

**FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
FAIRFIELD, CONNECTICUT

**POETRY**

Board of Education Approved 01/22/2008

# **POETRY**

## **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this semester course is to give students opportunities to learn about the genre of poetry and to develop their skills in writing poetry.

## **Audience**

Juniors and Seniors

## **Prerequisite**

For Seniors, completion of Junior English course. For Juniors, an addition to full-year English course

## **Design and Description**

The course focuses on writing, reading, and listening to poetry as well as reading and writing about poetry. Students will learn the elements of poetry (imagery, metaphor, meter allusion, rhyme, rhythm, sound structure, and form) to become poets themselves. Assessments will ask students to utilize forms, elements, and devices of poetry and identify them when writing about poetry. This course is based partially on a writing-workshop model, allowing students a weekly forum to discuss their own poetry with their writing groups. Students will informally respond to poetry by writing journals; they will also formally respond to poetry by writing critical essays. Major projects include a research project on the life and work of a major poet. In the fall, students will prepare for the college application process by writing a personal essay, which may be used as a college essay. In the spring, students will complete a senior English Independent Study Project.

## **Course Goals**

Students will learn to:

- increase their reading comprehension level and abstract thinking skills based on the complexity of the text selections.
- develop and apply a deeper understanding of the elements, devices, and genres of poetry.
- use language as a tool to explore, find, and convey growth and meaning through personal experience.
- both listen to and recite poetry to deepen their appreciation for the oral nature of the genre.
- engage in scholarly discourse (written and oral) about writing using the language of poetry.
- progress in their ability to think more abstractly in order to broaden, deepen, and enrich their life experience.
- internalize the knowledge that they gain about the craft of writing poetry in order to create purposeful and original poetry that resonates with themselves and others.
- develop and recognize their own voice in their writing through creative experimentation and structured study of the genre.

- increase the level of depth of their metacognition through their own reading, their discussion with peers and the teacher, and through examination of their own work.
- explore the relationship between poetry and other art forms (art, photography, other genres of literature) in order to see the poetic sensibility of artistic pursuits.
- independently select, read, and respond to poetry that speaks to them on a personal and aesthetic level.
- read and analyze essays of literary criticism for use in their own thinking and writing.
- determine the various influences on authors, political and social ideas as well as cultural and historical influences, in order to analyze the impact of those influences on the text.
- imitate poetic forms and styles of the authors they read to explore how the manipulation of style helps to achieve a purpose.
- demonstrate an appreciation for the ways in which poetry offers the reader an aesthetic experience.
- keep a collection of their work in writing folders for use to exemplify their growth as poets throughout the semester.

### **Course Objectives**

Students will be able to:

#### Reading

- read and discuss essays and poems about the writing of poetry.
- select and examine poetry of their choosing for response in reading journals.
- demonstrate acquisition of “Core Terminology” through written and oral discourse about class readings (essays, published poems, and student generated poems).
- select and investigate the work of a poet of their choice.
- research scholarly essays (literary criticism) about the life and work of a chosen poet.
- organize research information and write a three-four page first draft of a research paper.
- identify gaps in the research conducted for the Poet’s Research Project draft based on feedback from peers and teacher conferences.
- conduct continued research in order to further develop the Poet’s Research Project.
- write a five-seven page revised Poet’s Research Project.

#### Writing

- write one-two free-form poems.
- build vocabulary of “Core Terminology”.
- participate in various writing exercises inspired by the unit focus questions.
- use poetic prose to write a personal essay (college essay).
- write four poems focusing on use of figurative language and imagery and write one-two form poems.

- revise one-two poems using teacher feedback, writers' group feedback, and knowledge acquired from class work.
- use observations of visual art (paintings, photography) to express ideas using imagery that is concrete and rich with sensory details.
- pose an exploratory question about the writing style the major themes, historical perspective, or critical evaluation of a major poet.
- participate in attend at least one writing conference with the teacher.
- analyze a given poem for specific literary devices in the form of timed, in-class prompts.
- use language effectively to convey the personal meaning derived from life events.
- organize thinking for audience.
- use a strong and consistent voice in writing.
- demonstrate acquisition of advanced terminology through written and oral discourse about class readings (essays, published poems, and student generated poems).
- write four poems focusing on use of sound (meter, rhyme, sound devices), style, punctuation, and structure (line and stanza breaks, line variation, poem length)
- write one-two form poems.
- write an ode and/or elegy demonstrating their reflection on their personal experiences as they near graduation.
- document their growth throughout the semester by creating a poetry portfolio.

