

## INTRODUCTION TO POETRY & DRAMA

**English 2020 / Spring 2018**

**Class Meet:** M W F 10:45 am–11:40 am, Tupper 307

**Instructor:** Brian McAllister

**Office Hours:** M W F 9:30 am–10:30 am or by appointment

**Office:** Lindley S219

**Email:** mcallisb@ohio.edu

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### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will study poetry and drama from the Renaissance through the twenty-first century. The course will be divided evenly between the two forms, with the first half of the semester dealing with poetry and the second half focusing on drama. By the end of the semester, you will gain a broad knowledge of and appreciation for poetry and drama and their cultural and intellectual significance. We will read a variety of poetic and dramatic texts that employ everything from traditional to radically experimental forms, starting each section by focusing on the basic building blocks of poetry and drama and progressively integrating more complicated systems into our discussions and analyses of the works. From these focused reading practices, we will work to understand poetry's and drama's role within larger literary, cultural, and historical categories.

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### LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Students will develop their appreciation for the purposes and pleasures of poetry and drama.
2. Students will articulate ways that poetic and dramatic works construct values and ethical meanings.
3. Students will identify major features of literary form and construct arguments about the relationship between form and the work's meaning.

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### REQUIRED TEXTS

- PLEASE MAKE SURE THAT YOU PURCHASE THESE EDITIONS. NO ELECTRONIC VERSIONS.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot* [ISBN: 978-0802144423]
  - Churchill, Caryl. *Cloud 9*. [ISBN: 0-415-90135-9]
  - Lai, Larissa. *Automaton Biographies*. [ISBN: 978-1-55152-292-0]
  - Pinter, Harold. *The Birthday Party*. [ISBN: 978-0802151148]
  - Pruffer, Kevin. *Churches*. [ISBN: 978-1935536437]
  - Seth, Vikram. *The Golden Gate*. [ISBN: 978-0-679-73457-4]
  - Soyinka, Wole. *Death and the King's Horseman*. [ISBN: 978-0393322996]
  - Wolosky, Shira. *The Art of Poetry* [ISBN: 9780195371185]
  - Reading materials from Blackboard must be printed and brought to class.

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### COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

#### Class Participation

**10%**

Good participation means having read the material assigned for the day, having brought a copy of that material to class, and being prepared to contribute your views on the assigned reading. Active listening and questioning are important components of participation. This grade is also contingent on you collaborating appropriately and respectfully with your classmates and me. ***You will not earn a good participation grade if you just attend class and do not actively involve yourself in class discussions. Failure to bring the readings to class (including those that you need to print from Blackboard) will result in an unexcused absence.*** Should there be any reason that hinders your ability to participate, please speak with me as soon as possible, and we will work together to resolve the situation.

#### Reading Responses

**10%**

Students will post 10, 300-word responses to prompts on the Blackboard discussion board. These relatively

informal, low-pressure responses will serve to guide class discussion and address particular concerns, questions, and observations that students may have about the reading for the day. My hope is that responses help you prepare for class discussion on the following day. Reading responses must be posted to the discussion board by **9:00 am on the day of class**, so that I may read them and use them to help prepare class discussions.

**Reading Quizzes****10%**

There will be occasional, very short, 5-question quiz. These quizzes will be used to make sure that you are keeping up with the reading and will cover basic information included in the day's reading. Quizzes will either cover the material in Shira Wolosky's *The Art of Poetry*, or they will cover the plot details of Vikram Seth's *The Golden Gate* and the plays.

**Close Reading****20%**

Students will produce 2 close readings of poems or sections of poems throughout the quarter that closely analyze the relationship between poetic form, content, and the larger thematic concerns of the text. These close readings will be about 800–1200 words long. No secondary sources can be used in these readings. (More details to come.)

**Midterm Poetry Exam****25%**

Students will take one midterm poetry exam that includes definition questions; a short answer section, in which you will identify and analyze passages from works we've read and discussed; and an essay question that asks you to engage in a close reading and analysis of a poem that we have not read in class, using the vocabulary and techniques we have practiced. (More details to come.)

