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Level: BA Major English, Paper IV

Year: Second

Course Title: Reading and Responding to Poetry

Course Code: ENGL 424

Full Marks: 100

Contact hours: 150

Course Description

This course is designed to enhance the understanding of poetry. In particular, it aims at developing the skills of close reading in students of literature, subsequently leading them to appreciate the art with intellectual excitement and emotional engagement. The first two units lay out a clear map of reading poetry from various perspectives—thematic, formal, and structural—with pertinent examples. The units also allow students to practice the skills in selected group of poems. The final three units provide a selection of poems that are roughly representative of periods, trends, and movements, thus allowing students to read and analyze poetry within the specific historical and literary context. As students progress in the course, they are first expected to learn the ways of reading, understanding, and responding to poetry (first two units) and then apply the skills thus learned to read and respond to an array of poems.

Part One: Ways to Read and Understand

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UNIT 1

20 hrs.

Ways of Reading

1. The poem as life, pp. 3-14
2. The poem as arranged life, pp. 25-53
3. Poems as Pleasure, pp. 67-89
4. Describing Poems, pp. 101-128
5. The play of language, pp. 145-159

Focused Readings

6. "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" (Dylan Thomas), p. 19
7. "Because I could not stop for Death—" (Emily Dickinson), p. 62
8. "The Dance" (William Carlos Williams), p. 95
9. "The Garden" (Andrew Marvell), p. 131
10. "The Wild Swans at Coole" (William Butler Yeats), p. 165

UNIT 2

20 hrs.

Ways of Reading

11. Constructing Self, pp. 171-188
12. Poetry and Social Identity, pp. 211-222
13. History and Regionality, pp. 237-245
14. Attitude, Values, Judgments, pp. 283-292

Focused Readings

15. "Her Kind" (Anne Sexton), p. 207
16. "Wingfoot Lake" (Rita Dove), p. 234
17. "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (William Wordsworth), p. 255
18. "Shine, Perishing Republic" (Robinson Jeffers), p. 301
19. "The Gulf" (Derek Walcott), p. 276

Part Two: Reading and Responding

UNIT 3: Renaissance to Romanticism

30 hrs.

20. "With How Sad Steps, Oh Moon" (Philip Sydney)
21. "Fear Not More the Heat o' the Sun" (William Shakespeare)
22. "The Canonization" (John Donne)
23. "L' Allegro" (John Milton)
24. "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (Thomas Gray)
25. "from *Essay on Man*" (Epistle 1) (Alexander Pope)

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26. "A Description of the Morning" (Jonathan Swift)
27. "Tyger" (William Blake)
28. "The Solitary Reaper" (William Wordsworth)
29. "Kubla Khan" (S. T. Coleridge)
30. "Ode to the West Wind" (P. B. Shelley)
31. "To Autumn" (John Keats)
32. "The Snowstorm" (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

UNIT 4: Victorian to Modern

40 hrs.

33. "How I love Thee" (Elizabeth Barrett Browning)
34. "Aftermath" (Henry Wadsworth Longfellow)
35. "Ulysses" (Alfred Lord Tennyson)
36. "My Last Duchess" (Robert Browning)
37. "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd" (Walt Whitman)
38. "Dover Beach" (Mathew Arnold)
39. "My Life Stood—a Loaded Gun" (Emily Dickinson)
40. "Up-Hill" (Christina Rossetti)
41. "God's Grandeur" (G. M. Hopkins)
42. "Loveliest of Trees, the Cherry Now" (A. E. Housman)
43. "Anthem for the Doomed Youth" (Wilfred Owen)
44. "Among School Children" (W. B. Yeats)
45. "The Road Not Taken" (Robert Frost)
46. "Grass" (Carl Sandberg)
47. "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Bird" (Wallace Stevenson)
48. "The River Merchant's Wife—A Letter" (Ezra Pound)
49. "Sweeney among the Nightingales" (T. S. Eliot)
50. "The Fish" (Elizabeth Bishop)

UNIT 5: Postmodern to Contemporary

40 hrs.

51. "My Papa's Waltz" (Theodore Roethke)
52. "Night, Death, Mississippi" (Robert Hayden)
53. "Dream Song 4" (John Berryman)
54. "The Mother" (Gwendolyn Brooks)
55. "For the Union Dead" (Robert Lowell)
56. "The Asians Dying" (W. S. Merwin)
57. "High Windows" (Philip Larkin)
58. "Harlem" (Langston Hughes)

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59. "Ester Morning" (A. R. Ammons)
60. "Punishment" (Seamus Heaney)
61. "Lay Lazarus" (Silvia Plath)
62. "The White Lilies" (Louse Gluck)
63. "Facing It" (Yusef Komunyakaa)
64. "Parsley" (Rita Dove)
65. "The Interrogation" (Lee-Young Lee)
66. "Windigo" (Louise Edrich)
67. "Reservation Love Song" (Sherman Alexie)

Evaluation Scheme

Internal Evaluation 30%

Final Examination 70%

Prescribed Text

Helen Vendler, *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*, Bedford/ St. Martin, 2009.