

## Introduction to Poetry, or How to Read a Poem

Poetry is about somatic thinking. Historically, it has been our literary guide to how the mind maps and relates to the world by way of sensation. Poems use sound and sense to guide us into an emotional experience of their language. Reading poetry aloud is a visceral experience. The aesthetic properties of a poem require that we feel as we read. Through the visual medium of imagery, through the o/aurality of rhyme & meter, poetry brings to mind a whole set of sensory experiences. This unique art form, we will see, has a long-standing interest in the relationship between mind & body, text & *touch*.

This course will introduce you the basic mechanics of a poem: sound, image, rhyme, meter and rhythm. We will contemplate the power of poetry to transport us into new worlds, to forge emotional bonds, and to liberate us from social injustice. From Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Man* to contemporary hip hop music, this course celebrates poetry’s artful capacity to touch us on a personal level and enact cultural change.

There are no prerequisites for this course.

General Education: This course provides general education credit for the following outcomes:

1. Humanities.
2. Writing

### Learning Objectives:

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

- *Compose convincing interpretations of literary works and their ideas* by applying the skills of close reading, textual analysis, and literary terminology
- *Practice and improve writing skills* through frequent assignments both formal and informal, submitted to the instructor for regular feedback.
- *Gain a broad understanding and appreciation* of intellectual/cultural activity.
- *Develop skills necessary to the analysis of poetry.* This includes learning prosody (a series of techniques specific to the interpretation and analysis of poetry). As musicians do, you will develop a good ear for sound in this course.

- *Learn literary terminology, methods, and knowledge so as to gain a basic understanding of English as a subject.*

Required Course Texts\*:

*\*All required texts will be distributed electronically as PDFs or links to the Poetry Foundation (online) on Brightspace in each weekly module.*

Student Performance Requirements & Description of Assignments:

This class will require your active participation and a close attention to textual detail. Readings include mostly primary texts, or poems, distributed as PDFs through the Brightspace modules. To succeed in this course you must be able to keep up with the reading and also with all weekly assignments. This is an assignment heavy course! Expect to write frequently.

In this course, you will submit three short assignments as part of an “Assignment Series” (Sound, Rhyme, Meter). This series and your final close reading paper are heavily weighted. Shorter assignments include two response papers (2 pages each) and a final recitation. The recitation assignment will require memorization and practice, so please plan in advance for this. It typically takes 1-2 weeks to memorize a 12-14 line poem or piece of music.

Methods of Evaluation:

<b>Student Deliverables</b>	<b>Module</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Assignment Series (Sound, Rhyme, Meter)	1, 2, 3	40%
Response Papers (2)	1, 4	20%
Final Close Reading Paper	5	30%
Recitation	5	10%

Office Hours, Email & Instructor Availability:

Please take advantage of office hours! These occur via Zoom. They are scheduled **by appointment only**. Please make this **request via email** (preferably two days prior, or further in advance if it is finals period) to secure an appointment. I will send a link and passcode for our personalized Zoom meeting. Appointments are on a first-*email*, first-serve basis. If you need to cancel an appointment, please do so in advance as there are likely other students on the waitlist who could benefit from my time. No-shows will be given last priority in the future.

Typically, appointments last 15-30 minutes, depending on the reason for the appointment. For final papers, please anticipate 30-45 minute appointments. I may ask you to bring materials to our meeting (a passage from a text, a thesis statement etc.) so that I can better address your

needs. I am also available to assist via email, if you prefer this over Zoom. However, please do not leave your inquiries until the last minute! I check email 9:00AM-5 PM M-F.

I am only too happy to work with your schedules and meet with you, so please do not hesitate to take advantage of virtual meetings. I look forward to working with you all one-on-one so as to enhance your educational experience in this course! If students are struggling, I also offer group extra help sessions via Zoom.

## Course Schedule

### Week 1: Sound

START HERE. (Course Introduction & Syllabus).

Module Reading Assignments include:

John Keats, "To Autumn"

Michael Harper, "Dear John, Dear Coltrane"

Rita Dove, "American Smooth"

Emily Dickinson, "After great pain, a formal feeling comes—" "Because I could not stop for death—"

Watch: Lecture Videos! (Note: these take time!)

