Instructor: Steve Marsden  
Department: English and Creative Writing  
Class Hours: TR 12:30-1:45  
Classroom: ZOOM meeting only  
Phone: No physical office this semester  
Office: See above  
Email: marsdensj@sfasu.edu  
Office Hours: Tuesday 6:00-7:30pm, R: 3-3:30pm F: 10am-1pm. and by appt. Email for a link.  
Webpage: d2l.sfasu.edu – you are required to check daily

Course Description
Advanced study and research in American literature, which may focus on particular periods, genres, and/or authors. Prerequisite: twelve semester hours of English. This course is a study of American poetry in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

Course Outcomes
By the end of the semester, you should be able to:

- Read poetry closely and deftly, producing intelligent interpretations of difficult work.
- Demonstrate a command of poetic terminology necessary for talking about poetry, identifying metrical and rhetorical figures.
- Be able to place American poetry into a continuum of authors, movements, and ideas.
- Demonstrate familiarity with some of the major and minor poets of the American tradition.

Program Outcomes
This course should help serve the following official outcomes for the English major and minor:

- The student will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations.
- The student will demonstrate knowledge of literary history in regard to particular periods of World, British and American literature.
- The student will demonstrate ability to effectively conduct literary research.
- The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis.

Credit Hour Justification:
American Topics: 19th and 20th Century Poetry (3 credits) meets twice a week schedule for 75-minute sessions. The class will also take a 2.5-hour online final examination or write an equivalent take home exam. Students are expected to complete a significant amount of weekly reading of primary and/or secondary source material. The weekly reading will be accompanied by such assignments as reading quizzes, in-class and out-of-class writings, and class presentations. The amount of writing will average between 16-24 pages over the semester and will, at times, require substantial research. The required outside of class workload will average 6 hours per week.

Required Textbooks


Some works and background information may also be assigned through online copies or links. You’re responsible for reading and keeping up with these.

Course Policies

Reading, Participation, and Note Taking
This course is reading intensive, and some of the works we will be studying will be quite difficult. Budget your time and read ahead when necessary. Take notes as you read and write out questions about your reading for use in class. Mark up your books. Reread when necessary. Talk about your reading outside of class. Ask questions in class. If you find anything particularly impenetrable and need help, feel free to drop by my online office hours to chat about it. My job is to help you understand this stuff.

This course is taught largely as a dialogue-I ask and answer questions. The students who get the most out of the class are those who participate well in class discussion. If you can answer, do.

Contact by Email
Correspondence relating to this course must use your SFA email account. The subject line must be ENG 421. I am not certain to respond to emails with any other subject line, especially if they resemble spam. I never accept assignments by email unless I have asked for them that way. However, if there’s a problem with d2l dropboxes, sending the completed assignment via SFA email will prove proof of assignment completion.

Plagiarism
I take plagiarism very seriously. According to SFASU Policies and Procedures:
Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one's own work when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating the words or ideas of an author into one's paper without giving the author due credit.

Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

If I find papers with plagiarized passages, I will schedule a Zoom meeting with who produced them. Consequences may include an un-revisable score of 0 on the assignment and / or an F for the course. In addition, an Academic Dishonesty Form will be filed. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or fear you may not have properly cited something, please talk to me immediately.

Recycled Papers
All assignments turned in for this course must be written specifically for this course to receive credit. Please do not turn in papers that were written in whole or in part for other courses or purposes: such papers, if yours, will be counted as late until an original paper can be turned in.

Attendance and Absences

Regular attendance to Zoom meetings is required for success in this course. Lectures and discussions will highlight what sorts of things will be on the tests, there will be occasional activities for credit, and assignments will be explained. Questions / quizzes in the Zoom sessions may be worth daily work points, and can only be made up with XC.

Regardless of the reason for your absence, you are responsible for all information and work covered in class. Most (but not necessarily all, as accidents happen) course meetings will be recorded on Zoom and available later.

According to university policy, after six absences (the equivalent of three weeks of missed class) for any reason whatsoever, you may automatically fail the class. Please keep an eye on your absences, and document all absences with reasons. It’s an extraordinary time, and things happen. Be able to talk to me about them with evidence to avoid deductions.

