

English 210—Introduction to English Renaissance Poetry: Turning Sonnets, Songs, and Psalms in Shakespeare's Day



“I am sure I shall turn [a] sonnet. Devise, wit; write, pen” – Shakespeare's Armado in *Love's Labor's Lost*

Instructor: Carol Robertson

Class location/time: MGH 058, MTWTh, 8:30 - 9:20 a.m.

Office: Padelford, B5F; however, **office hours will be in Odegaard 326**

Office hours: Wednesday: 12-2 p.m. and by appointment

Class website: <https://canvas.uw.edu/courses>

Email: carolr3@u.washington.edu

What was it like to be a writer or a reader of poetry in Shakespeare's Day? The boundaries between reading and writing poems may be more fluid than you have imagined. And, what does it mean when we say many great English poets used “iambic pentameter”? As we explore the forms and development of English lyric poetry—engaging with selections from Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, Marlow, Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, Donne, and Milton—you will sharpen your critical-analysis (close reading) skills and discover why so many readers relish a good poem. For those who love to test their creative skills, some assignments will provide a creative-writing option in which you will try your own hand at turning (writing) sonnets or psalms in sixteenth-century style. Throughout this journey, we'll explore what it meant to be both a poet and a reader of poetry in a culture where active readers were anxious to make use of the texts they read. Be prepared to contribute to a highly interactive classroom environment. Course assignments will include weekly Canvas short-analysis posts, a group presentation, short assignments, a major paper, and a final project and presentation.

Student Assessment:

Final Poetry Portfolio (70%):

- Major Paper: Rhetorical Analysis (revised) – 20%
- Final project presentation and written description/analysis – 25%
- Five of eight revised paragraph rhetorical analysis posts – 20%
- Framing Essay—5%

Sonnet reading (5%)

Memorized, interpretive reading of a sonnet:

Two attempts possible (office hours or in-class option)

Class participation (25%):

- Thursday groups: OED and close reading groups
- Required Canvas posts (eight posts)
- In-class participation
- Quizettes (pop free-writes)

Thursday groups:

Each student will sign up to present twice during the quarter with a group of 3-4 other students—once with an OED group and once with a close reading group.

- **Close Reading Group:** Introduce an *unassigned* poem by an author whose work the class will engage with in the following week and present a close-reading rhetorical analysis. Consider the poetic devices used, meter, and structure as well as the language used. How do you interpret the poem based on the language used? Optional: suggest a modern poem or song with lyrics that revisits the same topoi.
- **OED Word Group:** Teach class the *hard* words for class readings the following week using the OED definitions and marginal notes for all assigned poems. Use words in different contexts where possible; construct vocab quizzes (online, perhaps).

Saturday Canvas posts (eight posts):

Write a brief paragraph (200-300 words) and post on Canvas discussion board with a specific argument concerning how one of the assigned poems uses language to communicate meaning. You may include how the poem's topos (topic), language and tone is similar or different than another poem, reflecting on what rhetorical elements made the difference. You may include how the poem's meaning may connect to a song or poem lyrics in our modern time. How is the poem's message and language similar? different? Post on Canvas *by* 7 p.m., Saturday, and respond to two other posts by 9 p.m. (of course you may post and respond to other posts when the discussion board earlier—the board will open on Thursday). **Choose five of the required eight posts (revised if need be) for your final poetry portfolio.**

Note: Respect your reading and hearing public; do not include offensive language when pulling from contemporary lyrics for purposes of comparison. Use ellipses to skip over the words or if not possible, choose another poem.

Sonnet Reading: One interpretive, memorized reading of a sonnet. Two attempts: Make office hour appointment to present. **Must present by Wednesday of week nine (5/23).**

Mid-Quarter Paper (3-4 pages): Rhetorical Analysis of *Romeo and Juliet*. Post first draft (not graded) on Canvas by Saturday, 5/5. Final draft is due Saturday, 5/12. Must engage in the scholarly conversation concerning *Romeo and Juliet* with your own *well supported* analysis (cite two scholarly sources at minimum); you may choose to critique an argument in a scholarly source, constructing your own argument concerning the text.

