

## English 4399.001: Senior Seminar

### MODERN AMERICAN POETRY

[first version, August 20, 2014]

#### Dr. Stacy Alaimo

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<http://www.uta.edu/english/profile/alaimo.html>

#### Fall 2014

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30-11:00

Classroom: Preston Hall 206

English Dept.: 817 272-2692



"Modern American Poetry. . . in its astonishing and endlessly energetic variety. . . is one of the major achievements of human culture" (Cary Nelson)

#### Description of Course Content:

English 4399: SENIOR SEMINAR is a capstone course for English majors. It is a writing-intensive, seminar-style, in-depth study of a topic. The Prerequisites for this course are: ENGL 2350 and completion of 18 hours of required 3000 - 4000 level English courses.

Because this is a capstone course the emphasis will be on independent research, thinking, writing, and learning, as well as on intense in-class discussions. The topic of this particular section of the Senior Seminar is Modern American Poetry. We will discuss an exciting range of 20<sup>th</sup>-Century American poetry, including the following topics: American visions and the poetics of dissent; modernisms and the Harlem Renaissance; gender, sex, love, desire; animals, nature, environment. We will examine poetry as an art form as well as discuss its cultural and political contexts and the philosophical questions it provokes. Students may do their final projects on a 20<sup>th</sup> century American poet of their choice or on a thematic topic of their choice. We will take advantage of the extraordinarily rich and informative web site that accompanies Cary Nelson's magnificent *Modern American Poetry* anthology. The class is organized as a seminar, focusing on students' interpretations and culminating with students' research projects.

### **Required Textbook and Other Course Materials**

*Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, ed. Cary Nelson, Oxford.

You will need access to the web in order to prepare for each class period.

Access to a printer and a stapler.

### **Recommended Books (to read on your own if you so wish)**

Terry Eagleton, *How to Read a Poem* (if you are concerned about your ability to analyze and interpret poetry.)

Robert Dale Parker, *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies* (if you did not gain a background in critical theory within 2350.)

These books are available through online booksellers such as Amazon.com.

### **Course Objectives**

- 1) To introduce students to a range of Modern American poetry, within its social, historical, and cultural contexts.
- 2) To enhance students' abilities to enjoy, understand, analyze, and interpret poetry.
- 3) To provide students with the opportunity to create their own interpretations of the poetry and to conduct independent research.
- 4) To create a space for philosophical reflection on difficult questions and issues that emerge from the poetry.
- 5) To improve students' skills, more generally, in reading, writing, critical thinking, research, use of internet and library resources, and public speaking.
- 6) To provide students with the opportunity to write a medium-length research paper, and present that paper to the class, as part of their capstone experience.

### **Student Learning Outcomes**

- 1) Students should demonstrate an understanding of the poetry included in the course.
- 2) Students should be able to formulate original, illuminating, and persuasive analyses and interpretations of the poetry.
- 3) Students should demonstrate an understanding of how the poetry relates to its specific historical/cultural/political moment.
- 4) Students should be able to use the MAP web site to discover biographical, historical, and cultural contexts as well as literary criticism. Students should be able to demonstrate how this information enhances their understanding of the poem.
- 5) Students should be able to express their ideas in clear, logical, organized, concise, and persuasive ways, in both written and oral forms.
- 6) Students should be able to conduct research and incorporate that research into a coherent seminar paper that develops and supports an original thesis.

### **Requirements/Grading**

You must complete all the required work in order to pass the course.

- Daily Participation: 10%
- 10 Index Cards: 20%
- Short Paper (5 pages): 10%
- Exam: 25%
- Final Research Paper (15 pages, plus prospectus and annotated bibliography): 30%
- Presentation of research paper: 5%
- Attend one live poetry reading, performance, or poetry slam and hand in a 2-page description//interpretation/critique by Thanksgiving [required: graded pass/fail].
- No final exam!

### **Index Cards**

Everyone will be required to hand in at least 10 index cards. The index cards are designed to help you prepare for the class discussions, both by generating your own readings of the poems and by encouraging you to take advantage of the MAP web site as a resource.