**Final Drama Paper****25%**

Students will construct a 1300–1800 word paper that addresses a particular element of drama that we've dealt with in class, using a dramatic text or texts from the semester. (More details to come.)

**Grade Scale**

|          |           |           |           |          |           |           |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| E: 0–59  | D: 60–66  | D+: 67–69 | C-: 70–72 | C: 73–76 | C+: 77–79 | B-: 80–82 |
| B: 83–86 | B+: 87–89 | A-: 90–92 | A: 93–100 |          |           |           |

**COURSE POLICIES**

**Attendance** is essential to the success of this class. Therefore, **each unexcused absence after four will result in the lowering of your final grade by a third of a grade.** Excused absences, such as those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics, will not affect your grade, though it is your responsibility to provide the appropriate documentation and get all missed work. **Seven unexcused absences will automatically result in failure for the course.**

**Tardiness** is disruptive to the classroom environment, and prevents you from fully participating and assimilating the information and materials discussed in class. If you are late, please still come to class, but excessive tardiness will lower your participation grade.

**Cell Phones/Electronic Devices:** For all classes, cell phones must be turned OFF before class (not on silent or vibrate). During all class sessions, texting or using other electronic devices outside the scope of the course will affect your ability to participate in class discussion and, therefore, **any usage outside of designated class activities will result in an unexcused absence for that day.** Extensive research (e.g., [Sana, et al.](#); [Hembroke and Gay](#); [Mueller and Oppenheimer](#)) has shown laptops, tablets, etc. to be significant distractions for both users and nearby students.

**Plagiarism** is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. It is a serious academic offense that can result in referral to the Office of Community Standards and Student Responsibility and failure for the course. Please remember that at no point during the writing process should the work of others be presented as your own.

**Student Work** must be completed and submitted on time. All assignments should be turned in during the class period when they are due. **Late assignments will lose one full letter grade for each day they are late.** The grade will not be affected when an assignment is late for reasons that would result in an excused absence, though it is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor to establish a new deadline. Students who know they will miss the class when the assignment is due must contact the instructor as soon as possible in advance of class to arrange for submission of the assignment.

**Class Cancellation Policy:** In the unlikely event of an emergency, I will contact you via email and request that a note on department letterhead be placed on the door. In addition, I will contact you as soon as possible following the cancellation to let you know what will be expected of you for our next class meeting.

## RESOURCES

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**The Student Writing Center** [<https://www.ohio.edu/uc/aac/swc.cfm>], located in the Alden Library (2nd floor), provides free scheduled and walk-in face-to-face appointments as well as online appointments. Assistance is available at any stage of the writing process, from understanding the assignment to looking at the revised draft. You can get help with developing the thesis or main idea, organizing or developing the ideas, the bibliography, grammatical issues or any other writing concerns. For free, face-to-face 50-minute sessions, visit <http://ohio.mywconline.com>. Once registered, you can see and schedule an appointment *up to a week in advance*.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

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### Week One

#### 17 January

- Patrick Rosal, "Tito Teddy with a Cigarette Dangling from His Mouth Uses My Arm to Illustrate a Jiu Jitsu Bone-Break Move from His Coast Guard Days"

#### 19 January

RESPONSE 1 DUE

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 1
- Elizabeth Bishop, "One Art" [Blackboard]

### Week Two

#### 22 January

RESPONSE 2 DUE

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 2
- Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" [Blackboard]
- Billie Holiday, "Strange Fruit" [Blackboard]

#### 24 January

READING QUIZ, CHAPTER 3

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 3
- John Donne, "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" [Blackboard]

#### 26 January

- WB Yeats, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death" [Blackboard]
- John Keats, "Ode on Melancholy" [Blackboard]

### Week Three

#### 29 January

READING QUIZ, CHAPTER 5

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 5
- Patrick Kavanagh, "Iniskeen Road: July Evening" [Blackboard]
- Edwin Morgan, "Space Sonnet & Polyfilla" [Blackboard]

