

Advanced English: Poetry Workshop for Developing Linguistic Skills

David Reckford

Academic year 2022-2023 - **Language Department** - Spring semester.

This course is meant for students of the advanced C1 and C2 levels. Theme-based language classes aim at developing written and oral skills through the study of a specific topic.

An active, participative study of poetry forms available to writers of English, particularly focusing on those available to students who wish to improve the creative and persuasive dimensions of their expression in the language. During the class, the idea to work with and to question is “what constitutes effective writing”, that slippery notion, and to do so through some hands-on practice. That will involve intense consideration of diction, rhetoric, and down to the parts of speech.

Presentation

The course will engage with texts that constitute varied models that students can work with: so there will be an initial phase of each course where we will discuss some reading that will have been assigned to the class. Then, looking carefully at the mechanisms behind the models chosen, students will plan their own works in dialog with what has been discussed. We will bring up the difficulties encountered and the solutions found. We will practice the art of making an informed argument for or against the qualities of a work as interesting or persuasive, directly or indirectly engaging.

Students will be expected to carry their varied interrogations into different formal tries of, for example, but not limited to, a list poem, a haiku, a sonnet, and a ballad. Topics such as world literature, politics in art, living artistically, changing minds, and others will participate in the conversation.

Teaching objectives

Generally, the course is designed to improve linguistic competencies while confronting the authoritative poetic artworks with personal production emerging from the current surroundings, intellectual environment, and the imagination of the students. It will engage with the poetry tradition of the English-speaking world.

Specifically, we will practice fluent discussion, focusing on one’s own preoccupations and those of the group, and move towards styles of oral persuasion.

Students will receive regular practice on both expository and creative writing, perhaps blurring the barriers.

They will read subtle and well-designed texts for the fullest of comprehensions, and as a springboard for action, widening the active grasp of new lexicons, such as that of poetic forms and critical stances.

Finally, they will gain in attentive concentration for nuances of oral speech in the specific contexts of poetry readings and critical discussions.

Individual work and evaluation

Reading short prepared (commented) excerpts from poems assembled for the class. Writing of poems in reaction to those studied, or using the methodology introduced. A written defense of the student's own production during the semester. The evaluation will be an average of the written and participation grades for each linguistic competency: listening, reading, speaking, and writing.