

ENGL 194 | Poetry in America: The City from Whitman to Hip Hop Fall C 2020

Course Creator

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I. COURSE OVERVIEW

In this course, we will consider American poets whose themes, forms, and voices have given expression to visions of the city since 1850. Beginning with Walt Whitman, the great poet of nineteenth-century New York, we will explore the diverse and ever-changing environment of the modern city—from Chicago to Washington, DC, from San Francisco to Detroit—through the eyes of such poets as Carl Sandburg, Emma Lazarus, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Langston Hughes, Marianne Moore, Frank O’Hara, Gwendolyn Brooks, Allen Ginsberg, Robert Hayden, and Robert Pinsky, as well as contemporary hip hop and spoken word artists.

Learning Outcomes and Topics

Poetry in America courses are anchored in five approaches to close reading literary texts:

1. **Making Observations**, with a focus on such skills as gathering and drawing conclusions from textual evidence; noticing patterns; tracing the

development of central ideas and themes; detecting shifts in voice, tone, and point of view; and drawing comparisons across texts.

2. **Understanding Structure and Form**, with a focus on analyzing structural features and patterns, such as the relation of structural sub-units (the sentence, the stanza) to one another and to the whole; and the impact of formal choice (rhymed couplet or free verse, sonnet or limerick, lyric or narrative) on a given text.
3. **Situating Texts in History**, with a focus on analyzing the relation of authors and texts to particular cultural, historical, and geographical contexts.
4. **Enjoying Language**, with a focus on cultivating the pleasure and fun of poetry in the classroom, and on analyzing the function of such elements as figurative language, word choice, sound, and imagery within a literary text.
5. **Making Claims**, drawing on evidence from these other reading strategies to support a focused and original argument about a literary text.

Poetry in America courses feature a combination of video tutorials and conversations, archival images and texts, expeditions to historic literary sites, sample classroom visits, and practical exercises designed to support skills development. In this course, you will:

- Learn and practice the course's four approaches to reading a poem, which can also be applied to reading literary texts more broadly (see Course Objectives). The course encourages skill practice through weekly analytical writing assignments.
- Build community through interactive video seminars focused around particular poems, themes, or reading or writing skills.
- Learn about the dynamic role of cities in American poetry.

- Experience the power of place through video excursions to the actual sites where our poets lived and wrote. Together we will read Whitman’s “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry” while riding across the East River, consider Frank O’Hara’s “Steps” in Midtown Manhattan, and compare Carl Sandburg’s Chicago of 1914 with Gwendolyn Brooks’s Chicago of the 1950s.

II. ACTIVITIES AND REQUIREMENTS

Course Content and Assignments

All students should plan to complete the following on a weekly basis:

Course Videos

Each week features a series of videos, including tutorials by Professor New and conversations with guest discussants. All videos are required (and content is fair game for weekly quizzes and the final exam) unless it is clearly indicated that viewing is optional.

Course Readings

Course readings comprise all written material on individual course pages, and PDFs of poems and other literary readings. PDFs of readings are available both on relevant course pages and as a Reading Packet for each unit.

You do not need to purchase a textbook for this course.

Graded Assignments

Graded assignments are required, and count toward the final grade. Students *must* submit *all* assignments via the course site unless otherwise instructed. Each assessment has submission instructions.

Writing and Discussion via Yellowdig (30%): During this course, you will introduce yourself and complete a written response to 9 required prompts, which will form the foundation of your Writing Portfolio. (On weeks during which we are not using Yellowdig--i.e., on weeks in which we will meet via Zoom and during

Thanksgiving week--we have also included "BONUS," or optional prompts, so that you can continue to engage with the material and with each other, or make up some missed points if needed.) Weekly Writing and Discussion responses are automatically graded based on word count.

Unit Quizzes (30%): Quizzes are multiple choice and based on a given unit's readings and video materials. You must complete them by the stipulated deadlines. (The 2 lowest-scoring quizzes will be dropped.)

Final Exam (20%): The Final Exam is multiple choice and will assess student mastery of concepts and content covered throughout the semester. Students will further apply skills learned over the course of the semester as they answer questions about poems not covered in the course.

Writing Portfolio (10%): Your Writing Portfolio will present a compilation and revision of 3 Writing Responses, and will be self-assessed according to a rubric.

Participation in Zoom Seminars or Make-Up Assignments (10%): Participants will engage in a total of 3 required Zoom Seminars, led by their TA or section leader. Students who are not able to attend these sessions should complete the Make-Up Assignments for each session they miss.

Feedback

You will give and receive several forms of feedback throughout the course. This feedback will be used to assess the quality of your work and help you improve, as well as to deepen your experience and understanding of course content. Feedback can take the following forms:

- **Self assessment:** You will assess your own work on some assignments, using provided rubrics and guidelines.
- **Automatic assessment:** Some of your assignments, such as quizzes, exams, and weekly writing assignments will be assessed automatically.

- **Community feedback:** You will receive weekly informal feedback from course peers and your Supervising Teacher.
- **Mentoring and support:** You will receive weekly informal feedback from Teaching Staff.
- **Course surveys:** You will complete several ungraded surveys throughout the semester, sharing your feedback on the course and your experience.

