

IN 264 Voices and Visions: A Television Course in Modern Poetry Faculty Designed Independent Study (FDIS)

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Course Description

Students will use the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) series “Voices & Visions” as an introduction to the study of their choice of several major American poets, including: Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, Hart Crane, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, William Carlos Williams, Robert Frost, Elizabeth Bishop, Wallace Stevens, Robert Lowell, and Sylvia Plath. Students will also read a book of poems by their selected poet(s) and review biographical material, before demonstrating the competence in one of a variety of ways.

Competences

A-1-A Can interpret works of art and relate them to one’s own experience.

A-1-C Can analyze artistic and textual works in terms of form, content, and style.

A-1-D Can analyze writers’ or artists’ representation of human experience.

Faculty

R. Craig Sautter is a poet, writer, editor, publisher, and political media consultant. He is the author of several books, including a volume of poetry, *Expresslanes Through The Inevitable City*, plus non-fiction books *Philadelphia Presidential Conventions, 2000*, *Inside the Wigwam, Chicago Presidential Conventions 1860-1996* (with Edward M. Burke), *The Wicked City: Chicago from Kenna to Capone* (with Curt Johnson,) *Floyd Dell: Essays from the Friday Literary Review 1909-1913*, and *Smart Schools, Smart Kids* (With Edward B. Fiske and Sally Reed.) His poetry has appeared in literary magazines across the nation, in art shows, and a movie. For several years, he served as “poet-in-residence” to 36 schools in upstate New York, and for the Illinois Arts Council. For the past two decades he has taught a variety of classes at SNL.

Learning Experience

The PBS series will be an occasion for learning about the lives and works of significant American poets who have shaped our literary tradition. The student will independently watch the series, take notes in a spiral notebook on each tape watched, and write a short reflective, one page essay after each viewing. The student will also read, for at least one month, a volume of poetry by each poet who is under examination, reading for pleasure, and focusing on one or two poems to dissect and discuss in a final paper or discussion with the instructor.

Expected Outcomes

This course will help SNL students:

1. Read poetry with more comprehension, sensitivity, and appreciation;
2. Recognize the qualities that define the art of poetry such as concentration of imagery, pattern of sound, and use of descriptive language;
3. Gain insight into each poet’s vision of the world and sense of language;
4. Develop a sense of the literary tradition that each poet represents.

Procedure

1. Contact the instructor at 773-262-5806 to discuss course overview and your independent learning plan to fulfill this competence.
2. Obtain the tapes for the PBS series, one at a time, and watch them, taking notes in a spiral notebook as though you were in a lecture class. At the end of each note-taking session, at the end of your notes, write a free-hand reflective essay of one page or more on what you just viewed in the tape from your personal perspective.
3. Tapes may be obtained in several ways, one at a time, for about a week.

Tapes are on reserve for SNL students at the DePaul University, Lincoln Park, Richardson Library. Or they can be obtained on-line from any DePaul campus from Lincoln Park and delivered to your campus later in the week. (Tapes must be returned on time to allow access to other students. Naturally, you are responsible for loss or damage.)

The tapes can also be obtained from any public library in Illinois. Either they have them or can get them. The series occasionally shows up on educational T.V.

4. Select a book of poems by each poet you are focusing on (AL-1, one poet; AL-3, two poets; AL-C, two poets) and read the book(s) for pleasure for a month, for each poet you are picking.

(Check out the library under poetry or book stores under poetry for book paperbacks.)

Evidence Students Will Submit

1. Write a five-to-seven page final paper that a) touches on the writer's background b) that analyzes one or two of the poems you concentrated on while reading. You should talk about the poem's form, the poet's choice of words and images, the theme(s), the sounds of words, the "meaning" and so forth. Use language of an intelligent reader, rather than worrying about technical terms, unless you have learned those terms and want to show your knowledge c) that gives your emotional reaction to the poet and his/her writing, and explains why you react that way.

(1. b) Or instead of a final paper, you can memorize one or two of the poet's poems and recite them to the instructor and discuss the poet and poems.

(1. c.) Or you can create an artistic collage that explores a particular poem or poems by the poet.

1. d.) Or you can propose some other creative way to demonstrate your new learning. (Two students once did a video tape of themselves playing Siskle and Ebert arguing about two poets. Another woman read poems of Langston Hughes to homeless people in her park and had them contribute to a collective poem. One woman made a video tape of herself on a hilltop expressively reading her favorite poems.) I am open to creative demonstrations.

2. Submit also, your notebook or notes and reflections on the PBS tapes. Mail it to the address at the top of this syllabus. (Enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope large enough for the notebook and paper and I will send it back to you.)

3. If you cannot finish your independent study within one quarter, notify the instructor that you want an "Incomplete," before the last class of the regular SNL class schedule. I will issue an "Incomplete," which I will replace with a grade when you turn in a satisfactory notebook and paper or project.

Criteria for Assessment

Your grade will be based on how well you understood or interacted with the poet(s) you studied, as reflected in your notes and reflection, and the quality of insights in your final paper or project.

Since I am a professional writer, I also will point out writing flaws and give you some tips to improve your writing. If necessary, I may require a rewrite. We will work until it is in satisfactory form. Then I will apply the above criteria.

Student Consultation

Feel free to contact the instructor to clarify work, discuss problems, or ask for guidance.

Call (before 9 p.m.) or e-mail.