English 4321
American Poetry and AI

Instructor: Steve Marsden
Department: English and Creative Writing
Class Hours: MW 1:00-2:15

Classroom: FERG 292
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Email: mardsensj@mfasu.edu  ENG 4321 in subject line.
Office Hours: MW 2:30-3:30, TR, 12:30-1:30pm, 3:30-4:00pm and by appointment
Webpage: d2l.mfasu.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 with the assistance and examination of AI pedagogy.

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.
- Demonstrate good use of AI resources for poetry tutorial and discussion purposes.

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.

Highly Recommended Textbooks
Lists of poetry will be available on D2L—most can be Googled or found in the 20th C American Poetry database through the Steen library. If you prefer paper copies, this is an excellent set of truly diverse anthologies:


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

Highly Recommended Resources:
Have access to a Chat GPT Plus account (Chat GPT 4). It’ll be possible to complete the assignments using other AI resources, or without AI resources, but that will be nowhere near as useful / enlightening. Disclaimers about privacy and ethical use of AI will be distributed via D2L.

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—with classmates, others, or with smart AI. 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. Student presentations will also be mostly in this model: guided dialogue rather than scripted speech. 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 4321. 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.

Academic Integrity

The Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outlines the prohibited conduct by any student enrolled in a course at SFA. It is the responsibility of all members of all faculty, staff, and students to adhere to and uphold this policy.

Articles IV, VI, and VII of the new Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity outline the violations and procedures concerning academic conduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and misrepresentation. Cheating includes, but is not limited to: (1) Copying from the test paper (or other assignment) of another student, (2) Possession and/or use during a test of materials that are not authorized by the person giving the test, (3) Using, obtaining, or attempting to obtain by any means the whole or any part of a non-administered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or using a test that has been administered in prior classes or semesters without permission of the Faculty member, (4) Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one’s self, to take a test, (5) Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other records or academic work offered for credit, (6) Using any sort of unauthorized resources or technology in completion of educational activities.

Plagiarism is the appropriation of material that is attributable in whole or in part to another source or the use of one’s own previous work in another context without citing that it was used previously, without any indication of the original source, including words, ideas, illustrations, structure, computer code, and other expression or media, and presenting that material as one’s own academic work being offered for credit or in conjunction with a program course or degree requirements.

Collusion is the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any provision of the rules on academic dishonesty, including disclosing and/or distributing the contents of an exam.

Misrepresentation is providing false grades or résumés; providing false or misleading information in an effort to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit for oneself or another individual or to injure another student academically or financially.

If a student’s paper contains evidence of academic dishonesty, the student will meet with me, and I will determine the outcome, which typically involve penalties from a partially-revisable zero on the paper to an F for the course. In addition, an Academic Dishonesty Form will be filed. See the link above for how that process now works under the UT system. If you have questions about what constitutes plagiarism, or fear you may not have properly cited something, please talk to me immediately.
If I find papers with plagiarized passages, I will schedule a 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.

**AI Use**

This course is specifically tailored for dialogue with AI tutorial agents. It’s my contention that using AI as a collaborator rather than a tool for direct composition produces better outcomes. Assignments will have their own rules for AI use. When you use AI in an assignment, I’ll require a brief statement outlining very specifically how you used it. Using it contrary to the assignment rules without required disclosure or explanation may lead to a required rewrite, or, in cases of falsehood, the outcomes outlined in Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty above.

**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 in person, or if arranged, via concurrent 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 course. 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.

**Institution Absences (HOP 04-110)**

An Institutional Absence may be granted to a student who participates as a representative of the University in academic (including research), extra- or cocurricular, or athletic activities. Students will be excused for institutional purposes from otherwise required academic activity only when a valid Institutional Absence is approved by the appropriate administrative unit or official and the documentation of approval is provided to the faculty member at least five (5) days in advance.

Institutional absences will not be approved for keystone events, defined as: a special or unique assignment, test, project, experience, or other academic exercise identified by the Faculty member as critical for successful completion of standards of the class and unable to be missed. These events must be identified on the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and communicated to the students. Events added to the syllabus at a later date will not qualify for Keystone Event status. Keystone Events where the
date/time is changed will no longer be considered a Keystone Event. Students should make themselves aware of any Keystone Events identified in the syllabus to ensure there are no conflicts.

For keystone events where the assignment dates vary, it is incumbent upon the students to work with their faculty member to not select a conflicting date.

More information on Institutional Absences, including how to apply, can be found at https://www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents/student-resources/institutional-absences.

**Exam Deadlines**
The midterm exam 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 2 hours of the 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 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 late. 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) or selectable .pdf (not photos or scans without OCR) are the only acceptable file types 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.

**Student Wellness and Well-Being**
SFA values students’ overall well-being, mental health and the role it plays in academic and overall student success. Students may experience stressors that can impact both their academic experience and their personal well-being. These may include academic pressure and challenges associated with relationships, emotional well-being, alcohol and other drugs, identities, finances, etc.

