

English 2230 G: Studies in Poetics

Brescia University College, Winter 2015

Mondays, 11:30-12:20 pm; Wednesdays, 11:30-1:20 pm
Room 135 of the St. James Building

Dr. David Hickey

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Office Hours: Mondays: 4:00-5:00 Wednesdays: 10:00-11:00 (or by appointment)

Course Description:

This course will provide an introduction to the theory and practice of poetic analysis. We will cover a wide range of poetic voices while considering the ways in which expectations of both poetry and poets have changed across centuries. The close readings we perform will be complemented by excerpts from poetic theory. The course also provides students with a grounding knowledge in the theory and practice of scansion.

Course Objectives:

By the close of the semester, each student will be expected to:

- Scan poetry effectively and offer interpretations based on meter and form
- Build a large vocabulary around poetry and poetics
- Make use of this vocabulary when performing close readings
- Demonstrate an engagement with poetry as an aural art form by “performing” a poem
- Come up with your own definition of poetry based on the work that we do

Text List

Adams, Stephen. *Poetic Designs*. Peterborough: Broadview, 2003.

Ferguson, Margaret, et al., eds. *Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Shorter 5th ed. New York: Norton, 2005.

Course Pack (specific to this section). Available from InPrint. (<http://www.usc.uwo.ca/inprint/>)

Resources

The Jeweller's Eye (website featuring close readings of contemporary Canadian poems)

Stephen Fry's *The Ode Less Travelled* (on reserve at Beryl Ivey Library)

Composition of Grade

<u>Course Component</u>	<u>Weight</u>	<u>Due Date</u>	<u>Length</u>
Participation	5%	ongoing	N/A
Poetry Presentation	10%	various	10 minutes
Poetry Journal	10%	February 9 and April 6	various
Scansion & Terminology Test	10%	February 11	1 hour
In-class Essay	10%	February 23	2 hours
Final Essay	20%	April 1	7-8 pages
Final Exam	35%	T.B.A.	3 hours

Participation

Students are expected to contribute questions and observations to class discussion in a respectful manner and on a consistent basis.

Poetry Presentation

Each student will be responsible for one ten-minute poetry presentation, during which time you will guide the class through one poem, selected from the assigned readings for the day. Each student will read his or her chosen poem out loud for the class (or perform it in any way that seems fitting). He or she will then share three interesting observations about the chosen poem with the class. Observations could include details of language, form, imagery, tone, voice, punctuation, historical or social context, or anything else that the presenter deems valid, but your focus should be interpretation and analysis. These presentations will take place at the beginning of each class; they will be graded on creativity, consideration of poetic detail, and your ability to generate class discussion. You may wish to conclude with a series of questions you still have about the poem, or some point that you would like us to discuss further.

Poetry Journal

Each student will be expected to create a personal poetry journal, which will be submitted twice per semester: once shortly before reading week (February 9) and then again at the end of term (April 6). These journals should reflect the student's preparation for class and his or her developing relationship with the material we cover. While entries need not be made every day, students should aim to record their thoughts at least once each week. The length of these entries may vary from week to week; you may wish to include a longer entry one week, and then two shorter entries the following week, for example.

Students are encouraged to adapt their journals to their own learning strategies: poetry journals may provide a place to respond to class readings, to collage favourite poems or critical excerpts, to paste relevant newspaper clippings, to reflect on changing relationships to poetry, to practice poetic analysis and vocabulary, to celebrate new favourite poets or to vent frustrations with certain styles.

The journal can also be a place to record interactions with London's poetry community. We will discuss in class the many poetry events that happen in and around London every month, and students will be invited (though not required) to attend these activities whenever possible. The grade assigned to the journal will reflect the student's level of engagement with the questions and challenges that poetry offers.

For Those Interested in Creative Writing

You may, of course, also use your journal to write your own poems. These may (or may not) reflect what we cover in class; what matters is that you are experimenting with poetry as a means of learning more about it.

