

English 621: Seventeenth-Century Poetic Communities

Thursday 6:30-9:00pm, Tawes Hall 3136

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Office hours: Tues/Thurs 2:00-3:00pm, and by appointment
Tawes Hall 3243

English poetry flourished despite – or perhaps because of – the upheavals of the seventeenth century, including Civil Wars and the Parliamentarians' beheading of Charles I. The poems of courtiers, balladeers, political radicals, female writers in aristocratic coteries, royalists in exile and even an isolated parish rector circulated in manuscript miscellanies, printed books and acoustic performance under rapidly shifting political circumstances. This course explores how and why these dynamic, adaptive and often fragile communities took poetry as their *raison d'être* during the so-called "short" seventeenth century from 1600 to the 1660s.

Texts and class preparation:

Seventeenth-century poetic culture was highly unstable; poems appeared in diverse versions and contexts, and they were often printed long (sometimes decades) after they were written. So, although I have organized the readings by poet in the Norton Anthology, I'd like to encourage you to read widely and freely across poets and their milieus each week.

To that end, please spend your reading time not only with the Norton but with the *New Oxford Book of Seventeenth-Century Verse*, which is less author-centered and period-localized. Scan through how poets are represented differently, and find poems that interest you.

Also please have at least a quick look at the *Early English Books Online* (EEBO) images of the first printed editions of the poems under discussion (noting that these often occur decades after the poems first circulated in manuscript). Think about how the presentation and organization of the poems differs from the anthologies. Spend more time with the EEBO images of the poems on which you choose to focus.

Our discussion will focus on the poems that are the topic of your weekly blog posts (see below). Please make sure to keep up with the blog and read the poems that your peers choose especially closely.

Be judicious about how you spend your reading time. In addition to the two anthologies and EEBO, we will be pairing seventeenth-century poetry with theories of community and literary criticism. Most of your preparation should concentrate on poems themselves, especially those in the Norton.

Please make sure to purchase the most recent edition of the Norton. Check www.addall.com and www.amazon.com for inexpensive copies.

Required:

- *Seventeenth-Century British Poetry, 1603-1660*, ed. John P. Rumrich and Gregory Chaplin (Norton, 2005), ISBN 0393979989
- *New Oxford Book of Seventeenth-Century Verse*, ed. Alastair Fowler (Oxford, 2008), ISBN 0199556296

All assigned texts not included in the anthologies will be downloadable on our ELMS/Canvas site. Please **print them out** and bring them to class.

Recommended:

- *Milton: The Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (Routledge, 2006) – or the 1997 Longman edition, available cheaply online, ISBN 0582019850
- Barbara Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography* (Blackwell, 2000), ISBN 1405106255
- Ian Donaldson, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 2013), ISBN 0199697477
- Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Cornell University Press, 1995), ISBN 0801482380
- Christopher Hill, *The World Turned Upside Down: Radical Ideas During the English Revolution* (Penguin: 1984), ISBN 0140137327

Writing and presenting:

Please post 250-500 words each week on our Wordpress site:

<http://poeticcommunities.wordpress.com>

Focus on one poem from the current week's readings, or a related poem from the Oxford anthology or EEBO. You're welcome to draw connections to other poems and other poets, but please pay detailed attention to a single poem. The blog is intended as the basis for class discussion, a place for that discussion to continue outside of class and a forum for you to develop your papers and final projects.

Work on the following over the course of the semester:

- A mixture of close reading and engagement with theory
- At least two posts drawn from your midterm papers and final presentations
- Regular comments on your peers' posts

Please make sure that your posts are online **by Wednesday at 5pm**. This will give your classmates and me the chance to read and think about what you say. These weekly deadlines are important: I use your blog posts to structure class discussion, so I need to be able to read them by Thursday morning at the latest.

You will have a 7-10 page paper due on October 29; use your writing on the blog as a starting point. Please meet with me outside of class **by October 8** to discuss your topic.