Submit:

Introductory Activity (by Wednesday)

Response Paper 1, "M.H Abrams Lecture" (by Friday)

PennSound Project (by Sunday)

### Week 2: Rhyme

Module Reading Assignments include:

\*Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Man*

\*Read Lecture on "Alexander Pope's Theory of Rhyme"

Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Ballad of Rudolph Reed"

Rita Dove, "Canary"

\*Selections from Hip Hop Music

\*Watch: Lecture Video

Submit:

Upload Hip Hop Selections for Rhyme Assignment (by Wednesday to Discussions)

Comment on Peer Selections (by Wednesday in Discussions)

Rhyme Assignment (by Sunday)

### Week 3: Rhythm

Module Reading Assignments include:

\*John Dryden, "To Mr. Oldham"

\*Read Lectures on Analyzing Meter in "To Mr. Oldham"

Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool"

Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Kingfishers Catch Fire"

Sylvia Curbelo, "Listening to a White Man Play the Blues," "The Lake has Swallowed the Whole Sky"

Selections from *Patterns of Poetry* on Poetic Scansion

Watch: Lecture Video on Rhythm & Poetic Scansion

Submit:

Submit Recitation Selections by Email (by Wednesday)

Group Work on Meter Assignment (Ongoing in Discussions all week)

Meter Assignment (by Sunday)

Begin Memorizing Recitation

### Week 4: Imagery

Module Reading Assignments include:

\*John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Audre Lorde, "Coal," "A Litany for Survival"

Gwendolyn Brooks, "An Aspect of Love: Alice in the Ice & Fire"

Jorie Graham, "San Sepolcro"

Sylvia Plath, "Metaphors"

\*Watch: Lecture Video on "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Submit:

Response Paper 2, "Imagery Analysis" (by Sunday)

Continue Memorizing Recitation

### Week 5:

Module Reading Assignments include:

Various Handouts & Instructions for Writing Final Paper

Watch: Lecture Videos on “Close Reading in English Papers” & “Introductions, Thesis Statements & Topic Sentences”

Submit:

\*Recitation Video (by Friday)

Final Close Reading Essay (by Sunday)

*\*A reminder that all videos must use closed captions. I strongly advise use of URI's Techsmith Relay. Alternatively, you can “submit” this assignment by setting up a time to do your recitation in a meeting with me via Zoom or WebEx.*

### Essays:

All essays must meet the length requirement or they will not be accepted. All papers must be formatted as follows:

- word-processed with numbered pages and submitted as a word file (no PDFs!)
- double-spaced
- submitted in Times New Roman, 12-point, black font, with 1 inch margins on all sides
- formatted with your name, course number, assignment number, date, and **essay title**

Should you require an **extension** for a paper, it is expected that you will submit your request via **email** at least **two days prior** to the date on which the paper is due. Please note: *there will be no extensions granted for final papers (Essay 2).*

### Plagiarism & Professional Conduct

Cheating and plagiarism are serious academic offenses, which are dealt with firmly by the College and University. Scholastic integrity presumes that students are honest in all academic work. **Cheating** is the failure to give credit for work not done independently (i.e., submitting a paper written by someone other than yourself), unauthorized communication during an examination, or the claiming of credit for work not done (i.e., falsifying information).

**Plagiarism** is the failure to give credit for another person’s written or oral statement, thereby falsely presuming that such work is originally and solely your own.

If you have any doubt about what constitutes plagiarism, visit the following website: <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/whatisplagiarism>, the URI Student Handbook, and University Manual sections on plagiarism and cheating at <http://web.uri.edu/studentconduct/student-handbook/>.

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student’s name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student’s own

independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty:

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published sources (print or electronic) without appropriate citation
- Use of AI
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
- Altering or attempting to alter grades
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the Instructor.

Please note the following section from the University Manual:

**8.27.17.** Instructors shall have the explicit duty to take action in known cases of cheating or plagiarism. The instructor shall have the right to fail a student on the assignment on which the instructor has determined that a student has cheated or plagiarized. The circumstances of this failure shall be reported to the student's academic dean, the instructor's dean, and the Office of Student Life. The student may appeal the matter to the instructor's dean, and the decision by the dean shall be expeditious and final. Such action will be initiated by the instructor if it is determined that any written assignment is copied or falsified or inappropriately referenced.

**In this course, you will not be asked to do outside research. Do not search for information outside of the course (including Google or Wikipedia) unless instructed to do so by the professor.**

**Please note:** Students are responsible for being familiar with and adhering to the published **"Community Standards of Behavior: University Policies and Regulations"** which can be accessed in the **University Student Handbook**.