If you are experiencing concerns, seeking help, SFA provides a variety of resources to support students’ mental health and wellness. Many of these resources are free, and all of them are confidential.

**On-campus Resources:**
The **Dean of Students Office** (Rusk Building, 3rd floor lobby)

www.sfasu.edu/deanofstudents
936.468.7249
dos@sfasu.edu

**SFA Human Services Counseling Clinic** Human Services, Room 202

www.sfasu.edu/humanservices/139.asp
936.468.1041

**The Health and Wellness Hub** “The Hub”
Location: corner of E. College and Raguet St.

To support the health and well-being of every Lumberjack, the Health and Wellness Hub offers comprehensive services that treat the whole person – mind, body and spirit. Services include:

- Health Services
- Counseling Services
- Student Outreach and Support
- Food Pantry
Wellness Coaching
Alcohol and Other Drug Education

www.sfasu.edu/thehub
936.468.4008
thehub@sfasu.edu

Crisis Resources:
Burke 24-hour crisis line: 1.800.392.8343
National Suicide Crisis Prevention: 9-8-8
Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1.800.273.TALK (8255)
Crisis Text Line: Text HELLO to 741-741

Assignments and Grade Determination

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

Term paper proposal 5%
Term paper annotated bib 5%
Term paper 20%
Final exam (take home essay): 10%

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

Tests
There will be a midterm exam which will be administered through the D2L quizzes tool. It 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.

Short Responses
Often (as much as once a week), I'll have you write some relatively informal response to the readings for a day, do some focused activity, or turn in summaries, logs, or reflections (logs can always be redacted) from your AI interactions. 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?"

**Conversation Preps / Research Common**

Every week, you’ll be responsible for having talked through or thought through at least one work relatively completely (with your AI tutor, or equivalent online and database research) so that you can aid walking through the poem. If we are using a research common (usually a Google Doc), you’re responsible for helping to annotate it or correct it. Those contributions will be counted as daily work scores.

**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. If you discuss the poem (recommended) with AI, you’ll be turning in a (redacted if necessary) transcript of your discussion over the poem: it should be you working the poem out in dialogue, not asking AI to write an explication or just explain everything. Pick a poem you can come to understand, but also one that shows off the range of your skills and understanding.

**Poetry 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, and can use AI (with guidelines). 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.

OR

AI Assisted Pedagogy Assignment
In this assignment, you'll write a series of prompts for Chat GPT 4 that can be used raw (dropped into a prompt) or used with an existing tutorial setup (dropped into a pre-existing conversation) that will teach a lesson in detail, allowing the user to discuss a topic, be guided by an AI personality, then be tested over the general concepts or otherwise fairly evaluated. This may be up to five separate written prompts, plus an accompanying explanation, and will be tested / graded by interaction or use.

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. If you’ve discussed the poem or the sources with AI (recommended), please include a summary of your use as a separate document. You may use AI as a sounding board, and as a recommendation tool for edits, but the language itself should be your own.

Final Exam Essay
The final exam essay is a take-home personal essay about your experiences with the poems and the pedagogy (and technology) of the course. I recommend you gather information throughout the semester in the form of highlighted dialogues with AI (or records of your method if you choose an AI-less path). This is a sort of essay that might be publishable in several kinds of venues, so aim at either a personal or a public audience, and write accordingly.

Important Dates

Explication –Feb 21
Midterm exam, Opens on March 18, submit by 11:59pm. March 20
Video Lesson / Screencast or AI Assisted Pedagogy Assignment—April 3
Proposal due—April 10
Annnotated bib due—April 22
RD of term paper due—April 29
Final draft of term paper due—May 1
Final Exam—Due by May 8, 3pm.

Reading Schedule
An extremely tentative reading schedule for the first weeks follows below. Given the new pedagogical innovation, 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 Wednesday I’ll have the week’s next readings and the directions for any work due the next Monday or (usually) Wednesday.

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

Week 2
Course intro, syllabus, a poem by Bryant

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

Week 3
Continue readings in the *LOA* volumes

Week 4
Continue readings in the *LOA* volumes.

Week 5
Continue readings in the *LOA* volumes.

**DW post: pitch and prelims for explication Feb 14**

Week 6
Continue readings in the *LOA* volumes.

Explication due, Feb. 21

Week 7
Continue readings in the *LOA* volumes and supplements

Week 8
Continue readings in the *LOA* volumes

Week 9
Spring Break

Week 10
Continue readings in the *LOA* volumes.

**Midterm due by March 20**
Week 11
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Post final pitch for Lesson

Week 12
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Video lesson or AI pedagogy lesson due, April 3

Week 13
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Proposal for major paper, April 10

Week 14
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements

Week 15
Continue readings in the LOA volumes and supplements
Annotated bib due, April 22

Week 16
Finish up, review, work on projects
Project RD: Posted April 29
Project FD: May 1 -- all DW XC due

Final exam essay due Wednesday, May 8, 3pm.