Exam Deadlines
Exams for this course will be taken online and offered for a 24 hour window (due at 11:59pm on the due date), and must be completed within 1 hour and 15 minutes from start—2 hours for the final exam. An automatic grace period for starting (until 11:59am the next morning) will be built into the exam. After that, exams will only be re-opened for authorizable excuses. Please email me your reasons immediately (the day you have access again), and we’ll re-open or reschedule as needed.
Late Homework and Major Papers
Homework is due in dropbox via D2L by the beginning of the Zoom meeting on the due date. An automatic grace period will be extended til 11:59pm of that day. After that, homework credit will be halved if it’s turned in without a valid excuse (please type excuses in the submission box). Homework more than a week late that you haven’t emailed about will receive a grade of 0.

Major papers are due in dropbox on D2L by 11:59pm on the day they are due. They have a built in grace period of one day (til 11:59pm) the next day. Papers turned in during the grace period will be graded last, and may receive less detailed feedback. After the grace period, any paper turned in without a viable and documented excuse will accrue 10 percentage point penalty per day it’s been late (after the grace period, it’ll start with 20 points down). Another full letter grade will be deducted for each weekday that passes. The easiest way to receive a very poor grade in this course is to turn things in late without arrangement.

No assignments will be accepted by email, but if D2L is down / you are having net problems, an emailed completed assignment will “stop the clock” until you can turn it in properly.

Acceptable File Formats
Microsoft Word files (.docx) are the only acceptable file type for this course. Most word processors will save as .docx, and the Microsoft 365 apps should be available to you on MySFA. You are responsible for making sure that your file is correct and will open (check it in the dropbox). Papers turned in with broken files or invalid file type will be considered late until the correct type is submitted.

Extra Credit
Several times during the semester, I will announce extra credit assignments. Please do not ask me for individual extra credit. Any extra credit assignments I given will be applied to the homework / quiz total, and will be offered to everyone. With extra credit, the daily work score will top at 100%.

Accommodations for Disabilities
To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS), Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

WH Grades
I do not grant withheld grades lightly. According to university policy, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the
WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

Assignments and Grade Determination

Grade Breakdown
Quizzes, written responses, daily work, annotations 15%
Explication: 20%
Video Lesson: 10%
Midterm exam: 15%

Term paper proposal 5%
Term paper annotated bib 5%
Term paper 15%
Final exam: 15%

Percentage Grade
90-100 A
80-89 B
70-79 C
60-69 D
0-59 F

Tests
There will be a midterm and a final in this course, which will be administered through the D2L quizzes tool. They will contain multiple choice, short answer and matching questions, as well as short comparative essays on your choice of topics you’ve been given at least a week in advance. The final exam will also contain a take-home essay, which you can write ahead of time and attach.

Short Responses
Often (as much as once a week), I'll have you write some relatively informal response to the readings for a day, or do some focused activity. These should be about a page in length, should be typed, and will have other requirements as posted. The intention is to get you thinking and recording what you think about the works, and to prepare you for class, as well as get the kinks out of your writing and formatting before more important papers occur. Sometimes you’ll be given a choice of topics: just do one.

5 = Excellent, flawless: Very insightful, and otherwise dazzlingly good. I think "wow! I wonder if I can get a copy to teach with next semester!" This is a rare score.
4.5 = Very good: Accomplishes everything needed with style and economy, reflects a strong understanding of the subject matter, and has no very significant errors. I think "good!"
4 = Good: Does the work expected and contains only errors that might be expected of the average careful student at this point in the semester. I think "okay."
3.5 = Needs some work: Ideas may be incomplete or unfocused, organization may be sloppy.
May be “off” in tone or style. I think "well, okay, I guess."

3 = Needs a lot of work: May be unclear in spots, or have numerous, embarrassing, or unprofessional errors. I think "well, maybe next time."

2 = Unacceptable: Fails to accomplish some aspect of the assignment or has a variety of unprofessional errors. I think "maybe he or she had a high fever or something."

1 = Token effort: Wrong assignment or shows very little work. Accomplishes little of what the assignment asks. Reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the assignment or a deficit of effort or skill. I think "why did I ever get into this line of work?" A paper with a name on it and a sentence, turned in on time.

0 = Didn't turn paper in: I think "hmm, I wonder if he or she has dropped the course?"

**Reading Quizzes**

If there are a few class periods in a row where participation is sub-par (I suspect people haven’t done the reading), I will create brief self-grading quizzes in D2L, due before the time of the class period. These will be worth 1-5 points, and go to the daily work score.