<http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/> The index cards are “due” every day, on the readings for that day, though you may skip days, as long as you hand in at least 10, in the end. If you hand in more than 10 I’ll take the 10 highest grades. They will be graded zero (F), check (B) check plus (A) and check minus (C). The index cards should include:

1. A 1-3 sentence thesis about the poem—your own original reading or analysis—not a summary or description but an interpretation or analytical argument.
2. A significant quote from one of the sources on the MAP site. (A quote that you would like to talk about.)
3. A discussion question for the class.

Your work on these cards should help you study for the exam and make substantial contributions to the class discussion.

### **Exam**

The exam will contain some short-answer and identification questions, but most of the points will be from essay questions. Bring bluebooks and pens for the exam. Bring your anthology. There will be no final.

### **Papers**

A short paper and a medium-length research paper are required, (5 and 15 pages, respectively.) You will be able to choose your own topic within Modern American Poetry for the research paper. Note that the research paper assignment requires a prospectus and an annotated bibliography, which must be handed in when they are due. I do not accept emailed or faxed papers. All papers are due at the very beginning of the class. I will mark down papers one grade for every day that they are late, starting at 9:35 am.

Mechanics: All papers must be “typed,” stapled, and have a significant title. Please do NOT use plastic folders for your paper—a staple is sufficient.

Please Note: plagiarism is a serious offense and will be punished to the full extent, according to university procedures. You must always give people credit for their intellectual property by citing them properly—this includes ideas and language.

### **Poetry Performance**

Our class will take advantage of the English Department's literary events by attending one live poetry performance. Although the fall schedule is not yet final, we expect Jaswinder Bolina to perform October 13<sup>th</sup>. <http://www.jaswinderbolina.com>. Check the English department website for more information. A 2-page description/interpretation/critique of a live poetry reading that you attended will be due by Thanksgiving. This is a pass/fail requirement that will not receive a letter grade. Just enjoy the performance and write up a brief response.

### **Due Dates**

Notecards: You may choose which days to submit notecards, throughout the semester.

Short Paper: Tuesday, September 30<sup>th</sup>, at the start of class.

Seminar Paper Prospectus: Thursday, October 9<sup>th</sup>, at the start of class.

Exam: Tuesday November 4.

Annotated Bibliography for Seminar Paper: Tuesday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, at the start of class.

Seminar Paper: Thursday November 13, at the start of class.

Your Presentation of Seminar Paper: [fill in later]\_\_\_\_\_

Before Thanksgiving break: Attend one live poetry reading or poetry slam or watch a video about poetry performances or poetry slams or competitions and hand in a 2-page description//interpretation/critique (required: graded pass/fail).

### **\*\*Participation/Attendance/Punctuality\*\***

Your active, informed participation is crucial to the success of the course. Carefully prepare for each class period by doing the reading in a rigorous and inquisitive manner. Every day that you come to class you should have something valuable to say. I will grade on actual participation, rather than on mere attendance. However, if you miss class four times, your course grade will be lowered and if you miss five classes you will fail the course. This is a required capstone course for the major—I must require that you attend. Everyone gets three absences; use them wisely. You do not need to tell me why you were absent—that is your own private business--just don't miss more than three classes. If you come in after I have marked the rolls, that will count as an absence—so come to class on time. If you can't come to class or you can't get here on time you will need to drop.

**Contacting the Instructor:** The best way to contact me is through email: [alaimo@uta.edu](mailto:alaimo@uta.edu). Note that we are required to require you to use your official UTA email when contacting us. We are not supposed to reply to any other email address. Also note that I do not have a phone in my office but you can leave a message with the English Department if you'd like. But email is best. Please do not contact me through Facebook regarding anything having to do with this class. I do not accept emailed or faxed papers.

**Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:30-1:30.**

### **RESOURCES:**

**The UTA Library and its librarians:** <http://www.uta.edu/library/help/index.php>.

**Library Data Bases:** Use the MLA International Bibliography for most of your research; it is the essential bibliographic tool for English Studies. You may find full text essays on Project Muse and other library resources.

**Poetry on the web:** The most important web site for this class is the Modern American Poetry website at University of Illinois: <http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/>. Get thoroughly acquainted with this excellent resource!

