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CRWR 515.01: Traditional Prosody

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CRWR 515 – 01: Traditional Prosody

Spring 2017

LA 243 Mon. 3-5:50 p.m.

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Course Description:

The word *prosody* originates from the Greek *prosodia*, meaning “song added to speech.” In fact, one definition of poetry is speech that is patterned in such a way as to sound musical. How that is accomplished—through stress, meter, line, stanza, rhyme—is the focus of this course. This is a course for practitioners; we will encounter form not only through careful and various reading and discussion of some of the great poems in the English language, but also through weekly memorizations, in which sound is literally embodied, and through assigned exercises designed to offer practice and familiarity in both traditional forms (form imposed from without) and open forms (form created during the act of composition itself, that is, from within). Along the way, we will examine some of the stylistic and ideological strategies that poets have employed as poetry evolved from a strict set of agreed upon rules to the diverse forms we see today. We will discover not only how but why form happens and what effects that has on the making itself.

Required texts:

- *Norton Anthology of Poetry*, 5th edition.
- Melissa Kwasny, Ed., *Toward the Open Field: Poets on the Art of Poetry 1800-1950*.
Please bring both books to every class.

Expectations:

Each week you will receive a list of assignments to be completed for the next class consisting of 1.) close reading of texts from the *Norton* and *Toward the Open Field*, 2.) memorization of poems and recitation of them in class, and 3.) written exercises.

Map of class:

Jan. 23 introduction—how to read a poem: line, stress, sound, stanza.
Jan. 30 accentual (strong stress) meter / alliteration
Feb. 6 common meter / the ballad form / types of rhyme
Feb. 13. accentual syllabic (meter) / iambic pentameter / blank verse
Feb. 20: President’s Day. No classes

Feb. 27 rhyme /iambic pentameter/ substitutions /the sonnet
Mar. 6 heroic couplets / terza rima / villanelle
Mar. 13 strophic patterns / varying feet / the ode
Mar. 20 spring break
March 27 sprung rhythm / consonance / assonance / extravagance
April 3 loosening the pentameter
April 10 free verse / open form / line / anaphora
April 17 modernism / collage /medley of forms
April 24 projective verse / back to the line again
May 1: the prose poem