#### Collaboration

- discuss etiquette and expectations for writing groups.
- participate in a read-around in which they share their own revised poetry.
- participate in a model writers' workshop.
- develop more sophisticated feedback and questions in writers' groups. incorporating knowledge gained in this unit.
- demonstrate acquisition of advanced terminology through written and oral discourse about class readings (essays, published poems, and student generated poems).
- participate in writing groups in which they draw upon concepts from the course to give fluid and insightful feedback, demonstrate apt use of poetic language, and connect elements of style and structure to meaning.
- continue to demonstrate acquisition of advanced terminology through written and oral discourse about class readings (essays, published poems, and student generated poems).
- revise one poem using teacher feedback, writers' group feedback, and demonstrating an advanced understanding of the craft of poetry.
- participate in a read-around in which they share their ode or elegy.
- share portfolio with classroom community or other community.

#### Senior English Independent Study Project

- brainstorm possible questions to explore.
- determine personal question to explore.
- identify sources for research such as people to interview and texts to read.
- research their question through multiple sources.

- decide format for presentation, utilizing oral, written, visual, and/or technological components for effectiveness.
- determine audience.
- organize research for audience.
- write first draft.
- revise for audience.
- present project.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- revise for redundancy and wordiness.
- recognize and avoid exaggeration.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- revise for sentence variety.
- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using a semi-colon and a comma with transitions such as therefore and however.
- use dash and ellipses.
- punctuate quotations within quotations, using single quotation marks.

### **State of Connecticut English Language Arts Standards**

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

#### **Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.**

Students will identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

Students will explain and explore their own and others' aesthetic reactions to texts.

Students will analyze literary conventions and devices an author uses and how they contribute meaning and appeal.

#### **Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will discuss how the experiences of an author influence the text.

Students will interpret, analyze and evaluate the influence of culture, history and ethnicity on themes and issues in literature.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology.

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

**Information and Technology Standards (to be added)**

**Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

**Focus Questions**

- Why do human beings write and read poetry?
- Where and how is poetry “born?”
- How do we need to “see” to be poets?
- How does poetic sensibility translate into other genres of writing and ways of being?
- How can the act of constructing a poem enable the poet to construct a more thoughtful and fulfilling existence?
- How can being a part of a writing group inspire, challenge, and instruct an individual as a poet?

- Why is revision so integral to poetry – a genre of precision?
- How can metaphors help us see ourselves in the world in more symbolic, abstract, and complex ways?
- How can metaphors give us a heightened sensitivity to the subtleties of life?
- In what ways are metaphor and imagery inextricably connected?
- What are the qualities of poignant and fresh imagery and metaphor?
- How does a writer create a unified poem using imagery and metaphor?
- How does a writer choose exacting language and detail to develop imagery successfully?
- What other kinds of figurative language contribute to the creation of a compelling poem?
- What is the relationship between a poet's life and a poet's work?
- How does the close reading of a poem yield a more intimate understanding of the poem?
- What is the power and purpose in choosing the sounds of a poem?
- How can a writer control meaning through choices in style, structure, and punctuation?
- How does a writer design a poem that has balanced elements to achieve an intended purpose?
- What experiences and knowledge can inspire creative experimentation and poetic innovation?
- How can reading and writing poetry serve as a vehicle for self-reflection and personal growth?
- What experiences (in class, outside of class, academic, and personal) have been instrumental in shaping me as a poet?
- How does a more developed awareness of craft lead to richer vision of one's work, world, and self?

## **UNITS of STUDY**

### **Unit 1: Introduction to the Writerly Life**

#### **English Language Arts Standards**

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.**

Students will identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

#### **Essential Questions**

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?

