

Syllabus

Instructor: Jonathan Morse, Kuykendall 518 TTh 9:30-10:20 and by appointment.
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Class web page: jonathanmorse.net

Texts, at the university bookstore:

R. S. Gwynn, ed., *Poetry: A Pocket Anthology*

Robert Pinsky, *The Sounds of Poetry: A Brief Guide*

Annie Finch and Kathrine Varnes, eds., *An Exaltation of Forms*

Grades: based on four five-page papers, a midterm, and a final. The first two papers, the midterm, and the final will be worth 15% each; the third and fourth papers will be worth 20% each. I grade on the plus-minus system, with an A worth 4.0 points, an A- 3.7, a B+ 3.3, a B 3.0, and so on. Class participation will raise your grade in borderline cases, and upward-trending averages are better than lower-trending averages. If you miss one assignment, it will get an F; if you miss more than one, you'll get an F in the course.

General idea and organization of the course: If you think of language as a game, you can play it within or around or against its rules. Once you've had a rule-related idea and given it a name like "inching" or "rhyme," fun can begin. In language, the bodily organ most responsible for the fun is the ear.

So we'll spend August through October learning some of the rules of sound that words have played by and then, starting in about the middle of the nineteenth century, amended. Our rulebooks in that part of the course will be the established major-league ones by Pinsky and Gwynn. Then in November we'll go adventuring to other playgrounds with Finch and Varnes.

Calendar, subject to change

8/22 Introduction: "A more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order."

24 Anatomy of the ear: letter, phoneme, syllable, accent.

29 Rhythm: Pinsky chapter I, with examples from Gwynn.

31 A pair of sound examples in detail: Thomas Campion's "Rose-Cheeked Laura" (Finch 133) and Carolyn Forché's "The Colonel" (Gwynn). Paper 1 assigned: Marianne Moore's "Mongoose Civative" and, on the other hand, the Ford Motor Company's Edsel.

9/5, 7 Pinsky chapter II. Paper 1 due September 7.

12, 14, 19 Pinsky chapter III.

21 Now that we have the technical vocabulary, let's talk about the differences in sound between two twentieth-century poets in Gwynn: Wendy Cope and Carolyn Forché.

26, 28, 10/3 The idea of diction.

10/5 Midterm

10, 12 "Iambic Meter," Finch 39-46, with examples from Gwynn.

17, 19 We write some blank verse. Paper 2 assigned October 19: rhyme vs. non-rhyme.

24, 26, 31 Rhyme

11/3 Paper 2 due.

7-21 (five periods) Stanzas: couplet, quatrain, sonnet. Paper 3 assigned November 8, due November 21. Paper 4 (sorry, but we're running out of time) assigned November 16.

23 Holiday

11/28 – 12/7 (four periods) Captive forms on display in Ms. Finch's zoo. Paper 4 due November 30.

Final: Thursday, December 14, 9:45-11:45.