Also check out these fabulous sites, which may help you find poems or poets for your seminar paper: Poets.org: <http://www.poets.org/> and the Poetry Foundation:

<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/>,

the Electronic Poetry Center: <http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/> and Poetry Slam Inc, video: [http://www.poetryslam.com/index.php?option=com\\_psivideo&view=all&Itemid=131](http://www.poetryslam.com/index.php?option=com_psivideo&view=all&Itemid=131) and Poet Gallery:

[http://www.poetryslam.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=22&Itemid=49](http://www.poetryslam.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=22&Itemid=49)

and Contemporary American Poetry Archive: <http://capa.conncoll.edu/>

And, on the less-than-scholarly end: "10 of the Most Bad-Ass Contemporary American Poets," <http://www.flavorwire.com/279654/10-of-the-most-bad-ass-contemporary-american-poets?all=1>;

"The Most Important Contemporary American Poet":

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anis-shivani/most-important-contemporary-poet\\_b\\_797050.html?s208673&title=H L Hix](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/anis-shivani/most-important-contemporary-poet_b_797050.html?s208673&title=H L Hix)

Please let everyone know if you find some more good sites!

**Poetry Terms on the web.** Rather than having you purchase a book of poetic terms, I thought it would be better if you checked out a book from the library or used various online sources. Here are some: [http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student\\_view0/poetic\\_glossary.html](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/0072405228/student_view0/poetic_glossary.html)

<http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0903237.html/>

[http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/glossary\\_of\\_poetic\\_terms.htm](http://www.poetsgraves.co.uk/glossary_of_poetic_terms.htm)

<http://www.poetryarchive.org/poetryarchive/glossaryIndex.do>

Links to many sites are here!: <http://thewordshop.tripod.com/forms.html/>

**The Writing Center:** The UTA Writing Center offers free help with your papers at any stage of the writing process. They are located in the Central Library, room 411. You can just walk in with your paper or you can make an appointment: <http://www.uta.edu/owl/> Please avail yourself of this important service and resource. "The Writing Center, 411 Central Library, offers individual 40 minute sessions to review assignments, *Quick Hits* (5-

10 minute quick answers to questions), and workshops on grammar and specific writing projects. Visit <https://uta.mywconline.com/> to register and make appointments. For hours, etc. visit the website: [www.uta.edu/owl/](http://www.uta.edu/owl/)." The Purdue OWL is an excellent online source as well: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>. The University of Richmond has helpful pages about Plagiarism <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/english/plagiarism.html> and Close Reading, <http://writing2.richmond.edu/writing/wweb/english/closereading.html>. I recommend Lanham's book *Revising Prose* for anyone who would like to improve their writing.

**The English Department's web pages:** <http://www.uta.edu/english/>  
My web pages: <http://www.uta.edu/english/alaimo/forundergrads.html>

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### **Respect your fellow students, respect the classroom:**

1. **TURN OFF** all pagers, beepers, cell phones and other electronic devices! You may not have these devices turned on while in class. You may not text message or read email or engage in any other electronic activities during class. You may not use laptops in class. The only exception is when you are accessing the MAPS site or other site that we are discussing. Anyone using cell phones or other electronic devices in class will be asked to leave and be marked absent because it is a distraction to the instructor and the other students.
  2. Arrive to class **ON TIME**. It is distracting to both the professor and the students to have someone come in late. If you come in late, you will be marked absent.
  3. Always arrive **PREPARED** to work. Every day we will have work to do in class. Some days we will work in small groups. If you are not prepared then you will not be able to contribute to the class or to your small group. You may be asked to leave class if you are not prepared. Also, remember that for English classes you **MUST BRING** whatever **TEXTS** we are discussing that day to class.
  3. Treat your classmates with **RESPECT**. Learn to disagree without being disagreeable. We will often discuss controversial, volatile topics, so everyone needs to learn how to disagree with someone's views, beliefs, or perspectives while maintaining a sense of civility. This is a rare skill in our culture, but a skill that is necessary for an educated, humane, democratic society.
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## OFFICIAL UTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES THAT ARE REQUIRED ON ALL SYLLABI.