Should you wish to pursue this creative option, the following readings from Stephen Fry's *The Ode Not Taken* (available on reserve) may prove helpful:

“Foreword” xi-xvii

“Poetic Vices” 320-323

Scansion

Full poetic analysis requires that students be comfortable and confident with the tools of scansion. An understanding of scansion is essential to a practical knowledge of poetry criticism, since students must be aware of how poets make use of meter and rhythm; additionally, knowledge of the conventions of scansion will help students to identify the moments at which poets knowingly break with expectations.

The scansion and terminology test, to be completed in a one-hour class, will ask students to scan a short poem. The requirements for the in-class essay, final essay, and final exam will each require a working knowledge of the practice of scansion and an ability to apply the vocabulary of poetic analysis that we develop over the course of the term.

In-Class Essay

This essay will ask students to respond in as much detail as possible to a single poem or to a pair of single poems. We will work through examples together in preparation for the test. The in-class essay will be written during a one-hour class. This essay is great preparation for the final exam, which will allow students to build on the feedback they receive from this exercise.

Final Essay

Students will write a 7-8 page review of a contemporary volume of poetry, to be chosen from a list provided in class. Reviews should provide an overview of the collection and should speak to elements of content and style; reviewers also have the option of offering evaluative commentary, but such statements must always be reinforced with details from the text. Each of the volumes available for review will be held in reserve at the Beryl Ivey Library. Students also have the option of reviewing a volume of their choice, but those wishing to choose their own text MUST receive the instructor's permission first. Essays that review a text that has not met with instructor's approval will receive a grade of zero. Further detail on conventions and expectations of the review genre will be discussed in class. Final essays will be graded on coherence of argument; success in addressing the volume as a whole; incorporation of textual evidence, including details of scansion and poetic devices; and rhetorical persuasiveness. Where appropriate, students may wish to incorporate elements of secondary readings discussed in class.

Expectations

You will likely find that the reading list for this course is substantially shorter than other English courses you have taken. We focus on only a few poems each week, and you are occasionally responsible for a theoretical or critical article, as listed in the schedule. This reduced volume should afford you with the time necessary to fully prepare for class discussion. Read through each of the assigned poems several times. Be sure to define any words or allusions that are unfamiliar to you, and then return to the poem, reading these pieces in context. Take notes that record your reactions to or questions about the text. You may even want to take the time to memorize the poems you find most engaging. There are real benefits to memorization. As the

Canadian poet Ann Michaels suggests, “[i]t’s probably no coincidence that when we speak of memorizing something, we refer to it as learning by heart.” Poetic engagement is personal, and different strategies are likely to work best for different readers. You will be the best judge of how to prepare yourself fully for class.

Class Format

Most class meetings will be organized around discussion of assigned readings. We will share our thoughts either as a collective or in smaller groups. We will discuss historical and social context, where appropriate, and compare poets’ decisions regarding content and style to the trends of their particular writing period, and to other poets whose work comes earlier or later. Each student will be expected to contribute to discussion; all observations and questions are worth sharing. One of the joys of poetry is that individual perspective brings so much to each work: we will all benefit most, then, when each student is willing to share his or her thoughts, and to listen attentively and critically to the ideas of peers. To be a critical listener means to be ready to respond generously and in detail. While it is never acceptable to dismiss one of your colleague’s ideas rudely or disrespectfully, it can be helpful to find points of disagreement. In fact, such differences of opinion will often lead to the greatest and most memorable moments of insight. You are expected, then, to come to class ready to share and to listen.

Civility Statement

As a class, we agree to the following collectively composed code of behaviour, which will help us to discuss course material in a productive and collegial manner:

- Laptops will be permitted, but sound must be turned off, and computer use should not distract colleagues.
- Cell phones should be turned to vibrate, and should not be answered during student presentations; if it is necessary to answer a call, the student will exit the classroom to do so.
- Eating and drinking is permitted.
- Students will wait until class has ended to pack up their belongings.
- Students will attend as many classes as is possible: regular attendance and participation will allow us to foster a community spirit within the classroom.

Office Hours

I have scheduled two office hours per week for students of this class, and I welcome each of you to stop by to discuss any questions or concerns you have. Office hours can be a great place to discuss various aspects of the course: if you find you are particularly excited about a certain poet or poem, I can recommend directions for further reading, and if you are frustrated with a particular assignment or reading, I can listen and offer assistance. Such individualized discussions are often especially important for scansion: if you find yourself struggling to master this skill, please do plan to speak with me individually. I also encourage all students to plan to visit my office hours to discuss the final review essay before it is submitted. If my scheduled hours do not work for you, you are welcome to make an appointment.

