

It is difficult  
to get the news from poems  
yet men die miserably every day  
for lack  
of what is found there

---William Carlos Williams  
from "Asphodel, That Greeny  
Flower" (1955)

## English 301: Critical Methods in the Study of Literature

Section 0201, Mon/Wed 3:30-4:45pm, Tawes Hall 3132

**Professor:** Scott Trudell  
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**Office hours:** Mondays 5-6pm, Wednesdays 2-3pm and by appointment  
Tawes Hall 3243

English 301 is the gateway to the major, preparing you to analyze literary form, explicate texts and conduct research. This version of 301 will emphasize poetic tone, diction, verse forms, figurative language, scansion and rhythm, asking students to identify poetic meter. It will introduce you to methodologies including formalism, narrative theory, historicism, Marxism, feminism, critical race theory and deconstruction. It will also prepare you to incorporate primary and secondary sources into your writing in order to produce successful papers for upper-level English courses. Readings will include narrative, drama and poetry in a broad variety of genres from the Middle Ages to the present day.

### Books:

- *The Norton Anthology of Poetry, 5th shorter edition*, ed. Margaret Ferguson, Jon Stallworthy and Mary Jo Salter (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), ISBN: 9780393979213. **Note: make sure to look online for inexpensive used copies of the anthology.**
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, 2nd ed.*, ed. J. Paul Hunter (New York: W. W. Norton, 2012), ISBN: 9780393927931.
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, trans. Simon Armitage (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008), ISBN: 9780393334159.
- Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction, 2nd ed.*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), ISBN: 9780199691340.

You are required to purchase these specific editions. Other editions have major differences and do not contain all of the required reading. Check [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and [www.bookfinder.com](http://www.bookfinder.com) for used and inexpensive copies. Please contact me if you have trouble locating an affordable copy of the *Norton Anthology of Poetry*.

### Course requirements:

- Participation (15%)
- Weekly blog posts and comments (20%)
- First paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Second paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Third paper, 4-5 pages (15%)
- Final (15%)
- Quizzes (5%)

### Policies

- Attendance and participation are extremely important in this course.
- I grade participation based on thoughtful, consistent engagement with the class. This is not simply about speaking often: more important is how you listen and respond to your peers.
- I take attendance daily. Absences that are not excused will result in failing participation grades. You may submit written documentation of excused absences before class begins or during my

office hours. For the University policy on absences, see  
<<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>>

- If you miss class for any reason, follow these steps:
  - 1) Send me a brief email before class begins to let me know that you cannot attend.
  
  - 2) Post a reaction to that day's readings on the course blog. Make-up posts are in addition to your weekly blog posts: they do not count as your post for the week. Post within three days of the class you missed and title it "Make-up post." Failing to submit make-up posts will result in lower or failing grades for participation and blog performance.
  
  - 3) Obtain notes. Find a partner and exchange contact information early in the semester to help with this.
  
- Turn off phones and computers completely (not to vibrate or silent) and leave them in your bag. See me if you require an exception.
- You are responsible for following the university code on academic honesty. If I detect plagiarism, I will report it to the Honor Council, and you will be subject to receiving an "XF" for the course, with the notation on your transcript, "Failure due to academic dishonesty."
- If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please let me know during the first two weeks of class.
- If there are hardships that will affect your course performance, I encourage you to let me know early in the semester. We can discuss strategies for succeeding.
- For further information on course policies, see  
<<http://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>>

#### **What to expect:**

Poetry takes a lot of patience and attention. It's necessary to read poems very slowly, and to read them aloud. Don't forget: **always read each poem, slowly, aloud to yourself before class.**

Writing assignments will include three papers and weekly blogging. Writing is your single most important skill as an English major, and it takes hard work to improve.

We will have quizzes at the end of each section of the course, and a final exam that synthesizes all units. You will be allowed to use your copies of *Frankenstein* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* on the final, including your marginal notes (but not notebooks or loose sheets of paper), so it's a good idea to write or paste notes in the margins over the course of the semester.

Pay close attention to the due dates on the syllabus: most of your writing assignments have deadlines outside of class, in electronic form. Also note that some Friday sessions (to be determined) will be held online.

**Blog requirement:**

Bloggging is a key part of this course: you will do a lot of your writing in this format, and our discussion in class will emerge from what you say online. In particular, you will be required to read and blog about the upcoming week's readings **by Sunday night** each week.

Please bookmark the blog here and sign up for email updates:

<http://english301fall17.wordpress.com>

The first step will be responding to an auto-generated invitation that you will receive via email. Check for messages from a Wordpress email address, accept the invitation and set up a Wordpress account.

