Instructor: Steve Olson
Office Hours: see Faculty Info in Blackboard
Office: L&L 416A
E-mail address: olsons@cwu.edu
Office Phone: 1536
Writing Center: Brooks Library, First Floor, Learning Commons, 963-1270,
http://www.cwu.edu/learning-commons/university-writing-center

TEXTS

COURSE OBJECTIVES
We will read, study, and discuss the poems of Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman, the two most notable American poets of the nineteenth century. We will be coming at their poetry from a number of angles: biographical, cultural, aesthetic. We'll weave in and out of their work, discussing ways they responded to key nineteenth-century events (like the Civil War, developing technology, changing notions of science, the women's rights movement) and ways they challenged orthodox views of writing poetry, of configuring gender, and of projecting America's future. We'll move back and forth between Whitman and Dickinson, looking for places where the work of one engages the work of the other and initiates a dialogue (not that they communicated—or even read the other).

We will be working to articulate what the poet's views are and how the two poets differ in their responses to various issues. Some essential questions we might begin asking are these: In what ways are Whitman's and Dickinson's poems different from those by their American contemporaries? In what ways are they similar? Other questions include: Who am I? What is "I"? What is our relation to other persons in our nation? . . . in our culture(s)? . . . in the world? What is our relation to nature—in terms of our worldly environment, in terms of our “place” in the cosmos, in terms of Emerson’s “not me”? Who or what is "God," and is "God" at home anymore? What is "death"? How do we die and what happens after death? How do we deal with death on a massive scale? Who and “what” is the reader? What is her/his relationship with the poems? . . . with the poet? What are "words" and how do they work? Has science replaced religion? How do we “know”?.

OUTCOMES
Upon completion of the course a student will be able to
415
- Understand and discuss the relationship of culture to literary expression, critique, and evaluation.
- Be able to identify cultural assumptions, your own and others’, which influence your reading of the literary text.
- Discuss a text’s difference/specificity (the culture/s in which and/or against which a text
was written, read, critiqued) as well as its commonality—aesthetic and political—with other texts.

- Write essays exploring the issues as stated above.

515

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- Discuss a text’s difference/specificity (the culture/s in which and/or against which a text was written, read, critiqued) as well as its commonality—aesthetic and political—with other texts.
- Write essays exploring the issues as stated above.
- Conduct responsible research that is informed by knowledge of appropriate critical theory, American literary issues, and recent scholarship.

**As in all literature courses, students will demonstrate both** (1) the skills associated with the close reading of literary texts and the process of interpretation and (2) the knowledge of and facility with various literary terms and critical concepts appropriate to the course texts.

**MEANS OF ASSESSMENT**

414
Writing Assignments: Two papers—the first will be on a Dickinson or a Whitman poem, and the second must compare poems by the two poets. The first paper will be a minimum of 1500 words, the second, a minimum of 2400 words (word count does **not** include notes or works cited). Some research will be required.

Presentations: All students will participate in a presentation group on an assigned topic.

Exams: I’m not planning on a final exam, but rather on a few shorter “exams.”

Daily preparation for class will include studying the required selections, on which I may give unannounced quizzes.

515

As above for 415, with the following exceptions:

Writing Assignments: Two—an annotated bibliography and a research paper of 4500 words (word count does **not** include notes or works cited).

Presentations: graduate students will act as “chairs” of the presentation groups.

Furthermore, graduate students will act as discussion group leaders.

**HELP WITH WRITING ASSIGNMENTS: CWU’S UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER**

Check it out at [http://www.cwu.edu/learning-commons/university-writing-center](http://www.cwu.edu/learning-commons/university-writing-center)

Writing Consultants offer free, one-on-one sessions to all CWU students, of all disciplines and levels. Students can brainstorm ideas, find research, and revise their drafts for organization, citation style, and grammar, learning how to edit their own papers.

You can drop in or call to make an appointment. The Writing Center is located in the Learning Commons, first floor of Brooks Library. The phone number is 963-1270.
CITIZENSHIP
I expect you to participate conscientiously, conduct yourselves in class responsibly, attend class each period, complete assignments on time, and demonstrate academic integrity. If you do miss class, remember to talk with a classmate about that day’s lesson and check Blackboard and Groupwise for any new information. You are responsible for completing any work assigned while you are absent. You may turn in assignments early if you know you are going to miss class. Be a good citizen to other classmates, not only to me.

Academic Honesty (or lack thereof)
Plagiarism is presenting as your own the IDEAS OR WRITING of someone else. Plagiarized papers will receive an F, at best. I may fail you for the course for plagiarizing a single assignment.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating, and it is illegal. One shouldn’t have to say this, but I will: plagiarism is also unethical and immoral, which may be a greater offense to other human beings than its illegality. University Policy requires that serious cases of plagiarism, which are a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, be reported to Student Affairs. (See CWU’s policy on academic dishonesty in appendix B of the catalog.)