### Grade Scale:

A	94-100
A-	90-93
B+	87-89
B	84-86

B-	80-83
C+	77-79
C	74-76
C-	70-73
D+	64-69
D	60-63

Note: URI *does not use* A+ or D- grades

### Technology Requirements:

To successfully complete this course, you will need access to a computer with reliable, high-speed Internet access and appropriate system and software to support the Brightspace learning platform. Typical technical requirements for users are:

Windows 7 (XP or Vista) 64 MB Ram 28.8 kbps modem (56k or higher recommended) External headphones with built-in microphone Mozilla Firefox 9.0 or higher Word 2007 (PC) 2011 (MAC) Adobe Acrobat Reader	Mac OS X or higher 32 MB Ram 28.8 kbps modem (56k or higher recommended) External headphones with built-in microphone Mozilla Firefox 9.0 or higher; Safari 5.0 or higher Word 2007 (PC) 2011 (MAC) Adobe Acrobat Reader
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### Brightspace Help:

Here is the link to access Brightspace <https://brightspace.uri.edu> as well as the Brightspace resource page <https://web.uri.edu/brightspace/>.

### Netiquette for Online Courses & Brightspace

- Be polite and **respectful** of one another.
- **Please refrain from any comments that may be construed as racist, sexist, homophobic or ableist.** Although you are entitled to your own political beliefs, hate speech will not be tolerated in my class. I seek to foster a learning environment of inclusivity that embraces our diverse backgrounds and perspectives, since this is indeed how we learn best from one another. Ideas grow out of the conversations we have with one another. Always remember the immense power of language before using it.
- Be helpful and share your expertise. Foster communication and collaboration.

- Contribute constructively and completely to any online discussions. Avoid short repetitive “I agree” responses; these do not count. Be sure that you have completed all required reading associated with any assignments before submitting.
- Consider carefully what you write. Re-read. **Save all your work to your desktop before submitting.**
- Respect privacy. Don’t forward a personal message without permission.
- Cite references. Include web addresses, authors, names of articles, date of publication, etc.

### Classroom Protocol:

For this online course, Brightspace is our “classroom.” Please refer to the [Brightspace YouTube video tutorials](#) before you get started and refer back to them as a resource as needed while you complete this course.

In the online learning environment, “attendance” is measured by your *presence* in the site as well as your *contributions* to the site. The importance of regular log-ins and active participation cannot be overstated. Brightspace tracks this automatically for the instructor.

### Attendance Policy

- Monday of each week is considered the first day of class for online asynchronous instruction. Every Monday, begin reading the content in the Brightspace module for that week. There will be a “TO DO” list at the end of each weekly module reminding you of due dates for all assignments or discussion posts to submitted that week.
- “Attendance” in an online course signifies your timely participation in all discussion forums and your timely submission of assignments. Short extensions may be granted, but please see my policy regarding extensions in the “essays” section of this syllabus. In the event that an assignment is submitted late, no grade deduction will be applied, but nor will you receive feedback on this work. In URI summer classes, it is very important to keep up with assignments so as to complete the course!
- Regular online attendance/participation is expected for student success. (Note this can be tracked by the instructor in Brightspace.) Students who miss more than one discussion post or assignment discuss Instructors may accommodate students under extraordinary circumstances.

### Academic Support Services

#### **Office of Disability Access and Inclusion**

Any student with a documented disability should contact me at the very start of the semester so that we may work out reasonable accommodations to support your success in this course. Students should also contact Disability Access and Inclusion services, Office of Student Life, 330 Memorial Union, 401-874-2098. **Important:** If you are not sure if you have a disability or if



you qualify for accommodations, please reach out to Disability Access and Inclusion services. Your **confidentiality** will be respected (legally!).

### Americans With Disabilities Act Statement

Any personal learning accommodations that may be needed by a student covered by the “Americans with Disabilities Act” must be made known to the university as soon as possible. This is the student's responsibility. Information about services, academic modifications and documentation requirements can be obtained from The Office of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity and Diversity (AAEOD). <https://web.uri.edu/affirmativeaction/>

### From the University Manual: 6.40.10 and 6.40.11 Accommodations for Qualified Students With Disabilities.

Students are expected to notify faculty at the onset of the semester if any special considerations are required in the classroom. If any special considerations are required for examinations, it is expected the student will notify the faculty a week before the examination with the appropriate paperwork.

### URI Online Library Resources:

<https://web.uri.edu/library/>

### URI Writing Center Resources:

<https://web.uri.edu/aec/writing/>

### URI Academic Skills (& Time Management) Resources:

[uri.edu/aec/academic-skills](https://web.uri.edu/aec/academic-skills)

### Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we gather as the University of Rhode Island on the traditional land of the Niantic and Narragansett peoples in past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the people who have stewarded it throughout the generations.

This class meets on the traditional homelands of the Narragansett people. What is now the state of Rhode Island occupies the traditional homelands and waterways of the Narragansett, Wampanoag, Pequot, Nimuc, Niantic and other Algonquin speaking peoples. Let us honor and respect the enduring relationship between this land and these peoples—let us also acknowledge the acts of violence and dispossession endured by these peoples.

