

Wachusett Regional High School

Course Name: Contemporary Poetry Foundations

Grade (s): 11 & 12

Course Description:

A survey of major movements, poets, and poems of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. All students are required to complete a seminar project on a major contemporary poet, which includes a biographical sketch and analysis of key poems. Class participation is imperative in this seminar/workshop course.

Links to Student Expectations:

1. All students will develop skills to utilize technology to gather, to evaluate, to assimilate, and to present information.
2. All students will utilize critical thinking by using skills to identify and to provide resources to solve a problem.
3. All students will learn to communicate critically, persuasively, and personally in both oral and written expression.
4. All students will be able to make decisions and solve problems using logical processes (e.g., scientific method, induction, deduction, syllogism, etc.).
5. All students will develop skills to promote a sense of confidence in tackling the rigors of standardized tests such as the required MCAS and optional AP, SAT.

Interdisciplinary Connections:

- ✓ Art
- ✓ Film
- ✓ Music
- ✓ Social, cultural, and historical background

Essential Concepts:

1. Contemporary Poetry reflects social issues and cultural changes.
2. Contemporary Poetry exposes students to a wide variety of styles and voices.
3. Contemporary Poetry encourages a life long love of reading poetry.

Student Objectives:

1. Students will read and discuss poets and poetry with a focus on themes, style, voice, and literary techniques.
2. Students will be exposed to the different poetic movements of the 20th and 21st Centuries.
3. Students will analyze the poems with a focus on developing an understanding of the social context.
4. Students will develop their writing voices with an awareness of audience, genre, and purpose.
5. Students will develop their analytical writing skills through essays, journals, and research projects.
6. Students will participate in large and small group discussions as well as develop and deliver individual oral presentations.

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Suggestions for Instruction:

1. Students will read contemporary poetry with a focus on form, style, theme, and social context.
2. Students will look at poetry from the perspective of would-be poets in order to analyze the poet's purpose in using various literary devices.
3. Students will work in cooperative learning groups.
4. Students will work individually to develop a voice in poetic expression.
5. Students will hone critical thinking and writing skills by analyzing poetry.
6. Students will use the technologies in the Media and Writing Centers both for research purposes and for word processing.
7. Students will design and present oral presentation to demonstrate their understanding of poets, their works and the social context in which they write.

Suggestions for Assessment:

- ✓ Quizzes for close reading
- ✓ Tests for analytical understanding
- ✓ Essays for critical thinking
- ✓ Individual research projects on influential poets and their poetry
- ✓ Oral presentations
- ✓ Self-reflection and evaluation

Curriculum:

Suggested Writers:

This course involves reading a variety of pieces written by poets from the 20th and 21st Century. The list changes according to the political and social climate of the times. These poets include but are not limited to:

Nikki Giovanni, Grace Paley, Anne Sexton, Mary Oliver, Maxine Kumin, Donald Hall, Billy Collins, Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Sharon Olds, Alan Ginsberg, Pablo Neruda, Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney, Joseph Brodsky, Ai, Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks.

Suggested Movements/Units:

- ✓ Beat Poets
- ✓ Confessionalists
- ✓ Traditionalists
- ✓ Imagists
- ✓ Naturalist / Regionalists
- ✓ Poetry in Motion

Lesson Extensions:

- ✓ To encourage students to attend cultural performances including poetry readings and poetry slams.
- ✓ To encourage students to read and enjoy the works of newly published poets.
- ✓ To encourage students to read reviews and critical commentary of newly published poetry.
- ✓ Field trips and field studies.