Email Policy

I am happy to use email to communicate with you. I respond to emails I receive during the week within 24 hours; emails received on weekends may not receive a response until the following Monday. I ask that email be used to address specific concerns. For questions that require a detailed response, I will generally ask that students plan to speak with me before or after class, or during my office hours.

Essay Style

Essays must comply with MLA (Modern Languages Association) citation style and guidelines. Before the final essay is due, we will discuss the expectations for formatting and citing poetry.

Late Penalty

Essays and other assignments are to be submitted in class on the due date. Papers handed in late without prior permission will be deducted 3% per day late, including weekends. Essays submitted more than two weeks after the due date has passed will not be accepted. Late essays will forfeit extensive instructor commentary.

Prerequisites

At least 60% in English 020E, 022E, or 024E. Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enrol in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Final Grades

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

Course Schedule

Week one: Introduction

Jan. 5 Course Overview, Essays, and Assignments

Jan. 7 Introduction: What is poetry? How do we read a poem?
What are our expectations of poetry? Of our role as readers?
Of poets?

Readings: Billy Collins, "Introduction to Poetry" (*CP*)
Mark Strand, "Man and Camel" (*CP*)
Edna St. Vincent Millay, "First Fig" (*N* 887)

POETICS: Cleanth Brooks' "Heresy of Paraphrase" (excerpts) (*CP*)

Week two: How Poems Work: Poems as Conversation Pieces

Jan. 12 Readings: Lewis Carroll, "Jabberwocky" (*N* 736)
Marianne Moore, "Poetry" (*N* 856)

Jan. 14 Readings: What Makes a Favourite Poem?

POETICS: Sylvia Plath: "A Comparison" (*CP*)

Week three: Uses and Abuses of Scansion

Jan. 19 Readings: Thomas Wyatt, "They Flee from Me" (N 104)
Tottel's rewrite of Thomas Wyatt's "They Flee from Me" (CP)
Shakespeare: Sonnet 73 (N 173) and Sonnet 116 (N 176)

Poetic Designs Chapter 1 (1-36)

Jan. 21 The Sonnet

Readings: Edna St. Vincent Millay, "Love Is Not All" (CP)
P.K. Page, "Water and Marble" (CP)
Gerald Manley Hopkins, "Pied Beauty" (N 756)
Margaret Avison, "Snow" (CP)
Robert Hayden, "Those Winter Sundays" (N 968)

Poetic Designs Chapter 3, "The Sonnet" (88-91)

Week four: Accentual Verse and Ballads

Jan. 26 Readings: William Blake, "The Tyger" (N 446)
Emily Dickinson, "Because I Could Not Stop for Death" (N 726)
Emily Dickinson, "They shut me up in Prose" (N 725)

Poetic Designs Chapter 2 (37-50)

Jan. 28 Readings: Edgar Allan Poe, "The Raven" (N 615)
Phillip Larkin, "This Be the Verse" (N 1033)
e.e. cummings, "anyone lived in a pretty town" (N 896)
William Butler Yeats, "Song of Wandering Aengus" (CP)
Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" (CP)

Poetic Designs Chapter 2 (51-55)

Week five: More Fun with Form: Villanelles, Ghazals, and the Sestina

Feb. 2 Readings: Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into that Good Night" (N 991)
Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" (N 966)
Jacqueline Osherow, "Villanelle for the Middle of the Night" (CP)

Feb. 4 Readings: Mimi Khalvati, "Ghazal" (CP)
Heather McHugh, "Ghazal of the Better-Unbegun" (CP)
Nellie Wong, "Grandmother's Song" (CP)
Greg Williamson, "New Year's: A Short Pantoum" (N 1250)

Poetic Designs Chapter 3, "The Villanelle" (93-95)

Week six: Narrative and Dramatic Poetry

Feb. 9 **Poetry journals due**
Readings: Robert Burns, "To a Mouse" (N 452)

Tennyson, "Tithonus" (N 639)

