



Community Education Spring 2025

Appreciating Poetry

Instructor: James F. Gray

E-Mail: jamesfgray999@gmail.com

Course Description:

If you haven't read poetry since high school, you're in for a surprise-- there's a lot more to it than "Oh Captain, My Captain." Learn how to understand and appreciate a wide range of poetry. Read and discuss poems in a relaxed, nonjudgmental atmosphere. Find out what the kinds of poems you like say about you.

Course Schedule

4/10/2025 to 5/1/2025

Thursdays, 4:00pm – 6:00pm

Zoom Class

Learning Outcomes:

Discuss how the details of a poem work together to create its plot.

Learn how to interpret a poem.

Learn the various ways list poems can work.

Learn about poets who are similar to ones you already like.

Class Schedule:

Week 1: Humor in Poetry: "The Deacon's Masterpiece" or "The Wonderful One-Hoss Shay" by Oliver Wendell Holmes; "Fire and Ice" by Robert Frost; Song "Go and Catch a Falling Star" by John Donne

Week 2: Comparing a 19th Century Translation and a 20th Century Poem: "The Ballad of Dead Ladies" by François Villon (1461) and translated by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1870); and "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird" by Wallace Stevens (1917)

Week 3: Soundplay: The Applicant by Sylvia Plath; The Splendour Falls On Castle Walls, a Song from The Princess by Alfred, Lord Tennyson; Spring and Fall to a Young Child by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Week 4: The Influence of T.S. Eliot's, "The Waste Land" on Modern Poetry: "Mortmain" by Robert Penn Warren; "Bagpipe Music" by Louis MacNeice; "To the Brooklyn Bridge" by Hart Crane

Selected Bibliography/Resources:

Poet's Choice edited by Paul Engle

The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry, the modern volume, edited by Richard Ellman, et al.

How Does a Poem Mean? by John Ciardi

An Approach to Literature by Robert Penn Warren, et al.

One Hundred American Poems of the Twentieth Century by Laurence Perrine and James M. Reid

The Poem Itself edited by Stanley Burnshaw

Reading Modern Poetry by Paul Engle and Warren Carrier

Poetspeak by Paul B. Janeczko

Class Evaluation: Class evaluations are sent by email. Sometimes the email will be delivered to your “junk mail,” but we can assure you it’s from Clark College only. Your responses are completely anonymous. If you do not see your evaluation immediately after class, look in your junk mail and send it to your email address. If you do not receive an evaluation, please email Continuingeducation@clark.edu or call 360.992.2939.

Inclement Weather:

If the College cancels due to icy conditions, you can find this on the college website www.clark.edu. If Community Education concludes that the weather is too hazardous, we may also decide to cancel this class. In that case you will receive both a phone call and email. Make certain that we have your correct contact information by viewing the class roster.

Looking for classes? Visit our Community Education webpage: www.clark.edu/cce/