

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.

- Rumi, *Swallowing the Sun*, trans. F. D. Lewis (Oneworld Publications, 2013).
- *The Popol Vuh*, trans. M. Bazzett (Milkweed Editions, 2018).
- N. Scott Momaday, *Way to Rainy Mountain* (University of New Mexico Press, 1976).
- Homer, *The Iliad*, trans. E. V. Rieu (University of Chicago Press, 2011).
- 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: “If It Ain’t Got That Swing’: The Music of Poetry” by Professor Rosanna Warren -Wednesday, October 6 at 6pm. Location TBD. 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"
Koleka Putuma, "Graduation"
- class 2: Odes: a selection
Jonathan Culler, "Apostrophe" (excerpt)

Week 2: *on structure*

- class 1: Villanelles: a selection
Paul Valery, "Poetry and Abstract Thought" (excerpt)
- class 2: Emily Dickinson, select poems
Paul Fussell, "The Historical Dimension"
see "Versification," for reference (posted on Canvas)

Wednesday, 6pm: Lecture by Professor Rosanna Warren

Week 3: *on images*

- class 1: Ezra Pound, select poems
H. D., select poems
Ezra Pound, "A Retrospect"
- class 2: William Carlos Williams, select poems
Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as technique" (excerpt)
- Friday: Villanelle exercise and commentary due

formation

Week 4: *on love I*

- 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 midnight

Week 5: on love II

class 1: Rumi, *Swallowing the Sun*, introduction and select poems

class 2: Rumi, *Swallowing the Sun* (continued)

Week 6: on creation

class 1: *The Popol Vuh*

class 2: *The Popol Vuh*

transformation

Week 7: on re-creation

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

class 2: Homer in Special Collections

Friday: second essay due by midnight

Week 8: on translation

class 1: Homer's *Iliad* 1, 24, translation by Richmond Lattimore

class 2: Homer, *Iliad*: Book 24, translation by George Chapman
Homer, *Iliad*: Book 24, translation by Alexander Pope

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 midnight