

18 September 2020



# **English Literature Critical Practice: Poetry Handbook 2020-21**

## INTRODUCTION TO CRITICAL PRACTICE COURSES

These courses have been designed to intensify your awareness of the critical tools central to the study of English Literature. In your Pre-Honours years, you were given a brief introduction to formal and critical discourses in the first semester, and over the rest of those two years you were provided with an overall sense of the historical development of literary forms and genres. Collectively, the Critical Practice (CP) courses build upon that training. The practical skills and range of knowledge acquired over the year will equip you with a command of the precise critical terminology necessary for Honours level study in both third and fourth years.

The four CP courses – Poetry, Performance, Prose, and Criticism – will expand your sensitivity to specific generic conventions and extend your knowledge of associated critical vocabulary. This, in turn, will hone your skills in the close reading, description, and analysis of a variety of texts. In the Performance course in particular you will be encouraged to reflect upon the meaning and effect of texts in relation to their staging, exploring a range of different aspects and styles of theatre.

If you have any specific queries about the courses you may consult the Course Organiser; additionally, you may consult full time members of staff during their office hours. While the CP courses do, of course, count for credit toward your degree in their own right, the skills acquired in them are also designed to be transferable. In particular, the critical terminology acquired should be used to inform your analysis of the texts you study in the rest of your Honours courses, including your Dissertation (where appropriate).

# Critical Practice: Poetry

## General Information

COURSE ORGANISER: Dr Alan Gillis (alan.gillis@ed.ac.uk)

COURSE ADMINISTRATOR: Sheila Strathdee (S.Strathdee@ed.ac.uk)

## CREDIT WEIGHTING

All Critical Practice courses are worth 10 credits.

Please refer to your respective Degree Programme Table (for those within the School of LLC see [http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/19-20/dpt/drps\\_llc.htm](http://www.drps.ed.ac.uk/19-20/dpt/drps_llc.htm) ) to see the ways in which the CP courses contribute towards your overall degree classification.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment Part 1 (40%). Essay of 1000 words due **Monday 2 November**  
Assessment Part 2 (60%): Essay of 1500 words due **Wednesday 9 December**

Full Information on assessment and regulations available separately

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

On completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. identify a range of poetic techniques and verse forms;
2. analyse and discuss the conjunctions of theory and practice in named poems;
3. recognise different critical approaches to the poetic artefact, and ways of reading that combine thematic and formal issues;
4. demonstrate a set of practical skills and range of knowledge that will complement and supplement other course work undertaken in the honours years

## COURSE RATIONALE

The course will introduce students to the critical skills they need to read a variety of poetic forms. It will examine a range of the key techniques of versification, including metre and rhythm, imagery and metaphor, rhyme and verse forms. The aim is to enhance the ways in which poetry can be read and to give you a critical vocabulary with which to define and explore this process. The course will also consider a wide range of poetic modes and explore how these have changed over time. It will also consider some of the key critical questions that bear upon the interpretation of poetry.

**Lectures** will describe and analyse poetic technique with reference to specific examples and will suggest their wider application for students to develop either in their own reading or on other courses where relevant. Students will be free as usual to consult course lecturers, or any other member of staff, during office hours. Questions and exercises suggested in lectures during the course will direct students towards putting into practice the concepts introduced.

## COURSE DELIVERY

This year, the course will be delivered via five 2-week blocks:

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|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 <b>Poetic Form</b> | (Prof Francis O’Gorman) |
| 2 <b>Verse forms</b> | (Dr Simon Cooke)        |
| 3 <b>Lyric</b>       | (Prof Penny Fielding)   |
| 4 <b>Vernacular</b>  | (Dr Alan Gillis)        |
| 5 <b>Gender</b>      | (Dr Suzanne Trill)      |

Lectures will be pre-recorded rather than delivered in-person.

You will find **lecture recordings** in named folders in LEARN, the virtual learning environment for the course, which is accessed via MyEd.

Each lecture will be split into 4 shorter sections, to suit the video medium. Each video lecture will be accompanied by a further reading guide, and PowerPoint or handout.

Lectures will be posted by 12 noon on the first Monday of each block.

For the hour **12pm-1pm, on the second Monday of each block**, the lecturer will be available to answer questions in a **live chat Q&A session**. This will take place on the course’s Discussion Board found in LEARN.

Make sure to watch the lectures (a) in the right order; (b) taking notes on the important points, and things you don't follow; and (c) in plenty of time to think about what the lecturer has said and to formulate questions to ask them in the Q&A forum. **You can post your question(s) there at any time between watching the lecture and the hour of the session AND/OR during the session itself;** but before you do so, please check that no-one else has already posted the same question! This will help the lecturer make efficient use of the time available.

There will also be three further Q & A sessions with the course convenor for general info and queries about assessment.

The lecture recordings and Q&A chat transcripts will remain available all year.