Remember to post by Sunday night and to make at least one comment on your peers' posts during the week. To make a post, it is best to use the "Write a new post" link, in the "Get to work" column on the right (using the drop-down menu sometimes leads to confusion). Note that part of your grade is based on how thoughtfully you comment on your peers' posts, so you will need to keep up with the blog and also engage with your classmates' ideas. To help you with this, some Friday class periods will be devoted to real-time commenting and online discussion.

I will provide blog prompts, but you are welcome to come up with your own topic if you prefer. Your posts will be the starting points for your papers; they will respond to and inspire threads of discussion in class; and they will allow you to draw connections between course texts and contemporary culture.

Posts should generally focus on the reading for the coming week. This means that you will need to read ahead. That said, it's okay to pick up on something that came up during class discussion. Try connecting the upcoming reading (which you will have just finished) to what we discussed in class. It's also okay to build on something that interested you about the previous week's discussion, or to focus on something that we did not have time to discuss in class. Just make sure that most of your posts touch on new material.

I encourage you to experiment with pairing texts on the syllabus with texts from other courses, literature of other periods, or digital media. For example, you might link to a clip on YouTube that helps to illuminate something at stake in that week's reading. Make sure to explain how your pairing helps us understand the course text in a new way.

Any topic that relates to the upcoming week's readings is welcome. This is your chance to set the agenda for discussion: if there are poems or issues you'd like to talk about in class, you should bring them up on the blog!

**Welcome**

August 28

- Poetry and song: discussion of Tracy Chapman, "Subcity" (in class)

- Introduction to the four components of the major (in class):
  1. Literary and Cultural Studies
  2. Linguistics, Writing and Rhetoric
  3. Media Studies
  4. Creative Writing

### **Voice, Tone, Character**

August 30

- **Create an account on the course blog**
- **Get to know the anthology: chose five lines or so from any poem in the book to read in class**
- Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress" (293)
- Thomas Hardy, "The Voice" (750)
- Langston Hughes, "Weary Blues" (912) "Theme for English B" (915)
- Sylvia Plath, "Daddy" (1145) "Lady Lazarus" (1149)

September 5

- **Blog post due by midnight**

September 6

- Thomas Wyatt, "Whoso List to Hunt" (103), "They Flee from me" (104)
- John Keats, "When I Have Fears" (568), "This Living Hand" (588)
- Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" (643), "Porphyria's Lover" (642)
- T. S. Eliot "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (862)

September 10

- **Blog post due by midnight**

September 11

- "Western Wind" (76)
- John Donne, "The Sun Rising" (193), Holy Sonnet 14 (208)
- Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (410)
- Percy Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind" (543)
- Gwendolyn Brooks, "We Real Cool" (999)

September 13

- **Library workshop: meet in McKeldin Library, 6101**

### **Figurative Language: Metaphor, Image, Conceit**

September 17

- **Blog post due by midnight**

September 18

- Robert Herrick, "Upon Julia's Breasts" and "Upon Julia's Clothes" (228)
- Williams Carlos Williams, "Portrait of a Lady," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "This is Just to say," "Poem" (829)

- Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" (846)
- Robert Pinsky, "A Long Branch Song" (1187)

September 20

- John Donne, "A Valediction Forbidding Mourning" (198), "The Flea" (202)
- Emily Dickinson, "A Route of Evanescence," "Fame is a bee" (732)
- Craig Raine, "A Martian Sends A Postcard Home" (1207)
- Annotated bibliography and textual report **due in class, in hard copy**

September 24

- **Begin first paper: post an extract on the blog by midnight**

September 25

- Class visitor: Kate Juhl (Career Services)
- Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (585)
- Emily Dickinson, "There's a certain Slant of light" (723), "I like a look of Agony" (723), "I heard a Fly buzz" (727)
- May Swenson, "Cardinal Ideograms" (972)
- John Hollander, "Swan and Shadow" (1104)
- Li-Young Lee, "Persimmons" (1243)
- Audre Lorde "Coal" (1156)

September 27

- Revision workshop. **Bring a hard copy of your draft to class.**

**Reminder** that now is a good time to begin reading Culler's *Literary Theory* and Shelley's *Frankenstein*

## **Rhythm and Meter**

October 1

- **First paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**

October 2

- **Quiz on figurative language**
- Read pp. 1251-1263 in your anthology.
- "Mary Hamilton" (95)
- William Blake, "The Sick Rose" (446), "A Poison Tree" (446)
- Lord Byron, "So We'll Go No More A-Roving" (512)
- Edgar Allen Poe, "Annabel Lee" (618)