Unfortunately, the increasing ease with which papers may be purchased raises suspicion of plagiarism. The following three specific types of problems will lead to a great deal of grief on your part as well as a possible smear on your academic record. 1) Although I do not think of myself as a police officer, it is all too easy to spot a non-student paper. I reserve the right to ask you to reproduce in my office the major arguments and writing style of any paper you turn in. If you cannot do this upon request, I will consider the paper plagiarized and you will receive an F for it and possibly for the class. 2) If you turn in a paper at any time during the course that is different from the one you proposed, is not accompanied by rough drafts (if required), and/or is not accompanied by copies of outside sources (if required), you will receive an F for that paper and perhaps for the entire course. 3) If, without my permission, you turn in the same paper for this class that you have turned in to another class, you will receive an F for that paper. Please take these warnings very seriously.

Absences
• Be punctual: you will be counted absent if you are perpetually tardy (more than twice) or are very late to a single class.
• You will be counted absent if you are not prepared for class.
• For 4 absences I may reduce your final grade by five percent.
• For 5 absences I may reduce your final grade by ten percent.
• For 6 or more absences I may fail you for the course.
• There is no such thing as an excused absence (though I think I’m reasonable).

Participation
This is a difficult item to grade, and you might think it "subjective." However, several things reveal how involved you are in the course. Attendance: merely showing up for class every day doesn’t earn an "A" for participation: being there is a minimum, a basic requirement (it could even be less than adequate). Your level of participation in both large-group and small-group discussions: how many, how consistent, and how thoughtful are the comments you make? the questions you ask? Your record of performance on quizzes: do your scores fluctuate, indicating sporadic attention to the course material? The thoughtfulness and style of your papers: are they dashed off? somewhat thoughtful? very thoughtful? The thoughtfulness of your answers on exams: do they reveal careful and attentive preparation? Your discussions with me outside of
class: do they evince a conscientious student? Your attitude: what do your tone, demeanor, perpetual tardiness, perpetual excuses reveal about your conscientiousness? These aspects help you maintain, lose, or gain credibility. You are welcome to ask me any time during the quarter how you are doing in terms of participation or credibility. **I may use participation when awarding your final grade for the course by raising or lowering your grade one degree (e.g., B+ to A-) or one full letter.** In other words, just as your grade may suffer by poor participation, it may benefit from exceptionally fine participation.

**GRADES**

**Timeliness:** I am not obliged to accept late assignments. However, should I agree to accept a late assignment, for each class day that it is late I may reduce the grade on it by five percent.

**Completeness:** Completing all assigned work is a minimum requirement of the course; this means that you may fail the course if any assignments are not completed (excepting quizzes).

**Distribution of Grades:** Assignments are weighted as follows to arrive at the final grade for the course:

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>Paper 1</td>
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<td>Paper 2</td>
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<td>Presentation</td>
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<td>Quizzes</td>
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<td>Paper workshops</td>
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<td>Group leadership</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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**Students with Disabilities**

Students with disabilities who wish to set up academic adjustments in this class should send me an electronic copy of their “Academic Adjustments” as soon as possible so we can meet to discuss how the approved adjustments will be implemented in this class. Students with disabilities without this documentation should contact the Center for Disability Services Office, Bouillon 140 or ds@cwu.edu or 509-963-1202 immediately.

**WELCOME TO THE COURSE!**
SCHEDULE

When (and if) I inform you of a quiz on Blackboard, it must be completed 30 MINUTES BEFORE THE BEGINNING OF THE CLASS PERIOD OF THE DAY it is assigned.
I have yet to add reading assignments from the biographies. I will most likely do that as we go along.
Abbreviations: D—Dickinson, E—Eagleton, H—Habegger, LG—Leaves of Grass, R—Reynolds, W—Whitman

Week 1, January
During the first week read the poems as listed below for discussion on the days assigned.
In addition, during the first week (1) preview the Table of Contents of Leaves of Grass (LG) to get an idea of how the book is put together. Preview the Appendixes and the Index of First Lines in The Poems of Emily Dickinson (PED). (2) Skim Bradley and Blodgett’s, and Franklin’s Introductions in LG and PED.
Finally, during the first two weeks of the course read the poems of other American poets of the time period to get an idea of the poetic scene that Dickinson and Whitman are writing in. A list of poets and poems is posted in a separate file.

6  Introduction to the course.
The brain/imagination; the self
8  Read “Pictures” by Whitman, pp. 560f in Leaves of Grass (LG).
  Read Dickinson poems on the brain and imagination. (Posted in another file.)
9  Read the “Inscriptions” section and “Starting from Paumanok” from LG.
10 Read Dickinson poems on the self. (Posted in another file.)
   Begin reading Whitman’s “Song of Myself” (dates 1891-92).

