### General Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Introduction to Poetry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Number</td>
<td>ENGL243</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>ARHU - Arts and Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submitted By</td>
<td>Thomas Colborn Moser Jr</td>
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### CORE Information

| CORE Fundamental Studies         | No |
| CORE Distributive/Advanced Studies (HL) - Literature | |
| CORE Diversity                  | No |

### General Education Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fundamental Studies</th>
<th>None</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distributive Studies</td>
<td>Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>None</td>
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**General Questions**

**Please give a brief description of the course:**

What is Poetry? is an inquiry into the oldest form of literature and an exploration of what is arguably the most complex, profound, and ubiquitous expression of human experience. A primary goal of the class is to develop student’s ability to see that in patterns made from the sound of words, the structures of syntax, the vividness of images, and the startling presence of metaphor, arises a mode of imaginative thinking founded on paradox and ambiguity--what the English poet John Keats calls “Negative Capability.” To be able to think like a poet allows us to perceive and interpret the world in more intricate and satisfying ways. Learning to read poems helps us to think like a poet and to see that such thinking engages every aspect of endeavor: science, politics, work, religion, and art. It also provides us with unique ways of comparing, across epochs and cultures, human responses to war, love, sickness, and death. What is Poetry? focuses on the close reading of individual poems primarily from Anglo–American and Western traditions, although consideration is given to non–Western traditions as well. Students will become thoroughly familiar with the most significant forms and conventions of Western poetry, including the sonnet, villanelle, ballad, ode, blank verse, and free verse; as well as elements of prosody, such as meter, rhyme, diction, alliteration, assonance, and consonance to name a few. Students will also learn about poetry’s roots in oral and folk traditions and their connections to popular song forms such as ballads, blues, spirituals, rock and roll, and jazz.

**Please list any pre- or co-requisites for this course:**

None

**If there are pre- or co-requisites, please justify them with respect to their appropriateness for a General Education course:**

N/A

**Please list any restrictions (e.g. majors only) placed on this course:**

None

**What is the approximate course size (students/academic year)?**

500

**Please describe how student learning will be assessed (i.e. exams, homework, papers, group projects, etc.):**

On average students will be required to read two or more poems for each Monday and Wednesday class. In addition to the poems students will read and discuss in class, students will also memorize two poems during the semester. Students will be asked to reproduce a different one on the mid–term and final exams respectively. There will be four tests during the semester: 1) Friday, September 24 2) Friday, October 22 (Midterm) 3) Friday, November 19; and 4) Friday, December 17, 8–10 a.m. (Final). Test format will be a combination of multiple choice, identification, short answer, and short essay. The first exam and close analysis paper will each count for 15% of the grade. The midterm and final will each count for 30% of the grade. Participation, primarily in the discussion sections, will count for 10%. Early–warning Grades will be posted by 8 a.m. Thursday, October 14. The course follows the grading scale described at http://www.umdedu/catalog/index.cfm/show/content.section/c/27/ss/1548/s/1543.
Comments on the course that you feel may be useful for the review process. Also, if this is an existing course that you are planning on making changes to via VPAC (i.e. changing the title), please list those proposed changes here:

This is a slightly revised version of a long-standing and popular course. A separate VPAC proposal is being submitted to change the name of the course from "Introduction to Poetry" to "What is Poetry?"

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are phrased as "At the completion of this course, students will be able to...". Answers are expected to demonstrate how the course will (1) give students the ability to meet the learning objective and (2) determine that students were successful in meeting the learning objective.

Learning outcomes in this color are REQUIRED

Humanities

Courses in the humanities disciplines study history and the genres of human creativity, and they include courses in the practice of architecture and the visual, literary and performing and creative arts. Under "Humanities," students will find courses in cultures and literatures in any language, creative writing, art, architecture, art history, classics, history, linguistics, philosophy, and the performing arts (dance, music, theatre) and their histories.

Must address at least 4 of the following Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to...

...demonstrate familiarity and facility with fundamental terminology and concepts in a specific topical area in the humanities.

Students are required to learn three dozen or more terms and concepts relating to the elements of prosody. In addition to these terms, they also are required to know several conventional poetic forms, i.e., sonnet (Italian and English), villanelle, rondeau, ballad, free verse, and blank verse, as well as stanza forms, i.e. couplet, tercet, quatrains, etc. Students are assessed approximately every four weeks on their knowledge of terms and forms. The formats used for testing knowledge of terms and forms are primarily identification and multiple choice, but students are also asked to write short answer and short essays that require them to employ appropriate terminology and concepts. Depending on the instructor, in some instances, students are required to memorize a poem for the mid-term and final exams. A different menu of poems is provided for each of these exams, and the student is expected to write out the poem, according to specific instructions, on of the exam pages. Students are encouraged to begin memorizing a poem in advance of the exam. Memorization and recitation of poetry was once an important method for transmitting the art and as such can be considered it a fundamental concept.

...demonstrate understanding of the methods used by scholars in a specific field in the humanities.
The main method used in What is Poetry? is the method of "close reading," or Explication de texte, which requires paying close attention to individual words, phrases, images, patterns of sound, and structures of syntax. A great deal of time is spent in class comparing and contrasting the denotative meaning of words with their connotative meanings, this leads to an exploration of the various beckoning and oftentimes conflicting paths of meaning a reader is asked to follow. Close reading of this kind demands students dwell in Keats’ realm of Negative Capability, which stretches not only their ability to work through difficult problems of meaning but develops new capacities of empathy and feeling. The short answer questions and short essays on the exams require that students employ the method of close reading, but they are actually employing it every time they read a poem.

...demonstrate critical thinking in the evaluation of sources and arguments in scholarly works, or in the evaluation of approaches and techniques in the visual, literary, or performing arts.

...describe how language use is related to ways of thinking, cultural heritage, and cultural values.

The course description argues that reading poetry itself represents a different way of thinking, in which reason and logic take a backseat to imagination, ambiguity, and paradox. W. H. Auden likened poetry to "the clear expression of mixed feelings," and this is a concept—a way of thinking—the students get exposed to and have to grapple with every time they read a poem. Poetic forms and conventions, such as the sonnet or carpe diem, carry with them often long and complicated cultural histories and legacies. Whenever forms and conventions are discussed in class issues of cultural heritage emerge. Short answer questions on the exams, as well as the short essay on the mid-term and final, provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge of how poetic language relates to ways of thinking, cultural heritage, and cultural values.

...conduct research on a topic in the humanities using a variety of sources and technologies.

...demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis related to a specific topic in the humanities and to support the thesis with evidence and argumentation.

Students are required to formulate a thesis for the short essay question that is given on the mid-term and final exams. In addition, students will write a short, close analysis paper outside of class.

...demonstrate understanding of the creative process and techniques used by practitioners in a specific field of the visual, literary, or performing arts.

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**Course Syllabus**

View the course syllabus [here](#).

Note: Your browser may download the syllabus, in which case you will have to open it in a separate program, i.e. Adobe Acrobat of Micro$oft Word, in order to view it.

Another Note: Some people are uploading Word .docx files (newer Word format). If your computer doesn't have a fairly recent version of Word installed (2007 or later), your