Feb. 11 **Scansion and Terminology Test**

Readings: Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (excerpts) (N 937)
Wallace Stevens, "The Snow Man" (N 816)

READING WEEK

Week seven: Moon Baboon Canoe

Feb. 23 Classroom visit and Reading by Gary Barwin

POETICS Jeffrey Donaldson: selections from *Echo Soundings* (CP)

Poetic Designs Chapter 5 (188-95)

Feb. 25 **In-class essay**

Week eight: Simile and Metaphor

Mar. 2 Readings: John Steffler, "That Night We Were Ravenous" (CP)
Seamus Heaney, "A Kite for Michael and Christopher" (CP)

Poetic Designs Chapter 5 (152-67)

POETICS: Adorno, "On Lyric Poetry and Society" (online)

Mar. 4 Readings: Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" (N 816)
Derek Walcott, "Midsummer, Tobago" (CP)
Simon Armitage, "Killing Time" (N 1247)
Adrienne Rich, "Diving into the Wreck" (N 1119)

POETICS: "In Conversation: Brian Bartlett, Ross Leckie and Anne Simpson
Discuss Jan Zwicky's *Wisdom & Metaphor*" (CP)

Poetic Designs Chapter 4 (133-41)

Week nine: Common Magic: Poetry of the Everyday

Mar. 9 Readings: Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (N 483)
Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (N 458)

Mar. 11 Readings: Bronwen Wallace, "Common Magic" (CP)
Barbara Nickel, "The Doctor and the Doctor's Wife" (CP)
Phillip Levine, "You Can Have it" (N 1094)
Eric Ormsby, "Song for an Ironing Board" (CP)
William Waring Cuney, "Down-Home Boy" (CP)

POETICS: "Two Women Talking: Correspondence 1985-1987 Erin Mouré and Bronwen Wallace" (selections) (CP)

Adrienne Rich's "Someone is Writing a Poem" (online)

Week ten: Nocturnes

Mar. 16 Readings: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight" (N 488)
Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach" (N 711)

Mar. 18 Readings: Robinson Jeffers, "Pearl Harbor" (CP)
Robert Frost, "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" (N 803)
Philip Larkin, "Sad Steps" (N 1032)
W.H. Auden, "As I Walked Out One Evening" (N 937)

Week eleven: The (Long and) Short of it

Mar. 23 Readings: William Carlos Williams, "This is Just to Say" (N 830)
P.K. Page, "Star-Gazer" (CP)
Philip Kevin Paul "Ceremony" (CP)
Suzanne Buffam "On Everyone" (CP)
Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" (N 846)
Amanda Jernigan "Catch" (CP)
James Reaney, "The Antiquary" (CP)

POETICS: Ezra Pound's "A Retrospect" (online)

Mar. 25 Readings: Gertrude Stein, selections from "Objects" (online)
Stephanie Bolster, selections from *White Stone: The Alice Poems* (CP)
Shane Rhodes, "The Unified Field" (CP)

Week twelve: "The Hurricane Does Not Roar in Pentameters"

Mar. 30 Readings: Derek Walcott, *Omeros*: Chapter 1, sections 1 & 2 (handout)
Lorna Goodison, "Keith Jarrett — Rainmaker" (handout)

Apr. 1 **Final essay due**

Except from M. NourbeSe Philip's *Zong!* (handout)

POETICS: Edward K. Brathwaite, "Nation Language" (excerpt) (CP)

Week thirteen: Revisiting Favourite Poems & Review

Apr. 6 **Poetry journals due**

EXAM TBA

**BRESCIA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ACADEMIC POLICIES
AND REGULATIONS**

1. POLICY REGARDING MAKEUP EXAMS AND EXTENSIONS OF DEADLINES

When a student requests academic accommodation (e.g., extension of a deadline, a makeup exam) for work representing 10% or more of the student's overall grade in the course, it is the responsibility of the student to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. All such requests for academic accommodation **must** be made through an Academic Advisor and include supporting documentation. Academic accommodation on medical grounds will be granted only if the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete her academic responsibilities. Appropriate academic accommodation will be determined by the Dean's Office in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Please note that personal commitments (e.g., vacation flight bookings, work schedule) which conflict with a scheduled test, exam or course requirement are not grounds for academic accommodation.

