

ENGL 2306: Introduction to Poetry

Instructor: Elizabeth Lyons

Class Meeting Time: Tu/Th 4:00-5:30 pm

Course Goals:

Poetry is perhaps the oldest literary form, and one that stretches across all cultures, languages, and social situations. Despite the lack of clear financial benefit, there are more people in this country writing and publishing poems than ever in our history. This course will examine the complicated questions of what we mean when we talk about poetry, what role poetry has played through history, and why it is important today.

We will approach the study of poetry from several perspectives, surveying the historical evolution of the lyric in the first unit, then exploring the ways in which poems engage the world aesthetically, socially, personally, etc. We will discuss historical trends, socio-political pressures, the play of language, the conventions of form, and our own reactions and experiences of these.

Hopefully everyone will emerge from the class with not only a better understanding of the ways poetry works, and what is being written today, but also how we got here, and why it all matters.

Reading List:

Ferguson, Margaret, Mary Jo Salter, and Jon Stallworthy, eds. *The Norton Anthology of Poetry, Shorter 5th Edition*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2005..