October 4

- Alfred Tennyson, "Break, Break, Break" (631), "The Lady of Shalott" (621)
- Edgar Allen Poe, "The Raven" (615)
- Robert Frost, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" (803)
- Wallace Stevens, "Anecdote of the Jar" (820)

October 8

- **Blog post due by midnight**

October 9

- Andrew Marvell, "Bermudas" (292)
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Kubla Khan" (486)
- Thomas Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush" (746)
- W. H. Auden, "As I Walked Out One Evening" (937)
- e. e. cummings, "anyone lived in a little how town" (896)
- Wordsworth, "Lines Composed a few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (458)

### **Narrative and Literary Theory**

October 11

- **Quiz on meter**
- Culler, *Literary Theory*

October 15

- **Blog post due by midnight**

October 16

- Culler, *Literary Theory* (continued)

October 18

- **Quiz on literary theory**
- *Frankenstein*, Volume I

October 22

- **Blog post due by midnight**

October 23

- *Frankenstein*, Volume II

October 25

- Class visitor: Jason Rudy (English Honors)
- *Frankenstein*, Volume III
- Mary Shelley, "Introduction to *Frankenstein*, Third Edition (1831)," in *Frankenstein*, 165-69
- Patrick Brantlinger, "The Reading Monster," in *Frankenstein*, 468-76

October 29

- **Begin second paper: post an extract on the blog by midnight**

October 30

- From *Genesis* and John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, in *Frankenstein*, 289-95
- Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, "Mary Shelley's Monstrous Eve," in *Frankenstein*, 328-44
- Jane Goodall, "Electrical Romanticism," in *Frankenstein*, 490-506

November 1

- Revision workshop. **Bring a hard copy of your draft to class.**

### **Bringing It All Together**

November 5

- **Second paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**

November 6

- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

November 8

- **Pleasure reading assignment:** outside of class

November 12

- **Blog post due by midnight**

November 13

- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (continued)

November 15

- Class visitor: Tom Earles (Writing Center)
- *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (continued)
- Elizabeth Scala, "The Wanting Words of *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*: Narrative Past, Present and Absent"

November 19

- **Post an extract from your third paper on the blog by midnight**

November 20

- Third paper revision workshop: **Bring a hard copy of your draft of 3-4 pages to class**

Thanksgiving Break!

### **Verse Forms**

November 26

- **Third paper due: upload to ELMS by midnight**

November 27

- Read pp. 1263-1275 in your anthology
- William Shakespeare, Sonnet 29 (171), Sonnet 73 (173), Sonnet 138 (177)
- John Milton, "When I Consider How My Light Is Spent" (274), "Methought I Saw" (275)
- Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur" (755)
- Robert Frost, "Design" (805), "The Silken Tent" (806)

November 29

- Class visitor: Lauren Ruszczyk (Education Abroad)

- William Wordsworth, "The World Is Too Much with Us" (484)
- Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias (541)
- John Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (567)
- William Butler Yeats, "Leda and the Swan" (776)
- Gwendolyn Brooks, "the rites for Cousin Vit" (999)
- T.R. Hummer, "The rural carrier stops to kill a nine-foot cottonmouth" (handout, also available on ELMS)

December 3

- **Blog post due by midnight**

December 4

- Class visitor: Johnna Schmidt (Writer's House)
- Dylan Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" (991)
- Elizabeth Bishop, "Sestina" (963), "One Art" (966)
- John Ashbery, "The Painter" (1080)
- Donald Justice, "Pantoum of the Great Depression" (1047)
- Greg Williamson, "New Year's: A Short Pantoum" (1250)

December 6

- Walt Whitman, from *Song of Myself* (679-84), "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry" (684-89), "When I Heard the Learn'd Astronomer" (689)
- Allen Ginsberg, from *Howl* (1061-66)

December 10

- **Blog post due by midnight**

December 11

- Course evaluations: meet in a computer classroom TBD
- Review

Friday, December 15, 1:30-3:30 in our normal classroom

- **Final exam:** bring *Frankenstein* and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*

**Speech to the Young**  
**Speech to the Progress-Toward**  
(Among them Nora and Henry III)

Say to them,  
say to the down-keepers,  
the sun-slappers,  
the self-soilers,  
the harmony-hushers,  
"Even if you are not ready for day  
it cannot always be night."  
You will be right.  
For that is the hard home-run.

Live not for battles won.  
Live not for the-end-of-the-song.  
Live in the along.

---Gwendolyn Brooks, *Family Pictures* (1971)