**Explication**

The root of all literary study is the text. This assignment will be a flashback to New Critical methods and assumptions. Students will sign up for a poem in a brief daily work proposal, then will write a clear, painstakingly complete explication, accounting for the poem’s diction, formal characteristics, devices, and effects, and explaining how those work together to create the poem’s effect. Any poem from our four volumes that is not apt to be fully explicated in class (I’ll let you know on your proposal) is fair game for this. No outside sources aside from reference works (like the OED or works to understand allusions) will be required or allowed. It’ll be you and the poem, so pick one you can come to understand, but also one that shows off the range of your skills and understanding.

**Poetry Lesson / Screencast / Video Lesson**

Poetry has a PR problem, particularly older, more obscure, or more formal poetry. Pick a poem you understand well (but not your explication poem), and, using appropriate technology and software, create a lesson with video or screencast wherein you use that poem to teach a lesson to a well-defined audience (you’ll write a brief daily work proposal for this). You can work singly or in groups of up to three for this. The result must be posted to Youtube or another free-to-view video service. You can include anything cool and relevant you find out about the poem or the author, but must make a Sources slide in MLA WC format at the end, and mention the sources out loud as you pass them. You’ll turn in the link to the video, and then each person will submit a completion report about who did what, how the process worked, and what you learned.

**Annotated Bibliography for Term Paper**

After you’ve gotten the go-ahead on your paper topic, you will find six great possible sources for your term paper. One should be a biography or historical work, at least two should be written in the last 15 years, and all should be scholarly and relevant. You’ll write an annotated bibliography, using MLA style and good, complete annotations. A detailed prompt, example entry, and grading rubric will be coming soon.
Term Paper

The term paper is a 7-10 page paper. You may go over length if you feel it absolutely necessary, but seven full pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman 12, 1 inch margins, not including the required Works Cited page) are absolutely required. In this rather brief paper, you will engage one small, manageable aspect of a work or two we’re covering in the class, coming up with a thesis and proving it through careful reference to the specifics of the text(s). You must use at least four good, relevant, scholarly (no web-only) outside sources to bolster your argument or to argue against. You will be graded on your analysis, your writing skills, your ability to incorporate quotation and outside evidence, and your conformity to standards of grammar, punctuation, and format.

Important Dates

Explication—Thursday September 24
Midterm exam, Opens on Saturday, October 10, due October 13 before class
Video Lesson / Screencast—Thursday October 29
Proposal due—Friday, November 10
Annotated bib due—Thursday, November 19
RD of term paper due—Wednesday, December 1
Final draft of term paper due—Thursday, December 3
Final Exam—Open from 7-10 December. Due by 11:59pm, December 10.

Reading Schedule

An extremely tentative reading schedule for the first weeks follows below. Given the new Zoom format, having textbooks that allow some zig-zagging, the presence of a global pandemic, and the variability of class enthusiasm and interest, I’ve decided to make the readings entirely flexible this time. Once I have a better sense of how we’re doing, I’ll make longer-term planning for readings. Until then, every Thursday I’ll have the week’s next readings and the directions for any work due the next Tuesday or (usually) Thursday.

The daily posts on D2L will be the authoritative source for reading and homework assignments.

Week 1
Course intro, syllabus, a poem by Bryant

Due: DW intro letter, intro post.
Romantic Poetry: Bryant and others

Week 2
Continue readings in the LOA volumes

DW Response (check MLA, writing, precision)

Week 3
Continue readings in the LOA volumes.

DW poem annotation (via Google Docs)

Week 4
Continue readings in the LOA volumes.
DW pitch for explication

Week 5
Continue readings in the LOA volumes.

Explication due, September 24

Week 6
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Week 7
Continue readings in the LOA volumes
DW Obscure Poet Pitch

Week 8
Continue readings in the LOA volumes.

Midterm due by Tuesday, Oct. 13, by class time

Week 9
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

DW pitch for Lesson

Week 10
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Video lesson due, October 29

Week 11
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Proposal for major paper, November 10

Week 12
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Week 13
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Annotated bib due, Thursday, November 19

Week 14 Eat Turkey and So On

Week 15
Finish up, review, work on projects
Project RD: posted by beginning of class, Tuesday, December 1
Project FD: Thursday December 3—also due date for OED XC
Final exam open from Monday, December 7 until Wednesday, December 9