III. TIME COMMITMENT AND COURSE COMMUNICATION

Time Commitment

Each week of the course runs from Tuesday at 6:59UTC to Tuesday at 6:59 UTC, and covers 1 Unit of material. *(Note: 06:59 UTC is 6:59 am UTC; please calculate the equivalent for your time zone. You can use time zone conversion sites such as timeanddate.com for assistance.)*

ENGL 194 requires 135 hours of work. Therefore, expect to spend approximately 9-12 hours per week preparing for and engaging in this course.

Course Communication

Most communication will take place via the discussion board, course updates, and course home page. You may also communicate with your TA via email as needed.

For each module, there will be a dedicated discussion board called “**General Questions,**” where you can post general questions and comments about the subject matter, as well as any direct inquiries for the course team. *Please use this forum to ensure a timely response.*

IV. STUDENT EVALUATION

Here is the breakdown of your grade:

| Item (number) | Weight | Form of Feedback |
|---------------|--------|------------------|
|---------------|--------|------------------|

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|---|-----|----------------------|
| Writing & Discussion (9) | 30% | Automatic assessment |
| Unit Quizzes (10) (lowest 2 dropped) | 30% | Automatic assessment |
| Final Exam (1) | 20% | Automatic assessment |
| Writing Portfolio (1) | 10% | Self assessment |
| Zoom Seminars or Make-Up Assignment (3) | 10% | Self assessment |

Final grades are based on the number of points you earn on the course activities listed above. **There is no extra credit available.** Final scores will be absolute as follows: 90% or better will receive an A, 80% or better a B, 70% or better a C, below 70% is a failing grade. There will be no + or - added to grades.

Credit Eligibility: You must pass the course with a grade of C (70%) or higher and be on the Credit Eligible Track.

*Note: You have **up to one year to transcript this course for ASU credit after you become credit eligible.** Please see Section IX, below, “Taking this Course for ASU Credit” for more information.*

V. POLICIES

Assignment Deadlines: This is an online course. Your instructional team will provide all content and learning activities on your course site. All course interactions will use Internet technologies; it is your responsibility to review all content, fulfill all assignments on time, and ask any questions you have in our designated discussion area. All deadlines are listed in UTC time. For more information, please see section VI, “UTC Time Zone” below.

Late assignments will not be accepted at any point during the course. We recommend that you establish your time management schedule for this course within the first two days after it opens.

Subject to Change Notice: This syllabus is to be used as a guide only. Information contained here, such as assignments, grading scales, deadlines, and other materials are subject to change. It is your responsibility to read the course announcements regularly to be aware of any changes or updates in the course.

Academic Integrity: Academic honesty is expected of all students in all coursework and exams. The possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, appropriate grade penalties, course failure (indicated on the transcript as a grade of E), course failure due to academic dishonesty (indicated on the transcript as a grade of XE), loss of registration privileges, disqualification, and dismissal. For more information, review ASU's [Academic Integrity Policy](#) and [Terms of Use](#).

Prohibition of Commercial Note Taking Services: In accordance with ACD 304-06 Commercial Note Taking Services, written permission must be secured from the official instructor of the class in order to sell the instructor's oral communication in the form of notes. Notes must have the notetaker's name as well as the instructor's name, the course number, and the date.

Title IX: Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As mandatory reporters, course staff is obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. [ASU Counseling Services](#) is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

VI. UTC TIME ZONE

To accommodate students from across the globe, all deadlines are posted in UTC time, the global standard. Please see “Deadlines and the UTC Time Zone” section of “Before the Course Begins” section for a detailed explanation.

Remember, it is your responsibility to understand UTC and determine the due dates and times for your time zone. Make sure you address this, ideally before the first set of assignments is due, to avoid any unnecessary stress.

VII. GENERAL AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

This course is best accessed by a reasonably modern browser on a laptop or desktop computer. You can also access course videos via a browser on your mobile device.

Students who are interested in taking the course for credit will need additional computer requirements and skills to access the remote proctor service. Please see the [Software Secure](#) site, which details Proctor Now’s requirements.

If you are not certain about your system, it is highly recommended that you complete the practice proctored exam in the “Before the Course Begins” section to confirm system compatibility.

VIII. GENERAL AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Student Support and Accessibility: Please access the [Learner’s Guide](#) for solutions to common problems, and review the “Student Support” page in the “Before the Course Begins” section for further information.

IX. TAKING THIS COURSE FOR ASU CREDIT

ASU Credit: Students wishing to take this course for ASU credit are required to do the following:

- **Opt to upgrade by September 29, 07:00 UTC**
- Take the proctored final exam
- Pass the course with a C or better (70% or higher)

Transcripting for Credit

Important: Provided you have met all requirements for this course, you can decide to transcript for credit for up to one year after you become credit eligible (i.e., after you have passed the course with a 70% or higher). Please note that you must have a transcript in order to transfer your 3 credits to the college of your choice in the future.

Your date of eligibility may differ from the course end date. Please visit your course progress page, specifically the “Requirements for Course Credit” section, to see the status of your credit eligibility.

Please review the information on credit eligibility in the “Before the Course Begins” section for additional details.

Note: Potential limitations of Internet connectivity by some countries may limit the ability of a credit eligible student residing in those countries to complete all the assessments, and therefore potentially impede the eligibility to earn college credit.