#### 31 January

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 6
- Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" [Blackboard]
- The Rolling Stones, "Sympathy for the Devil" [Blackboard]
- Lupe Fiasco, "Put You on Game" [Blackboard]

**2 February**

CLOSE READING 1 DUE

- Seamus Heaney, "Bog Queen" [Blackboard]
- Seamus Heaney, "The Tollund Man" [Blackboard]

**Week Four**

**5 February**

RESPONSE 3 DUE

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 8
- Larissa Lai, *Automaton Biographies*, Rachel [9–42]

**7 February**

- Larissa Lai, *Automaton Biographies*, nascent fashion [43–84]

**9 February**

READING QUIZ, CHAPTER 9

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 9
- Larissa Lai, *Automaton Biographies*, Ham [85–122]

**Week Five**

**12 February**

RESPONSE 4 DUE

- Larissa Lai, *Automaton Biographies*, auto matter [123–164]

**14 February**

READING QUIZ, CHAPTER 11

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 11
- Kevin Prufer, *Churches*, Part One [Choose two poems to prepare for discussion]

**16 February**

- Kevin Prufer, *Churches*, Part Two [Choose two poems to prepare for discussion]

**Week Six**

**19 February**

READING QUIZ, CHAPTER 12

- Shira Wolosky, *The Art of Poetry*, Chapter 12
- Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* [Acknowledgments, Dedication, Table of Contents, 3–52]

**21 February**

CLOSE READING 2 DUE

- Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* [53–99]

**23 February**

- Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* [100–147]

**Week Seven**

**26 February**

- Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* [148–191]
- Midterm Exam Review

**28 February**

POETRY EXAM, PT. 1: VOCABULARY/SHORT ANSWER

**2 March**

POETRY EXAM, PT. 2: CLOSE READING

**Week Eight**

**5 March**

RESPONSE 5 DUE

- Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* [192–233]

**7 March**

- Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* [234–280]

**9 March**

READING QUIZ

- Vikram Seth, *The Golden Gate* [281–307]

**Week Nine**

**12 March–16 March**

SPRING BREAK. NO CLASS.

**Week Ten**

**19 March**

- David Mamet, *Cold* [Blackboard]

**21 March**

RESPONSE 6 DUE

- Harold Pinter, *The Dumb Waiter* [Blackboard]

**23 March**

READING QUIZ

- Harold Pinter, *The Room* [Entire Play]

**Week Eleven**

**26 March**

- Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*, Act One

**28 March**

READING QUIZ

- Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*, Act Two

**30 March**

RESPONSE 7 DUE

- Harold Pinter, *The Birthday Party*, Act Three

**Week Twelve**

**2 April**

READING QUIZ

- Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* [Entire Play]

**4 April**

RESPONSE 8 DUE

- Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*

**6 April**

- Martin Rohmer, "Wole Soyinka's 'Death and the King's Horseman,' Royal Exchange Theater, Manchester" [In Soyinka 121–138]

**Week Thirteen**

**9 April**

READING QUIZ

- Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, Act One

**11 April**

RESPONSE 9 DUE

- Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*, Act Two

**13 April**

- Samuel Beckett, *Play* [Blackboard]

***Week Fourteen***

**16 April**

CLASS MEETS AT BICENTENNIAL PARK, WEATHER PERMITTING.

- Samuel Beckett, *Quad* [Blackboard]

**18 April**

RESPONSE 10 DUE

- Samuel Beckett, *Ohio Impromptu* [Blackboard]

**20 April**

NO CLASS.

***Week Fifteen***

**23 April**

READING QUIZ

- Caryl Churchill, *Cloud 9*, Act One

**25 April**

RESPONSE 11 DUE

- Caryl Churchill, *Cloud 9*, Act Two

**27 April**

- Course Wrap-Up

FINAL DRAMA PAPER DUE WEDNESDAY, 2 MAY AT 11:59 PM