(The following policies are reprinted here, verbatim, from the Provost's office.)

**Grade Grievances:** Any appeal of a grade in this course must follow the procedures and deadlines for grade-related grievances as published in the current University Catalog. For undergraduate courses, see <http://catalog.uta.edu/academicregulations/grades/#undergraduatetext>.

**Drop Policy:** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance.** Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

**Title IX:** The University of Texas at Arlington is committed to upholding U.S. Federal Law "Title IX" such that no member of the UT Arlington community shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. For more information, visit [www.uta.edu/titleIX](http://www.uta.edu/titleIX).

**Academic Integrity:** Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents' Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

**Electronic Communication:** UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and



are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

**Student Feedback Survey:** At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as “lecture,” “seminar,” or “laboratory” shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student’s feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

**Final Review Week:** A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week *unless specified in the class syllabus*. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

**Emergency Exit Procedures:** Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located at either end of the hall in Preston. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities. Inclusion of this verbiage as well as a brief discussion on the matter with your students at the beginning of the term is mandated by UT Arlington Procedure 7-6: Emergency/Fire Evacuation Procedures (<https://www.uta.edu/policy/procedure/7-6>.)

**Student Support Services:** UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to [resources@uta.edu](mailto:resources@uta.edu), or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

**Emergency Phone Numbers:** In case of an on-campus emergency, call the UT Arlington Police Department at **817-272-3003** (non-campus phone), **2-3003** (campus phone). You may also dial 911.

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## Course Schedule

*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course. Please note that the course is organized in such a way as to give you a great deal of time to work on researching and writing your seminar paper.*

All page numbers refer to the *Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, ed. Cary Nelson  
[BB]= Texts available, poetry or theory, on Blackboard, under the "Course Materials" link there. Please print these out or at least download them onto your laptop or other device so that in the event of a Blackboard or internet outage you will have them for class.

**Be sure to spend time on the MAPWEB, reading the sections on at least one author that we are reading for that day and the excerpts of criticism on at least one poem.**

<http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets.htm>. Go to the Poet Search page:

[http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poet\\_search.html](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poet_search.html)

then select the poet's name. Read about the poet; read about a poem or two, read the history, look at photos, etc. (See also, the specific instructions for the notecards, above and below.)

### Introduction

Day One. Thursday, August 21. Introductions.

### American Visions and the Poetics of Dissent

Week Two. August 26 & 28.

Tuesday: Walt Whitman, "One's Self I Sing," "I Hear America Singing," "For You O Democracy," 1-3; Emily Dickinson, "I'm ceded—I've stopped being Theirs" 12, "They Shut Me Up I Prose," 14, "The Soul Selects," 20, "My Life Had Stood" 15, "Tell All the Truth but Tell it Slant" 17, [Remember to spend time on the MAP web site, reading about at least one author and at least one poem.]

Thursday: Edwin Markham, "The Man with the Hoe," 18 & 1224. Paul Lawrence Dunbar, "We Wear the Mask," "Sympathy" 37; Carl Sandburg, "Chicago," "Subway," "Child of Romans," "Planked Whitefish," "Man, the Man-Hunter," "Grass," 107-113.

Week Three. September 2 & 4.

Tuesday: Angel Island, Poems by Chinese Immigrants, all poems, 491; Genevieve, "Ode in Time of Crisis," 339; Lucia Trent, "Breed, Women, Breed," 376; Edwin Rolfe, "Asbestos" and "Season of Death," 609; Tillie Olsen, "I Want you Women Up North to Know" 652.

Thursday: Japanese American Concentration Camp Haiku, 717; Randall Jarrell, "Losses" 713; Denise Levertov, "What Were They Like" and "Life at War," 813; Thomas McGrath, "Ode for the Dead in Asia" 748; Carolyn Forché, "The Colonel" 1168. Watch/listen to Suheir Hammad, "What I Will" and "break (clustered)"  
[http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/suheir\\_hammad\\_poems\\_of\\_war\\_peace\\_women\\_power.html](http://www.ted.com/talks/lang/en/suheir_hammad_poems_of_war_peace_women_power.html)

Week Four. September 9 & 11.

