Course Description

In this course we shall read a wide range of poetry, largely lyric, from Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard in the early sixteenth century to John Milton and Katherine Philips in the later seventeenth century. We shall work to situate poems amidst the careers and historical situations of their authors, but we shall also pay attention to form and genre. We shall explore the productive tension between formal control and insurgent passion in the poetry of early modern England. Why might a writer choose to articulate desire in formally patterned language? Is literary form the necessary vehicle, or the constraint, of desire? How do class, gender, and dis/ability mark lyric utterance? How does the material production and imagined audience of a poem alter its expression and meaning? Is there a politics of lyric form in the early modern period? With the close reading of a wide range of poems, we shall investigate a range of possible motives for putting into carefully patterned language the chaotic vagaries of emotion and appetite.

Course Goals

1. Enabling you to read older poetry with ease and enjoyment;
2. Deepening your understanding of lyric form and conventions with respect to the social conditions of the individuals engaged in lyric composition in the early modern period;
3. Developing your close reading methods and strategies for intricate and sometimes challenging poetic language;
4. Encouraging your facility to express complex literary appreciation in writing.

Course Requirements

Attendance and participation 20% of course grade
Short paper (5 pages; close reading) 20% of course grade
In-class reports and presentations 20% of course grade
Final paper (12 pages; critical analysis) 40% of course grade

Required Materials


Schedule

Note: From the second week onwards, each class will include brief reports of critical essays pertinent to the poetry we are reading. Each student will be responsible for 2-3 reports.

Week 1
Introduction
Petrarch, selections from Rime Sparse (handouts)
Wyatt, “They fle from me,” “Who so list to hount,” “It may be good like it who list,” “My lute awake” (PB 181-84)
Surrey, “The soote season” (PB 185)
Turberville, “To his love” (PB 186)

Week 2
Sidney, Certain Sonnets 4 (PB 196), Astrophil and Stella 1, 2, 9, 72, 81, 83, “Eighth Song,” “Eleventh Song” (PB 199-208)
Spenser, “Maye” from The Shepheardes Calender, Amoretti 23, 64, 67, 70, 71, “Epithalamion” (PB 395-401, 231-247)

Reports
Catherine Bates, “Wyatt, Surrey, and the Henrician Court” (EMEP)
William J. Kennedy, “Sidney’s Astrophil and Stella and Petrarchism” (EMEP)
Bart Van Es, “Spenserian Pastoral” (EMEP)

Week 3
Greville, Caelica 22, 27,39,44,84 (PB 208-212)
Gascoigne, “A Sonet written in praise of the brown beautie” (PB 192)

Reports
Colin Burrow, Introduction to *The Oxford Shakespeare: The Complete Sonnets and Poems*
Jonathan Goldberg, “Literary Criticism, Literary History, and the Place of Homoeroticism” (EMEP)
Sasha Roberts, “Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* and English Sonnet Sequences” (EMEP)

Week 4
Shakespeare, *The Rape of Lucrece*
Whitney, “To her unconstant Lover” (PB 187-191)
Wroth, *Pamphilia to Amphilanthus*, P1-P13, P15-P25, P31-P34, P40, P52-P55, P70, P74, P77-P90, P103

Reports
Patrick Cheney, “Shakespeare’s Literary Career and Narrative Poetry” (EMEP)
Naomi J. Miller, “Lady Mary Wroth and Women’s Love Poetry” (EMEP)

Week 5

Reports
Andrew Hadfield, “Donne’s *Songs and Sonets* and Artistic Identity” (EMEP)

Week 6

Close reading paper due

Nashe, “The Choise of Valentines” (PB 253-63)
Marlowe, “Hero and Leander” (PB 266-89)
Carew, “A Rapture” (Norton 302-306)
Herrick, “The Vine,” “Delight in Disorder,” “Julia’s Petticoat,” “To the Virgins” (Norton 183-184, 185, 189, 195-196)
Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress,” “The Garden” (Norton 543-544, 553-555)
Philips, “An Answer to another” (PB 378)

Reports

Week 7
Jonson, “Inviting a Friend to Supper,” “To Penshurst” (Norton 89-90, 97-100)
Philips, “Friendship’s Mystery,” “Friendship in Embleme,” “To my Excellent Lucasia” (PB 517-522)
Herrick, “The Hock Cart” (Norton 197-198)
Carew, “To Saxham” (Norton 300-301)
Marvell, “Upon Appleton House” (Norton 559-581)
Lovelace, “The Snail” (Norton 500-501)

Reports
Thomas Healy, “Marvell and Pastoral” (EMEP)
Raymond Williams, “Pastoral and Counter-Pastoral” (Norton)

Week 8
Lanyer, Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum
Donne, “Satire 3 (Kind pity),” Holy Sonnets II (“As due by many titles”), IV (“Oh my black soul”), VI (“This is my play’s last scene”), VII (“At the round earth’s imagined corners”), IX (“If poisonous minerals”), X (“Death be not proud”), XI (“Spit in my face”), XII (“Why are we by all creatures”), XIII (“What if this present”), XIV (“Batter my heart”), XVII (“Since she whom I loved”), XVIII (“Show me, dear Christ”), XIX (“Oh, to vex me”), “Good Friday, 1613. Riding Westward” (Norton 53-55, 69-76)

Reports
Helen Wilcox, “Lanyer and the Poetry of Land and Devotion” (EMEP)
Achsah Guibbory, “Donne’s Religious Poetry and the Trauma of Grace” (EMEP)
Danielle Clarke, “Mary Sidney Herbert and Women’s Religious Verse” (EMEP)

Week 9

Reports
John Drury, General Introduction to George Herbert: The Complete Poetry
Joseph H. Summers, “The Poem as Hieroglyph” (Norton 878-90)

Week 10
Southwell, “The burning Babe” (PB 535)
Anonymous, “Yet if his Majestie our Sovereigne lord” (PB 585)
Crashaw, “A Hymne of the Nativity,” “To the Noblest and best of Ladyes” (PB 591-593)
Vaughan, “They are all gone into the world of light” (PB 660-661)
Philips, “Epitaph,” “Orinda upon little Hector Philips” (PB 661-663)
Week 11


Constable, “To St Mary Magdalen” (PB 536)

Marvell, “A Coronet” (PB 616-617)

Askew, “The Balade” (PB 527-528)

Week 12


Trapnel, selection from The Cry of a Stone (PB 613)

Collins, “Another Song exciting to spirituall Mirth” (PB 614-616)


Randolph, “An Elegy” (Norton 341-342)


Lovelace, “Song. To Lucasta,” “Gratiana dauncing and singing,” “To Althea, From Prison” (PB 367-370)

Week 13

Annotated bibliography for final paper due

Bradstreet, “The Author to her Book,” “Before the Birth of One of Her Children,” “By Night when Others Soundly Slept,” “Contemplations,” “A Dialogue between Old England and New,” “The Four Ages of Man,” “To Her Father with Some Verses,” “To My Dear and Loving Husband” (handouts)


Week 14

Presentation of research questions for final papers

Examinations Week

Critical analysis paper due