

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.*

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) SoundCard & Speakers External headphones with built-in microphone Mozilla Firefox 9.0 or higher	Mac OS X or higher 32 MB Ram 28.8 kbps modem (56k or higher recommended) SoundCard & Speakers External headphones with built-in microphone Mozilla Firefox 9.0 or higher; Safari 5.0 or higher
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Also requires Word 2007 (PC) 2011 (MAC) or newer, PowerPoint, Excel, Adobe Flash, and Adobe Acrobat Reader.

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/>.

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

- Students are expected to participate in all weekly forum discussions.
- 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.
- Regular onsite attendance is expected for student success. Students who will miss more than one class (discussion post or assignment) have the responsibility to discuss their attendance with the instructor in advance. Instructors may accommodate students under extraordinary circumstances.
- If a student misses a portion of an onsite course, the student's grade will be adversely affected. Attendance is counted as your timely participation in all discussion forums. Students should discuss missing portions of a class with their instructor to determine how their grade may be affected and/or how to catch up on missing work.
- Regular online attendance/participation and engagement is expected for student success in both fully online and blended courses. Online participation is evident through posting to a discussion board, wiki, virtual office or classroom meeting, a drop box, attending a virtual seminar, completing real-time activities or quizzes, submitting assignments, or other course-related activities.

Netiquette for Online Courses

- Be polite and respectful of one another.
- Avoid personal attacks. Keep dialogue friendly and supportive, even when you disagree or wish to present a controversial idea or response.
- 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 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 community communication and collaboration.
- Contribute constructively and completely to discussions. Avoid short repetitive "I agree" responses and don't make everyone else do the work.
- Consider carefully what you write. Re-read all e-mails, assignments, and discussions before sending, submitting, or posting. **Consider saving your work to your desktop before posting and submitting.**
- Remember that e-mail is considered a permanent record that may be forwarded to others.
- Use descriptive subject headings for each e-mail messages & discussion post.
- Respect privacy. Don't forward a personal message without permission.
- Cite references. Include web addresses, authors, names of articles, date of publication, etc.
- Keep responses professional and educational. Do not advertise or send chain letters.

- Do not send large attachments unless you have been requested to do so by the instructor.
- 2 word postings (e.g.: I agree, Oh yeah, No way, Me too) do not count as postings.

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:

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

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"

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)

Week 4: Image

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 to a Grecian Urn"

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

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.*

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 always available to assist via email or through online methods. However, please do not leave your inquiries until the last minute! I check email 9:00AM-5 PM M-F. Finally, I am only too happy to work 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 my course! If students are struggling, I also offer group extra help sessions via Zoom.

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 **three 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;
- 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**.

Academic Support Services

Office of Disability Services

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 Services for Students, 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 Services. Your confidentiality must be legally respected. Although you may not consider yourself as having a “disability”, the need for accommodations is, in fact, fairly common. Accommodations are what allow many students to succeed in courses and to have an optimal learning experience. We are here to meet your needs and support you as needed.**

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 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:

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

URI Academic Writing Standards

Specific writing standards differ from discipline to discipline, and learning to write persuasively in any genre is a complex process, both individual and social, that takes place over time with continued practice and guidance. Nonetheless, URI has identified some common assumptions and practices that apply to most academic writing done at the university level. These generally understood elements are articulated here to help students see how they can best express their ideas effectively, regardless of their discipline or any particular writing assignment.

Venues for writing include the widespread use of e-mail, electronic chat spaces and interactive blackboards. URI is committed to guaranteeing that students can expect all electronic communication to meet Federal and State regulations concerning harassment or other “hate” speech. Individual integrity and social decency require common courtesies and a mutual understanding that writing--in all its educational configurations--is an attempt to share information, knowledge, opinions and insights in fruitful ways.

Academic writing (as commonly understood in the university) always aims at correct Standard English grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

The following details are meant to give students accurate, useful, and practical assistance for writing across the curriculum of URI.

Students can assume that successful collegiate writing will generally:

- Delineate the relationships among writer, purpose and audience by means of a clear focus (thesis statements, hypotheses or instructor-posed questions are examples of such focusing methods, but are by no means the only ones) and a topic that's managed and developed appropriately for the specific task.
- Display a familiarity with and understanding of the particular discourse styles of the discipline and/or particular assignment.
- Demonstrate the analytical skills of the writer rather than just repeating what others have said by summarizing or paraphrasing
- Substantiate abstractions, judgments, and assertions with evidence specifically applicable for the occasion whether illustrations, quotations, or relevant data.
- Draw upon contextualized research whenever necessary, properly acknowledging the explicit work or intellectual property of others.
- Require more than one carefully proofread and documented draft, typed or computer printed unless otherwise specified.