Your final, 30-minute presentations will vary based on your professional goals. They might consist of a teaching presentation geared toward a specific student group, for example, or a presentation appropriate for a conference. You'll break into working groups that will give feedback and attend your presentation at the end of the term.

Please let me know within the first two weeks of the semester if you have a disability that requires accommodation or a hardship that would be helpful to discuss.

Grading:

Your grade will be based on your work on the blog, your participation in class, your 7-10 page paper and your final presentation. Make sure to keep up with the blog and participate thoughtfully in every class.

September 3

- Introductions
- Marlowe, "The Passionate Shepherd to His Love"
- Jonson, "To Penshurst"
- Lanier, poems in the *Norton*

September 10

- Donne, poems in the *Norton*
- Jonathan F.S. Post, "Irredemiably Donne," from *English Lyric Poetry: The Early Seventeenth Century* (pdf)

September 17

- Herbert, poems in the *Norton*
- Benedict Anderson, "Introduction" and "Cultural Roots," from *Imagined Communities* (pdf)

September 24

- Crashaw, poems in the *Norton*
- Vaughan, poems in the *Norton*
- Traherne, poems in the *Norton*
- Leah Marcus, "Children of Light: Vaughan and Traherne," in the *Norton*

October 1

- Marvell, poems in the *Norton* except "Upon Appleton House"
- Cowley, poems in the *Norton*
- Nicholas McDowell, "Introduction: Marvell and Friends," from *Poetry and Allegiance in the English Civil Wars* (pdf)

October 8

- Jonson, poems in the *Norton*
- Hugh Jenkins, "'That He which can faine a *Common-wealth'*: Fashioning the Ideal Community," from *Feigned Commonwealths* (pdf)

October 15

- Herrick, poems in the *Norton*
- Waller, poems in the *Norton*
- Randolph, poems in the *Norton*
- Jean-Luc Nancy, chapters 1 and 3 from *The Inoperative Community* (pdf)

October 22

- Carew, poems in the *Norton*
- Corbett, poems in the *Norton*
- Shirley, poems in the *Norton*
- Fane, poems in the *Norton*
- Habington, poems in the *Norton*
- Cartwright, poems in the *Norton*
- Graham, poems in the *Norton*
- Stanley, poems in the *Norton*
- Roberto Esposito, "Nothing in Common," from *Communitas* (pdf)

October 29: No class, papers due (7-10 pages)**November 5**

- Suckling, poems in the *Norton*
- Lovelace, poems in the *Norton*
- Milton, Sonnet 13: "To Mr. H. Lawes, on his Airs," in the *Norton*
- Dowland, *The Second Booke of Songs or Ayres*, esp. prefatory material, "I saw my Lady weepe," "Flow my teares," "Sorow sorow stay" (EEBO)
- Dowland, "To the reader," in *A Pilgrimes Solace* (EEBO)
- Campion, *The Third and Fourth Booke of Ayres*, esp. "Oft haue I sigh'd," "Now winter nights enlarge," "Awake, thou spring of speaking grace," "If thou longst so much to learne," "To the reader" (EEBO, toward the middle of the codex)

November 12

- Cavendish, poems in the *Norton*
- Philips, poems in the *Norton*
- Bradstreet, poems in the *Norton*
- Wroth, poems in the *Norton*
- William Kerrigan, "Transformations of Friendship in the Work of Katherine Philips," in the *Norton*

November 19

- Denham, poem in the *Norton*
- Marvell, "Upon Appleton House" (pdf from Nigel Smith's edition)
- Winstanley, *A Declaration to the Powers of England (The True Levellers Standard Advanced)* (pdf)
- Winstanley, "The Diggers Song" (in the Oxford anthology)

Thanksgiving Break!

December 3

- Milton, 1645 *Poems*
- Stanley Fish, "Lycidas: A Poem Finally Anonymous," from *How Milton Works* (pdf)

December 10

- Dryden, poems in the *Norton*
- Milton, poems in the *Norton*
- Giorgio Agamben, chapters I-VI from *The Coming Community* (pdf)

December 14-18: Final presentations, scheduled using Doodle