Required: one tutor visit—Odegaard Writing Center or IC (if access)—and peer response. Post these under **Mid-Quarter Paper Writing Reflections**. Use this space to keep records. Final posting is due on Friday 5/18.

Final Project—Written part due week nine--Saturday, 5/26, by 12 p.m. Class presentations will be Tuesday and Wednesday (5/29, 5/30). Here are the options:

1. **Commonplace book** (3-5 pages). Use at least three topic tabs [topoi (singular: topos) or commonplaces] and employ multiple sources. Begin with one quotation from a sixteenth-century sonnet. Cross reference with quotations from other sonnets and sixteenth-century texts that share the topos of your reflection. You may also choose to add quotations from contemporary lyrics of the same topos). Add to each topos your own brief reflection. You may choose your own topoi, but here are some suggestions:
 - Love Unrequited
 - Love as Artifice
 - Love—To Trust or Not to Trust
 - Love and Rashness
 - Love and Idealization or Love and Idolatry (worshipping the loved one).
2. **Preface or commentaries to *Romeo and Juliet* or a collection of poems** (3-5 pages). **Preface:** Model after Brook and Garter's sixteenth-century prefaces to *Romeo and Juliet* which imagine the lesson to be found in the text. Engage with specific references in the text to uphold your argument. **Commentaries:** Model after EK's commentaries to Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*.
3. **Original parody** (a parody is an imitation which uses exaggeration for comic effect) **or imitation of a sonnet or psalm.** This may include an investigation of the poem's later reception by examining other parodies and imitations and their significance. (3-5 pages including the sonnet on its own page).
4. **In-class dramatic reading with interpretive summary** interposed or following the readings which explains your choices. One-person or up to four-person reading or play (live acting or with puppets) of a sonnet; interpretive work may be presented in the form of narration or may follow the presentation. Project includes written individual submission of project intent and interpretive framework (2 pages).

Final Poetry Portfolio—Include the following in the final portfolio:

- Two to three-page essay introducing your portfolio which briefly describes the writing pieces you attach and defends your development as a close-reader of poetry. Upload the following as separate attachments:
 - Five of eight rhetorical analysis posts (revised if needed).
 - Mid-quarter rhetorical analysis of *Romeo and Juliet* (revised if needed).
 - Final Project

Required Texts:

- *Norton Anthology of English Literature--Volume B: The Sixteenth Century/Early Seventeenth Century*, ninth edition): ISBN: 978-0-393-91250-0
- Norton Critical Editions *Romeo and Juliet*, William Shakespeare, Gordon McMullan (2016): ISBN: 978-0-393-92626-2

Attendance and Engagement

1. **Arrive promptly!** Our class time is limited, and we must hit the ground running; therefore, even a few minutes late will be considered late. Lack of attendance or tardiness will adversely affect your participation grade!
2. **Be an active participant!** Do the readings, so you are prepared to contribute to discussion.
3. **No cell phones should be visible in class.**
4. **Laptop is limited to specifically approved group activities.** Individual concerns are considered. Please see me if you feel taking notes on your laptop during lecture is a factor to your success in class.
5. **Group discussion is limited to the assigned topic!**

Late Work:

Please email me regarding any special circumstances which require an extension on an assignment due date. **Written feedback on assignments that are turned in late, especially if the assignment is more than one day late;** yet, these assignments must be included in your portfolio to receive a passing grade. If you submit a late Canvas discussion board post, you miss the value of class engagement (participation in peer response). *Consistently turning in late work will affect your participation grade and make successful completion of the portfolio less possible.*

Academic Integrity:

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing--as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

Accommodations:

If you need accommodation of any sort, please let me know so that I can work with the UW Disability Resources for Students Office (DRS) to provide what you require. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials. More information about accommodation may be found at <http://www.washington.edu/students/drs/>.

