

## Understanding Poetry

English 215  
Fall 2006  
Welles 134  
T/R 2-3:15

R. Finkelstein  
Welles 220  
e-mail: finkelst  
X5245  
Office Hours:  
T/R11-12:30 and by  
appointment

Texts: *The Norton Introduction to Poetry* (8<sup>th</sup> edition), ed. Hunter, Booth, Mays  
Hollander, *Rhyme's Reason*  
Gluck, *Meadowlands*

Note: Always bring the assigned materials to class. We will sometimes look very closely at individual poems from a group, and sometimes make general points about a large set of poems. However, I expect you to gain enough understanding of each poem on your own so that you can contribute productively to class discussion or ask informed questions. When it is present, please read the commentary in the Norton text.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Readings</u>
8/29	Description of course; handout; see Hollander, <i>RR</i> , ix-xi, 1.
8/31	<u>Feeling and Discipline:</u> poems, 2-11; read advice, 14-15.
9/5 aloud	poems, 16-24; Browning, "Soliloquy," 66-68:: practice reading these and be prepared to read aloud in class in a way that indicates your comprehension of the speaker's <i>feelings</i> and <i>ideas</i> .
9/7	<u>Speaker:</u> poems, 59-72.
9/12	poems, 73-77; Plath, "Daddy," 413-14 and CD track 21; Plath, "Point Shirley," 94-95.
9/14	<u>Precision in Language:</u> Williams, "Red Wheelbarrow," "This is Just to Say," 135; Roethke, "My Papa's Waltz," 131-21. Jonson, "Still to be Neat," 142; Herrick, "Delight in Disorder," 143.
9/19	Hopkins, "Pied Beauty," 138. <u>Ambiguity in Language:</u> Dickinson, "Possibility," 134-35; "Alabaster Chambers," 452; "Wild Nights," 173; "Loaded Gun," 287.
9/21	<u>Pictorial Language:</u> Jonson, "To Penshurst," 156-58; Lowell, "Skunk Hour," 505-6 and CD track 16.

- 9/26 Metaphor: poems, 159-66. **Paper Due**
- 9/28 poems, 167-72; Dickinson, “Because I could not Stop for Death,” 477 and track 8;  
Symbol: poems, 178-81.
- 10/3 poems, 182-87; Syllables and Lines (scansion): Hollander, *Rhyme’s Reason*, 3-11; poems (in Norton), 197-208.
- 10/5 scansion (cont.).
- 10/10 **FALL BREAK**
- 10/12 Groupings of lines by rhymes, sounds, numbers of lines:  
Hollander, *RR*, 11-19, 50-54.
- 10/17 group reports (tba).
- 10/19 group reports (tba).  
Sonnets: Hollander, *RR*, 19-21; Shakespeare, 159 and CD track 26.
- 10/24 Shakespeare, 458.  
More sonnets—your choice (be prepared!), from 253-64 and Shakespeare (see index).
- 10/26 Other Forms: Hollander, 33-45 (especially odes—choral and Horatian; villanelles, sestina, ballads); handouts. **Paper Due**
- 10/31 other forms (cont.); Thomas, “Do Not Go,” 266 (and CD track 29); Bishop, Sestina,” 267.
- 11/2 **Review for exam on scansion and forms**
- 11/7 **Exam**
- 11/9 Free Verse: Hollander, *RR*, 26-30; Whitman, “Song of Myself,” 83; “Lilacs,” 540-47; Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” 485-89.
- 11/14 Speakers and Selves—Biography as Context (1): Keats, poems, 297-305, handout (“Melancholy”), and CD track 17.
- 11/16 Keats, cont. Also read letters and chronology, 306-11.
- 11/21 Political/Historical Context: Hughes, “Harlem,” 383; McKay, “America,” 382; Hayden, “Frederick Douglass,” 383; Randall, “Birmingham,” 387. Owen, “Dulce et Decorum,” 386; Eberhart, “Bombardment,” 387; Auden, “Musée des Beaux Arts,” 284 and CD track 2.
- 11/23 **THANKSGIVING VACATION**
- 11/28 Speakers and Selves—Biography as Context (2):  
Rich, editor’s introduction, chronology, and the poet’s essays, 312-13, 326-35; poems, 35, 165-66, 184 and CD track 22.
- 11/30 Rich, poems, 314-26. **Paper Due**

12/5            A Volume  
                  Gluck, *Meadowlands*  
12/7            Gluck (cont.).

12/19 @12-3   **Final Exam**

<u>Evaluation:</u>	Hour Exam (Tuesday, 11/7)	15%
	3-page paper (due Tuesday, 9/26)	15%
	3- page paper (due Thursday, 10/26)	15%
	5-page paper (due Thursday, 11/30)	20%
	Final Exam (Tuesday, 12/19 @ 12:00)	20%
	Class Participation	15%

Note: Attendance is important because this is a discussion class and there is a grade for class participation. I am happy to discuss your ideas and planning for papers with you. However, because I have not found evaluating drafts of papers helpful to students, I can't actually read written work before it's due. All written work must be completed to pass the course. Late papers require Instructor's consent.

## Terms For Which You Are Responsible

Related to meter:

iamb  
trochee  
anapest  
dactyl  
spondee  
tetrameter  
pentameter  
blank verse  
free verse

Related to form:

couplet  
quatrains  
Elizabethan sonnet  
Italian sonnet  
rhyme royal  
terca rima  
tercets  
ballad stanza

sonnet  
choral ode  
Horatian ode  
villanelle  
sestina  
ballad