Tuesday: Margaret Walker, "For My People," 735; Gwendolyn Brooks, "The Boy Died in my Alley" 777; Marilyn Chin, "How I Got that Name" 1202; Martin Espada, "Imagine the Angels of Bread, 1210; Ray A. Young Bear, "In Viewpoint: Poem for 14 Catfish and the Town of Tama Iowa" 1163; Sesshu Foster, "We're Caffeinated," "You'll be," "Look and look again," "Life Magazine," 1205.

### **Modernisms and the Harlem Renaissance**

Thursday: Gertrude Stein, "Patriarchal Poetry" 54; William Carlos Williams, "The Young Housewife," "Portrait of a Lady," "To Elsie," "The Red Wheelbarrow," "This is Just to Say," 164.

Week Five. September 16 & 18.

Tuesday: e.e. cummings, 343, all poems; Harry Crosby, all poems, 382.

Thursday: Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird," "Anecdote of the Jar," "The Snow Man," "The Idea of Order at Key West," "Of Modern Poetry," "The Plain Sense of Things," "As You Leave the Room," "A Clear Day and No Memories," "Of Mere Being" 124.

Week Six. September 23 & 25.

Tuesday: T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," 278, "The Hollow Men," 302; "Burnt Norton," 306. Ezra Pound, "A Pact," "In a Station of the Metro," 202.

Thursday: Mina Loy, "Song to Joannes," 149 and selected poems (BB); H.D., "Oread," "Sea Rose," "Eurydice," "Helen," "The Walls do Not Fall," 232

Week Seven. September 30 & October 2

Tuesday: Short Paper Due

Jean Toomer, all poems from *Cane*, 352-354. Claude McKay, "The Harlem Dancer," "The Lynching," "America," 315-18; Gwendolyn Bennett, all poems, 528.

Thursday: Langston Hughes, all poems, 502.

**Gender, Sex, Love, Desire**

Week Eight. October 7 & 9.

Tuesday: Lecture on gender theory, feminist theory, and intersectionality.

Louise Bogan, "Women" 380; Adrienne Rich, "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers," "Diving into the Wreck," 934; Gwendolyn Brooks, "To Those of My Sisters Who Kept Their Naturals" 778; Anne Sexton, "Her Kind," 921; Thylia Moss, "Crystals" 1196.

Thursday: Seminar Paper Prospectus due at the start of class.

Edwin Rolfe, "Elegia," 611; Randall Jarrell, "The Death of the Ball Turret Gunner" 713; Etheridge Knight, "The Idea of Ancestry" 969; Robert Duncan, "Uprising Passages 25" 790; Yusef Komunyakaa, "Prisoners" 1143; Louise Erdrich, "Dear John Wayne" 1190; Thylia Moss, "Ambition" 1194.

Week Nine. October 14 & 16.

[Monday: Jaswinder Bolina reads his poetry]

Tuesday: Gregory Corso, "Marriage" 960; Mona Van Duyn, "Toward a Definition of Marriage" 797; Ai "Twenty-Year Marriage" 1149; Denise Levertov, "The Ache of Marriage" 807; Gary Snyder, "Beneath my Hand and Eye" 956; Robert Hass, "A Story About the Body" 1076; Robert Creeley, "For Love" and "Age" 877.

[Office hours cancelled.]

Thursday: Time off to compensate for required attendance at a poetry reading. You can use this time to work on your research paper.

Week Ten. October 21 & 23.

Tuesday: Lecture on queer theory.

Adrienne Rich, "Twenty One Love Poems," 945; Judy Grahn, "Carol," "I Have Come to Claim" 1068; Audre Lorde, "Outlines" 1011; Whitman, "As Adam," "I Hear it Was Charged," "Vigil Strange," 1; Robert Duncan, "The Torso Passages 18" 788; Mark Doty, "Homo Will Not Inherit," 1183; Qwo-Li Driskill poem and others (BB).

### **Animals, Environment, Nature**

Thursday: Lectures on ecocriticism and animal studies.

