotional Poetry," "Epigram," "Caesura," *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*

Christanne Miller, "Introduction," *Emily Dickinson's Poems: As She Preserved Them*

Alexandra Socarides, "Introduction," *Dickinson Unbound*

Week 6 – February 13 – Address/Contact – Dickinson

“Russian Formalism,” “Address,” “Apostrophe” *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*  
Roman Jakobson, “Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics,” in *Theory of the Lyric*  
Emile Benveniste, “Relationships of Person in the Verb”  
Jonathan Culler, “Lyric Address,” in *Theory of the Lyric*  
Michelle Ballif, “Regarding the Dead”

Week 7 – February 27 – Lyric Effects – Dickinson

“Tone,” “Affect,” “Near Rhyme,” “Riddle,” *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*  
Diana Fuss, “The Corpse Poem”  
Brian McGrath, “Understating Poetry”  
Gillian White, “Introduction,” in *Lyric Shame*

Week 8 – March 6 – Allegory – HD

“Allegory” *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*  
HD, *Trilogy*  
Angus Fletcher, selections *Allegory: The Theory of a Symbolic Mode*  
Michael Golston, “Polemical Introduction,” “Introduction” *Poetic Machinations:  
Allegory, Surrealism, and Postmodern Poetic Form*  
Recommended: Paul de Man, “The Rhetoric of Temporality”  
**due:** essay abstract

Week 9 – March 13 – Environmental Form – Pound

“Environment and Poetry,” *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*  
Robert Casillo, “Nature, History, Anti-Nature in Pound”  
Bob Perelman, “The Pound Cage”  
Daniel Tiffany, selections, on Pound and Kitsch in *My Silver Planet*  
Recommended: Angela Hume, “Imagining Ecopoetics: An Interview with Robert Hass,  
Brenda Hillman, Evelyn Reilly, and Jonathan Skinner”

Week 10 – March 20 – Philosophy and Poetry

“Hermeneutics,” “Knowledge, Poetry As,” “Philosophy and Poetry,” “Representation,”  
“Work”  
Heidegger, “Language,” “Poetically Man Dwells”  
Maurice Blanchot, “Literature and the Right to Death,” “René Char and the Thought of  
the Neutral”  
Jonathan Bate, selections, *The Song of the Earth*  
Recommended: Drew Milne, “In Memory of the Pterodactyl: The Limits of Lyric  
Humanism,” *Lyric Theory Reader*  
**due:** new poetics term

Week 11 – March 27 – Poetics in the Universe – Robert Duncan  
“Projective Verse,” “San Francisco Renaissance,” “Science and Poetry,” “Technology  
and Poetry,” *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*  
Robert Duncan, “Towards an Open Universe”

Week 12 – April 3 – Voice – in Whitman, Dickinson, HD, Pound, and Duncan  
“Voice,” “Prosody,” *Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetics*  
Reuben Brower, “The Speaking Voice,” in *Lyric Theory Reader*  
Roland Barthes, “The Grain of the Voice”  
Mladen Dolar, “The Linguistics of the Voice,” “The Ethics of the Voice”

**final essay due:** April 10