

Study of Two Major Authors

English 337

Professor Johanna Winant

Tuesday/Thursday, 8:30-9:45am

This upper-division course will focus on the poetry of Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson. Whitman and Dickinson are monumental figures and contemporaries who wrote during the Civil War, and yet their poetics could not be more different: Whitman's expansive, inclusive, and seemingly easy-to-understand poems stand in sharp contrast to Dickinson's condensed, controlled, and tricky work. We will approach them through reading literary criticism that uses various analytical frames—biography, historical context, queer theory, feminist theory, political philosophy, textual and material studies—but our main concern will always be the poems.

Don't worry if you're not already comfortable with poetry! This course serves as an introduction to reading, analyzing, and writing about poetry. And because you'll finish the course knowledgeable about with the father and mother of American poetry, all more recent poetry will be more familiar to you too. We'll end the course by reading contemporary poetry and tracing Whitman and Dickinson's influence today.