A UWO Student Medical Certificate (SMC) is **required** if a student is seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds. This documentation should be obtained at the time of the initial consultation with the physician/nurse practitioner or walk-in clinic. A SMC can be downloaded under the Medical Documentation heading of the following website: <https://studentservices.uwo.ca/secure/index.cfm> . If it is not possible to have an SMC completed by the attending physician/nurse practitioner, the student must request documentation sufficient to demonstrate that her ability to meet academic responsibilities was seriously affected. Please note that under University Senate regulations documentation stating simply that the student "was seen for a medical reason" or "was ill" is **not** adequate to support a request for academic accommodation. All documentation is to be submitted to an Academic Advisor.

Whenever possible, requests for academic accommodation should be initiated in advance of due dates, examination dates, etc. Students must follow up with their professors and Academic Advisor in a timely manner.

The full statement of University policy regarding extensions of deadlines or makeup exams can be found at <http://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/2014/pg117.html>

2. ACADEMIC CONCERNS

If you feel that you have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with your work, contact your instructor and Academic Advisor as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist you can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. Retroactive requests for academic accommodation on medical or compassionate grounds may not be considered.

If you think that you are too far behind to catch up or that your work load is not manageable, you should consult an Academic Advisor. If you consider reducing your workload by dropping one or more courses, this must be done by the appropriate deadlines (refer to the Registrar's website, www.registrar.uwo.ca, for official dates). You should consult with the course instructor and the Academic Advisor who can help you consider alternatives to dropping one or more courses. *Note that dropping a course may affect OSAP eligibility and/or Entrance Scholarship eligibility.*

The Dean may refuse permission to write the final examination in a course if the student has failed to maintain satisfactory academic standing throughout the year or for too frequent absence from the class or laboratory.

3. ABSENCES

Short Absences: If you miss a class due to a minor illness or other problems, check your course outline for information regarding attendance requirements and make sure you are not missing a test or assignment. Cover any readings and arrange to borrow notes from a classmate. Contact the course instructor if you have any questions.

Extended Absences: If you have an extended absence, you should contact the course instructor and an Academic Advisor. Your course instructor and Academic Advisor can discuss ways for you to catch up on missed work and arrange academic accommodations, if appropriate.

4. POLICY ON CHEATING & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

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/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf.

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, cheating on an examination, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, impersonating a candidate, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Misconduct in the Western Academic Calendar.

If you are in doubt about whether what you are doing is inappropriate or not, consult your instructor, the Student Services Centre, or the Registrar. A claim that "you didn't know it was wrong" is not accepted as an excuse.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence (including plagiarism) include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the University, and expulsion from the University.

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 such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence (see Scholastic Offence Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com.

Computer-marked Tests/exams:

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating. Software currently in use to score computer-marked multiple-choice tests and exams performs a similarity review as part of standard exam analysis.

5. PROCEDURES FOR APPEALING ACADEMIC EVALUATIONS

All appeals of a grade must be directed first to the course instructor. If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal signed by the student must be sent to the Department Chair. If the response of the department is considered unsatisfactory to the student, she may then submit a signed, written appeal to the Office of the Dean. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's Office, or you can consult an Academic Advisor. Students are advised to consult the section on Academic Rights and Responsibilities in the Western Academic Calendar.

6. PREREQUISITES AND ANTIREQUISITES

Unless you have either the prerequisites for a course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from the course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Similarly, you will also be deleted from a class list if you have previously taken an antirequisite course unless this has the approval of the Dean. These decisions may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course because you have taken an antirequisite course.

7. SUPPORT SERVICES

The Brescia University College Registrar's website, with a link to Academic Advisors, is at http://www.brescia.uwo.ca/academics/registrar_services/index.html . The Western Registrar's website is at <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/index.cfm> . The website for the Student Development Centre at Western is at <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/> . Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health @ Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Portions of this document were taken from the Academic Calendar, the Handbook of Academic and Scholarship Policy and the Academic Handbook of Senate Regulations. This document is a summary of relevant regulations and does not supersede the academic policies and regulations of the Senate of the University.