UW Safe Campus:

Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone.

- Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
- Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources.
- TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
- Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk: 206-685-WALK (9255).
- Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging. Sign up online at www.washington.edu/alert.
- For more information visit the Safe Campus website: www.washington.edu/safecampus

Assigned Readings

(Readings not otherwise specified are in *The Norton Anthology to English Literature, Volume B—The Sixteenth Century / The Early Seventeenth Century*):

Week Two:

- **Influences: *The Courtier***—Book IV. “The Ladder of Love” (pp. 706-720). Sir Thomas Hoby’s translation of Castiglione.
- ***Tottel’s Miscellany*:**
 - Wyatt, Thomas:
 - “The Long Love, That in My Thought Doth Harbor”; read with Petrarch rima 140. (pp. 648, 649).
 - “Whoso List to Hunt”; read with Petrarch rima 190 (pp. 649, 650).
 - “They Flee from Me” (pp. 653, 654).
 - Henry, Howard, Earl of Surrey:
 - “The Soote Season”; read with Petrarch, rima 310 (pp. 662, 663)
 - “Love that doth reign and live within my thought”; read with Petrarch rima 164. (pp. 663, 664).

Week Three:

Sidney, Sir Philip:

- *The Defense of Poetry*. [Excerpt: pp. 1044-1062 (stop before “The Poetic Kinds”); read conclusion 1082, 1083.]
- *Astrophil and Stella*, sonnets 1 (pp. 1084, 1085), 5 (pp. 1085, 1086), 47 (pp. 1092, 1093)

Week Four:

The Pastoral:

- Marlowe, Christopher: “The Passionate Shepherd to His Love” (p. 1126).
- Raleigh, Sir Walter: “The Nymph’s Reply to the Shepherd” (pp. 1024, 1025).

Psalmody:

- Thomas Wyatt: Ps. 51 (see attachment: *Shagan and Shuger*).
- Sidney Herbert, Mary: Ps. 84 (see attachment: *Shagan and Shuger*) and 139 (*Norton* p. 1104).

Week Five:

Shakespeare, William.

- *Norton Romeo and Juliet*, pp. 3-46 (to scene 2.4).
- *Norton Romeo and Juliet*, pp. 46-65 (to scene 3.4).

Week Six:**Shakespeare, William.**

- *Norton Romeo and Juliet*, pp. 65-98.
- Shakespearean sonnets 1, 15, 18, 116 (*Norton* pp. 1171, 1172, 1182).

First draft of Mid-Quarter Paper due for tutor/peer review by Saturday, 5/5.

Week Seven:**Shakespeare, William.**

- Shakespearean sonnets: 121 (find online), 129, 130, 146 (*Norton* pp. 1183, 1184, 1185).

Final draft of Mid-Quarter Paper due by Saturday, 5/12.

Week Eight:**Spenser, Edmund**

- *The Shepheardes Calendar*. "To His Booke" and "October" (*Norton* pp. 769-774)
- Sonnets 65 (p. 987), 68 (p. 988), and 75 (p. 989) of the *Amoretti*.

Sign up to indicate your final project.

Final post for Mid-Quarter Paper Writer's Reflections due Friday, 5/18.

Week Nine:**Herbert, George**

- "Denial" (p. 1713), "The Flower" (p. 1721), "Love III" (p. 1725); student selection.

Donne, John

- "The Flea" (p. 1373), "The Indifferent" (p. 1377); Holy Sonnets 14 (p. 1413) and 19 (p. 1415).

Milton, John

- Sonnet: "When I Consider How My Light Is Spent" (p. 1942).

Week Ten:

Student Final Project presentations

Week Eleven:

Final Poetry Portfolio due online Saturday, June 2.