#### **Focus Questions**

- Why do human beings write and read poetry?
- Where and how is poetry “born?”
- How do we need to “see” to be poets?
- How does poetic sensibility translate into other genres of writing and ways of being?
- How can the act of constructing a poem enable the poet to construct a more thoughtful and fulfilling existence?
- How can being a part of a writing group inspire, challenge, and instruct an individual as a poet?
- Why is revision so integral to poetry – a genre of precision?

#### **Core Topics**

- Establishing Writing Groups
- Responding to Poetry
- Writing Poetry
- Building a Vocabulary of Poetic Conventions

#### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- write one-two free-form poems.



- discuss etiquette and expectations for writing groups.
- participate in a model writers' workshop.
- build vocabulary of "Core Terminology".
- read and discuss essays and poems about the writing of poetry.
- select and examine poetry of their choosing for response in reading journals.
- participate in various writing exercises inspired by the unit focus questions.
- use poetic prose to begin to write a personal essay (college essay).

### **Assessments**

- 1 original poem per week with corresponding entry in a graded Writer's Journal
- Write 1 page responses to at least 4 poems for the Reading Journal
- "Core Terminology" assessment – quiz

### **Pacing**

2 weeks

## Unit 2: Metaphors Abound

### English Language Arts Standards

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize that readers and authors are influenced by individual, social, cultural and historical contexts.**

Students will analyze and evaluate the basic beliefs, perspectives and assumptions underlying an author's work.

Students will discuss how the experiences of an author influence the text.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

### Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?

### Focus Questions

- How can metaphors help us see ourselves in the world in more symbolic, abstract, and complex ways?
- How can metaphors give us a heightened sensitivity to the subtleties of life?
- In what ways are metaphor and imagery inextricably connected?
- What are the qualities of poignant and fresh imagery and metaphor?
- How does a writer create a unified poem using imagery and metaphor?
- How does a writer choose exacting language and detail to develop imagery successfully?
- What other kinds of figurative language contribute to the creation of a compelling poem?
- What is the relationship between a poet's life and a poet's work?

### Core Topics

- Applying Literary Conventions
- Writing Poetry
- Conducting Research

## **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate acquisition of “Core Terminology” through written and oral discourse about class readings (essays, published poems, and student generated poems).
- write four poems focusing on use of figurative language and imagery and write one-two form poems.
- revise one-two poems using teacher feedback, writers’ group feedback, and knowledge acquired from class work.
- use observations of visual art (paintings, photography) to express ideas using imagery that is concrete and rich with sensory details.
- participate in a read-around in which they share their own revised poetry.
- develop more sophisticated feedback and questions in writers’ groups. incorporating knowledge gained in this unit.
- select and investigate the work of a poet of their choice.
- pose an exploratory question about the writing style the major themes, historical perspective, or critical evaluation of a major poet.
- research scholarly essays (literary criticism) about the life and work of a chosen poet.
- organize research information and write a three-four page first draft of a research paper.
- participate in at least one writing conference with the teacher.
- analyze a given poem for specific literary devices in the form of timed, in-class prompts.
- use language effectively to convey the personal meaning derived from life events.
- organize thinking for audience.
- use a strong and consistent voice in writing.

## **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- revise for redundancy and wordiness.
- recognize and avoid exaggeration.
- avoid sentence sprawl.
- revise for sentence variety.

## **Assessments**

- 1 original poem per week with corresponding entry in a graded Writer’s Journal
- Write 1 page responses to at least 4 poems for the Reading Journal
- “Poetry Terminology” assessment – quiz
- 1-2 Literary Analysis in-class essays
- Draft 1 of Poet’s Research Project – This paper incorporates biographical research and literary criticism to examine the relationship between a poet’s work and life. Students should select a poet whose work speaks to them as the subject of the assignment.
- Personal essay (college essay)

**Pacing**  
6 weeks

## Unit 3: Artful Choices

### English Language Arts Standards

*Exploring and Responding to Literature - Students read and respond to classical and contemporary texts from many cultures and literary periods.*

**Students recognize how literary devices and conventions engage the reader.**

Students will identify the various conventions within a genre and apply this understanding to the evaluation of the text.