Robinson Jeffers, "Hurt Hawks," "The Purse Seine," "Vulture," "Birds and Fishes" 244; William Everson, "A Canticle to the Waterbirds" 648; Stanley Kunitz, "The Wellfleet Whale," "The Snakes of September" 578.

Week Eleven. October 28 & 30.

Tuesday: Annotated Bibliography Due

W. S. Merwin, "For a Coming Extinction" 916; Philip Levine, "Animals are Passing from Our Lives" 926; Thylas Moss, "There Will Be Animals," Elizabeth Bishop, "Pink Dog," 1193; Les Murray, from *Translations* (BB) and other poems TBA.

Thursday: cummings, "O sweet spontaneous," 345; Ai, "The Testimony of J. Robert Oppenheimer," 1150; C.D. Wright, "Over Everything," "Song of the Gourd," 1159; More poems TBA [BB].

### **Exam, Seminar Papers, Presentations, Conclusions**

Week Twelve. November 4 & 6.

Tuesday: **Exam: Bring bluebooks and pens, notecards, and your MAP book**

Thursday: Writing workshops/consultations

Week Thirteen. November 11 & 13.

Tuesday: Writing workshops/consultations.

Thursday: Seminar Papers Due by the start of class.

Poetry party! Watch video in class, enjoy snacks, celebrate!

Week Fourteen. November 18 & 20

Tuesday: Presentations

Thursday: Presentations

Week Fifteen. November 25 & 27

Tuesday: Presentations

2-page description//interpretation/critique of poetry performance due by or before this date [required].

Closing Poem: Bring 5-20 lines of your favorite poem to read in class as a conclusion.

Thursday: Thanksgiving break.

Week Sixteen. December 2.

Tuesday: Floating Day, to be used, as needed

## **Dr. Stacy Alaimo English 4399: Modern American Poetry.**

### **PREPARING FOR CLASS**

---Before each class, prepare by carefully reading all the assigned poems and any other assigned texts.

---Then, choose one of the poems, reread it, and create your own analysis or interpretation. (Write 1-3 sentences on your index card.)

---Next, read additional background materials or criticism on the poem you have chosen. These materials are available on the MAP web site. Explore cultural and historical backgrounds, biographical information about the poet, and various criticisms, readings, and interpretations of the poem.

---Prepare to briefly discuss, in class, your most significant findings. What did you think was particularly intriguing? What information helped you understand the poem? Which readings did you disagree with and why? How do the visual texts, if available, add to our understanding of the poem? Depending on whether the technology works, you may be able to show particular web pages to the class.

---Finally, prepare one or more discussion questions for the class about the poem.

--Hand in an index card with the following:

1. A 1-3 sentence thesis about the poem—your own original reading.
2. A significant quote from one of the sources on the MAP site. (A quote that you would like to talk about.)
3. A discussion question for the class.

### **APPROACHES TO POETRY**

1. Artistic aspects of the poem itself: form, structure, style, imagery, sound, etc. How does the poem, as a poem, embody its meaning? “Close reading.” Formal analysis.
2. What is the “argument” of the poem, if any, and how does it relate to #3?
3. What aspects of culture, politics, and history inform the poem? What is it referring to or commenting on? How does the poem try to intervene in its political moment? What change does it seek? How does it attempt to appeal to its reader?
4. Biography of the Poet—what is the relation between the life of the poet and the ideas or perspectives or philosophies of the poem?
5. Reception and criticism of the poem—key ideas, questions, debates. What do various critics think the poem means? Why? Do you agree or disagree? Why do they think the poem is interesting or important? What puzzles them or impresses them?
6. Literary history. How does the poem comment upon or reflect or depart from previous poems? Is the poem part of a particular movement? If so, explore further.
7. Relation of the poem to . . . visual arts, music, dance, performance, psychology, science, place, environment, . . . . .
8. Analyze the poem considering gender, race, class, sexual orientation, colonialism, religion, capitalism, and other potent social categories, ideologies, and forms of power.
9. Draw upon critical theories such as structuralism, poststructuralism, Marxism, cultural studies, gender studies, or psychoanalysis to analyze such things as discourse, double voicing, subjectivity, social construction, commodification.

