

SYLLABUS: READING AND WRITING POETRY
Graduate Liberal Studies, HUMS 632, Spring 2010

Professor Gertrude Hughes
860-346-3675

INFORMATION SHEET

NOTE: This is an “immersion,” or “special schedule” course.
Dates: January 23 and 24; February 6, 7, and 13

Preparation for the course is minimal, because most of the scheduled readings will be done out loud in class, as part of the daily lecture. About 2/3 of each class day will be devoted to group writing exercises (with discussion) and to solitary writing time. 1/3 for lecture and discussion. See the Schedule Sheet for details. **All writing for the course, except for the final project, will be done on site, during class time.**

The Final Project is a portfolio of writings by you (prose and/or poetry), showing your mastery of the ideas, readings, and writing experiences that constitute the course.

Length: About 10 – 15 poems or drafts of poems, and 3-5 short prose pieces that can be analytic or prose-poems. Suggestions for contents of portfolios will be made during the course.

Due: Tuesday, March 2 You will have about 2 weeks, including 2 weekends, before your final portfolio of poems, prose-poems, and critical prose is due. Much of the contents of your portfolio will have been written in class time, and some drafts will have been shared with fellow students in small feedback groups.

Delivering your final project: Please email me a copy (ghughes@wesleyan.edu) *and also send a paper copy by post addressed to the GLS office*, High Street, Middletown, CT 06459. I expect to have them read and graded by March 31. Would you like the paper copy posted back to you? If so, tell me and I will ask the GLS office to do so.

Readings and preparation: The syllabus indicates what poems we will probably consider each day, in the morning lecture and at other times in that day.

For the **FIRST DAY**, note that you are **expected** to read the brief introductory pages of our main text, *Sing Me The Creation*, by Paul Matthews. It would be best if you can also read the selections from Whitman’s *Leaves of Grass* indicated on the syllabus: various so-called chants from his “Song of Myself,” and two of his longer poems. But we will take time to read those poems out loud as part of the morning’s work in any case.

Thereafter, reading ahead will help you enjoy the course, but it is **not expected**. A possible exception might be the **THIRD DAY** i.e. the second Saturday (February 6). It comes nearly two weeks after the first weekend of class and might be a good time for you to come with prepared readings. We will decide this on Sunday January 24.

Writing: Plan to devote up to two hours to solitary writing, re-writing, experimenting, imitating, parodying class day. Each day, we will also do numerous exercises from *Sing Me The Creation* many of them tailored especially for group work.

Attendance: It is expected. Come to all classes; stay for the entire class: 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Daily schedule: 9-10:30 lecture and discussion. Break. 11-12:15 writing exercises.
12:15-1:30 Lunch. 1:30 – 3 Writing. Break. 3:30- 5:00 writing exercises.

SYLLABUS: GLS HUMS 632, continued:

Daily Plans and Readings

Required Books (in order of use), available from Wesleyan bookstore

Matthews, Paul *Sing Me the Creation: A Sourcebook for poets and teachers...*

Hawthorn Press, ISBN 1 869 89060 4

Whitman, Walt *Leaves of Grass*, (Intro by Malcolm Cowley) Penguin Classics

ISBN 0-14-142199-0

Hughes, L, *Selected Poems of Langston Hughes* Vintage Classics ISBN 0-679-72818-x

Course Packet available after December 17, '09. Readings from it have * in syllabus.

Buy course packet on line from Pip Printing www.PIPMID.com Find the Wesleyan icon, find our course, fill out order form (you will need credit card), pick up book 24 hours later at PIP Printing, 179 Main St. Middletown. To arrange for UPS delivery you can call 860-344-9001 after you have ordered on line. Ask for "Roger"; he is familiar with their course packet service.

SATURDAY JANUARY 23, 2010

Assigned reading **for you to prepare**: Paul Matthews, *Sing Me the Creation*, pages 2-8 ("How this book came to be" to "Suggestions for Group Practice").

Lecture: Whitman's Self

Reading (prepare if you can): Walt Whitman (1819-1892), poems from *Leaves of Grass*

"Song of Myself" Chants (or sections) 6, 31, 51, 52, any others you want to read

"There was a Child Went Forth (138 ff.)

"The Sleepers" (105 ff.)

Introduction by Malcolm Cowley (Optional)

See also "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"* and excerpt from 1855 preface to *Leaves**

SUNDAY JANUARY 24 2010

Continue Walt Whitman as above.

Reading: Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) Sunset poems in Course Packet*

Lecture on ED and WW. Title TBA

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 6 2010

Lecture:

"Compression and Structure in Lyrical Poetry: Langston Hughes and Lucille Clifton"

Reading: Langston Hughes (1902-1967) poems from *Selected Poems* TBA

Lucille Clifton (1936 -) All poems by her in course packet*

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7 2010

Lecture: Bishop's Voice ["a voice like someone counting to 100" Seamus Heaney said, complimenting her]

Reading: Elizabeth Bishop, All poems by her in course packet*, & maybe some handouts

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 17

Bring to class a valentine poem (written by you or someone else)

Lecture: "Mary Oliver's Nature compared to ED's nature"

Reading: Mary Oliver, All poems by her in course packet* plus some handouts maybe