Week 2 (Jan. 13-17): the self; poetry and poetics. Read in the order listed.
Mon and Wed. WW: “Song of Myself”
Wed: Reynolds, Chp. 10, pp. 306-38
Thurs: ED: Poetry and poetics (1) (Here and following, the emboldened topics for Dickinson refer to units in the posted file <Dickinson poems to read – by topics>.)
Fri: ED: finish from Thursday
  W: “Out of the Cradle . . .” and “There Was a Child Went Forth”
  E: Chapter 1

Week 3 (20-24): poetry and poetics; gender, sex, eroticism, love
1/20 (Mon.): Martin Luther King, Jr., Holiday
D: Poetry and poetics (2)--poems on poetry, words, publication:
W: “Starting from Paumanok” (reprise), “Crossing Brooklyn Ferry,” “By Blue Ontario’s Shore,”
   “Preface” to the 1855 edition of LG
Presentation on poetry in mid-19th-century America
D: gender, sex, eroticism, love (including bride, wife, marriage)
W: Parts of “Song of Myself” (as you note from reviewing the poem)
  “Children of Adam” (section of LG)
  “Calamus” (section of LG)
  “To a Common Prostitute”
  “Live Oak, With Moss”
E: Chapter 2
Week 4 (27-31): gender, sex, eroticism, love; death—the dead, dying, immortality
1/29 (Wed.): Faculty Development Day. No class.
Continue from last week
**Presentation on gender, sex, eroticism, love**
D: **Death—the dead, dying, immortality**
W: Parts of “Song of Myself” (as you note from reviewing the poem)
  “When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom’d”
  “O Captain! My Captain!”
  “Outlines for a Tomb”
  “Whispers of Heavenly Death” (section)
  “A Voice from Death”
  “Death’s Valley”
  “On the Same Picture”
E: Chapter 3

**FIRST PAPER DUE by 11:59 p.m. Friday for students in 415**

Week 5 (Feb 3-7): death—the dead, dying, immortality: religion and spirituality—earth, body, soul
Continue from last week
**Presentation on death, the dead, dying, immortality**
D: **religion and spirituality—earth, body, soul** (including spirit, redemption, immortality, eternity, infinity)
W: As always, parts of “Song of Myself” (as you note from reviewing the poem)
   *Leaves of Grass*, passim
   “Passage to India”
   “Whispers of Heavenly Death” (section), reconsidered

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE by 11:59 p.m. Friday for 515 students**

Week 6 (10-14): Religion and spirituality—earth, body, soul
Mon: ED. finish **religion and spirituality—earth, body, soul** (including spirit, redemption, immortality, eternity, infinity)
Wed: WW. As always, parts of “Song of Myself” (as you note from reviewing the poem)
   *Leaves of Grass*, passim
   “Passage to India”
   “Whispers of Heavenly Death” (section), reconsidered
Th: **Presentation on religion and spirituality—earth, body, soul**
Fri: Eagleton: Chapter 4, pp. 65-88
   Start science and technology?

Week 7 (17-21): Science and technology
2/17 (Mon.): President’s Day Holiday
D: **science and technology**
W: “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer,” p. 227
   “Passage to India,” pp. 345f
   “Return of the Heroes,” pp. 301f
Week 8 (24-28): Science and technology; war
Continue from last week: Presentation on science and technology
D: war.
W: “Drum-Taps” (section), pp. 234-75
   “Memories of President Lincoln” (section), pp. 276-85
   “Ashes of Soldiers” (in “Songs of Parting,” pp. 411-12, originally a Drum-Taps poem)
   And don’t forget; there’re always sections of “Song of Myself”

Presentation on war
E: Chapter 5, pp. 102-20

Week 9 (March 3-7): Nature
D: nature
W: “Sea-Drift” (section)
   “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer”
   “The Dalliance of the Eagles”
   “Thou Orb Aloft Full Dazzling”
   “A Prairie Sunset”
   “Give Me the Splendid Silent Sun”
   And don’t forget; there’s always that same old “Song . . .”
E: Chapter 5, pp. 120-42

Week 10 (10-14): Nature; miscellaneous
Continue from last week: Presentation on nature
D: miscellaneous
W: “Salut au Monde!”
   “Song of the Open Road”
   “Thou Mother with Thy Equal Brood”
   “From Noon to Starry Night” (section)
   “Songs of Parting” (section)
   “The Sleepers,” 356-64

Final: SECOND WRITING ASSIGNMENTS DUE from both 415 and 515 by the end of the day scheduled for a final exam: Tues., March 18, 8-10 a.m.