### FULL PROGRAMME

28/09/20, 12pm-1pm	General Info Q&A Session	Dr Alan Gillis
<b>BLOCK 1: POETIC FORM</b>		
28/09/20, 12pm	Lecture available on LEARN	Prof Francis O’Gorman
05/10/20, 12pm-1pm	Q&A Session	Prof Francis O’Gorman
<b>BLOCK 2: VERSE FORMS</b>		
12/10/20, 12pm	Lecture available on LEARN	Dr Simon Cooke
19/10/20, 12pm-1pm	Q&A Session	Dr Simon Cooke
<b>BLOCK 3: LYRIC</b>		
26/10/20, 12pm	Lecture available on LEARN	Prof Penny Fielding
02/11/20, 12pm-1pm	Q&A Session	Prof Penny Fielding
<b>BLOCK 4: VERNACULAR</b>		
09/11/20, 12pm	Lecture available on LEARN	Dr Alan Gillis
16/11/20, 12pm-1pm	Q&A Session	Dr Alan Gillis
<b>BLOCK 5: GENDER</b>		
23/11/20, 12pm	Lecture available on LEARN	Dr Suzanne Trill
30/11/20, 12pm-1pm	Q&A Session	Dr Suzanne Trill
12/10/20, 12pm-1pm	Assessment 1 Q&A	Dr Alan Gillis
09/11/20, 12pm-1pm	Assessment 2 Q&A	Dr Alan Gillis

## SET TEXTS

For each block, the lecturer will supply a PDF of poems which they will discuss in the lecture and/or they would like you to read and further consider in light of the lecture.

The cumulated 5 PDFs of poems will constitute the primary text for the course.

## FURTHER READING

### POETRY

Alongside poetry on the internet, it is very strongly recommended that you seek out a curated guide to quality verse in book form. For a full sense of 'the canon' in one volume:

- *The Norton Anthology of Poetry*. Ed. Margaret Ferguson, Tim Kendall and Mary Jo Salter. Sixth ed. London: W. W. Norton & Co., 2018.
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This is the fullest one-volume text of its kind available. It is therefore recommended, but is formidably huge, heavy as a brick, and designed to be read at the desk.

For a more portable 'way in' to enjoying poetry:

- *The Rattle Bag*. Ed. Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes (1982). London: Faber, and Faber 2005.
- *The Zoo of the New*. Ed. Nick Laird and Don Paterson. London: Faber and Faber, 2018.

A more portable starting point for a historical sense of English verse:

- *The New Penguin Book of English Verse*. Ed. Paul Keegan. London: Penguin, 2000.

From there, you can proceed to similar anthologies of other nations, epochs, genres and so on – but Keegan's book is a great place to start gaining a sense of the progress of Anglophone verse while still enjoying oneself.

For reading poetry online, the following are recommended:

- <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>
- <https://poets.org/>
- <https://poetryarchive.org/>
- <https://www.scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/>

## POETRY CRITICISM

Each block's lecturer will provide information on further reading.

The following is more general guidance as recommended and further reading:

- Attridge, Derek. *Poetic Rhythm: An Introduction*. London: Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- \_\_\_ and Thomas Carper, *Meter And Meaning: An Introduction To Rhythm In Poetry*. London: Routledge, 2003.
- Brooks, Cleanth, *The Well-Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry*. New York: Dobson, 1968.
- \_\_\_ and R.P. Warren. *Understanding Poetry*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960.
- Cook, Jon (ed.). *Poetry in Theory: An Anthology, 1900-2000*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
- Eagleton, Terry. *How to Read a Poem*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2007.
- Easthope, Antony. *Poetry as Discourse*. London: Methuen, 1983.
- Fenton, James. *An Introduction to English Poetry*. London: Penguin, 2002.
- Furniss, Tom, and Michael Bath, *Reading Poetry: An Introduction*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Prentice Hall, 1996.
- Fussell, Paul. *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form*. London: Random House, 1979.
- Gross, Harvey. *Sound and Form in Modern Poetry*. University of Michigan Press, 1964.
- Hurley, Michael, and Michael O'Neil (eds.). *Poetic Form: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Koch, Kenneth. *Making Your Own Days: The Pleasures of Reading and Writing Poetry*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1998.
- Lennard, John. *The Poetry Handbook*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Nowottny, Winifred. *The Language Poets Use (1965)*. London: Bloomsbury, 2000.
- Paterson, Don. *The Poem: Lyric, Sign, Metre*. London: Faber and Faber, 2018.
- Preminger, Alex and T.V.F. Brogan (eds.). *The New Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (3rd ed.). Princeton University Press, 1993.
- Wainwright, Jeffrey. *Poetry: The Basics*. Routledge, 2004.
- Wimsatt, W.K. *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry*. [1954] London: Methuen, 1970.
- Wolosky, Shira. *The Art of Poetry: How to Read a Poem*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.