

English 618

English 618, Mary Ann Samyn, Spring 2007

English 618: Poetry Workshop

Spring 2007: Tuesdays, 7-9:50 p.m. 336 Stansbury

Mary Ann Samyn

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Office hours: TR 1:15-2:30, T 6-7, and by appt.

PROCESS, or what I did and when and how and why

Texts

Antin, David. i never knew what time it was. Berkeley: U of California P, 2005.

Bishop, Elizabeth. Edgar Allan Poe and the Juke Box. Ed. Alice Quinn. New York: Farrar, 2006.

Garren, Christine. The Piercing. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State UP, 2006.

Graham, Jorie. Never. New York: Ecco, 2002.

Jensen, Laura. Memory. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Mellon UP, 2006.

Plath, Sylvia. Ariel: The Restored Edition. New York: Harper Collins, 2004.

Stevens, Wallace. The Collected Poems. New York: Vintage, 1990.

Taking Note: From Poets' Notebooks. Ed. Kuusisto, Tall, and Weiss. Geneva, NY: Hobart and William Smith Colleges P, 1991. (selections)

Course Description

This semester we'll consider process from as many angles as possible. We're all "doing" process all the time, of course, but some writers foreground the process of process and we'll consider what that means in terms of what gets on the page (both what gets selected/rejected and how particular writing strategies are more process-obvious than others). We'll also look at the processes of revision and manuscript structuring, and aim to gain some insight into our own writing patterns. Along the way, we'll workshop, too, of course, and as always I envision the reading component of the course as something that your poems push off from/work against/dive under/etc.

Assignment: Poems

I'd like to see 10 poems from each of you, give or take. The best assignment I know: write the poem that scares you. A corollary assignment: write the next poem.

Assignment: Critical/creative responses

This semester you'll have a series of opportunities (yes! That is the word!) to respond to the readings. I'm not looking for particular reactions or particular expressions/embodiments of those reactions; I am looking for serious engagement. More info to follow, but, basically, if I say "write a response to Antin for next week," that response might be an imitation, a critique, an application of his ideas to another text, a comparison, a demonstration (via another art form), or some other type of investigative response that is helpful to you. Make sense? It will. I also encourage you to keep some sort of "poet's notebook," if you don't already. We'll look at samples early on and keeping a notebook of your own might prove helpful with the responses.

Final Project

The final project, yet to be determined based on how our experience this semester unfolds, will give you a chance to be at your most dazzling. Fun, huh?!

Course Evaluation

Your grade will be the composite of all your work this semester: poems and prose, written and oral, everything. I expect that all poems will be commented on before class and that you'll arrive bright-eyed and ready to go. I do not accept late work unless you've contacted me ahead of time and received my permission.

Attendance Policy

I take attendance seriously, don't you? You should let me know, ahead of time, if you must, for some unavoidable reason, be absent. I do grade down for absences and tardiness. We only meet once a week. Be there, on time, ready to participate.

Social Justice

WVU is committed to social justice, as am I. That means you can expect a learning environment that is constructive, based on mutual respect and non-discrimination. If you have any questions, please let me know.

Questions?

Ask me. And of course I encourage you to come to my office, or email me, to discuss your work, publication, teaching, anything.

Schedule: please bring poems to workshop every week.

Week 1: Jan 9 Hellos, etc.

Week 2: Jan 16 Taking Note: From Poets' Notebook

Week 3: Jan 23 Bishop

Week 4: Jan 30 Stevens

Week 5: Feb 6 Plath

Week 6: Feb 13 Response #1: We hardly knew ya: reconsidering Bishop, Stevens, Plath

John McKernan reading: Tuesday, 7:30, Mountainlair: we'll attend

Week 7: Feb 20 Jensen

Week 8: Feb 27 Garren (AWP: Feb. 28-March 3)

Week 9: Mar 6 Response #2: Lyric Time: remembering Jensen and Garren

Week 10: Mar 13 No class: I'll be giving readings. We'll re-schedule.

Lee K. Abbott reading: Thursday, March 15, 7:30, Robinson Reading Room

Week 11: Mar 20 Antin

Spring Break

Week 12: Apr 3 Graham

Week 13: Apr 10 Response #3: Act it out: responding to Antin and Graham

Week 14: Apr 17 Considering the final project

Calliope reading: Thursday, April 19, 7:30, Rhododendron Room

Week 15: Apr 24 Finishing...

418 reading: Tuesday, April 24, 1:00, E. Moore Hall

MFA reading: Thursday, April 26, 7:30, Rhododendron Room

Final project due Friday, Apr 27, by noon.