Students will explain and explore their own and others' aesthetic reactions to texts.

Students will analyze literary conventions and devices an author uses and how they contribute meaning and appeal.

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students use descriptive, narrative, expository, persuasive and poetic modes.**

Students will use the appropriate features of persuasive, narrative, expository or poetic writing.

Students will write to delight in the imagination.

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will revise texts for organization, elaboration, fluency and clarity.

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### Essential Questions

- How does literature enrich our lives?
- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### Focus Questions

- How does the close reading of a poem yield a more intimate understanding of the poem?
- What is the power and purpose in choosing the sounds of a poem?
- How can a writer control meaning through choices in style, structure, and punctuation?
- How does a writer design a poem that has balances elements to achieve an intended purpose?
- What experiences and knowledge can inspire creative experimentation and poetic innovation?

### **Core Topics**

- Writing Poetry
- Participating in Writers' Workshop
- Conducting Research

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate acquisition of advanced terminology through written and oral discourse about class readings (essays, published poems, and student generated poems).
- write 4 poems focusing on use of sound (meter, rhyme, sound devices), style, punctuation, and structure (line and stanza breaks, line variation, poem length)
- write one-two form poems.
- revise one-two poems using teacher feedback, writers' group feedback, and demonstrating an advanced understanding of the craft of poetry.
- participate in a read-around in which they share their own revised poetry.
- participate in writing groups in which they draw upon concepts from the course to give fluid and insightful feedback, demonstrate apt use of poetic language, and connect elements of style and structure to meaning.
- identify gaps in the research conducted for the Poet's Research Project draft based on feedback from peers and teacher conferences.
- conduct continued research in order to further develop the Poet's Research Project.
- write a five-seven page revised Poet's Research Project.
- participate in at least one writing conference with the teacher.
- analyze a given poem for specific literary devices in the form of timed, in-class prompts.

Senior English Independent Study Project

- brainstorm possible questions to explore.
- determine personal question to explore.
- identify sources for research such as people to interview and texts to read.
- research their question through multiple sources.

### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- avoid misplaced modifiers.
- use adverbial connectives for emphasis and transition.
- punctuate adverbial connectives, using a semi-colon and a comma with transitions such as therefore and however.

### **Assessments**

- 1 original poem per week with corresponding entry in a graded Writer's Journal
- Write 1 page responses to at least 4 poems for the Reading Journal
- "Poetry Terminology" assessment – quiz
- 1-2 Literary Analysis in-class essays
- Final draft of Poet's Research Project (5-7 pages)

### **Pacing**

6 weeks

## **Unit 4: A Life's Work**

### **English Language Arts Standards**

*Communicating with Others - Students produce written, oral and visual texts to express, develop and substantiate ideas and experiences.*

**Students prepare, publish and/or present work appropriate to audience, purpose and task.**

Students will research information from multiple sources for a specific purpose.

Students will publish and/or present final products in a myriad of ways, including the use of the arts and technology.

*Applying English Language Conventions - Students apply the conventions of Standard English in oral and written communication.*

**Students use Standard English for composing and revising written text.**

Students will demonstrate proficient use of proper mechanics, usage and spelling skills.

Students will use resources for proofreading and editing.

### **Essential Questions**

- How do we write, speak and present effectively?
- How do we use the English language appropriately to speak and write?

### **Focus Questions**

- How can reading and writing poetry serve as a vehicle for self-reflection and personal growth?
- What experiences (in class, outside of class, academic, and personal) have been instrumental in shaping me as a poet?
- How does a more developed awareness of craft lead to richer vision of one's work, world, and self?

### **Core Topics**

- Producing a Portfolio

### **Unit Objectives**

Students will be able to:

- continue to demonstrate acquisition of advanced terminology through written and oral discourse about class readings (essays, published poems, and student generated poems).
- write one-two free form poems.
- write an ode and/or elegy demonstrating their reflection on their personal experiences as they near graduation.



- revise one-two poem using teacher feedback, writers' group feedback, and demonstrating an advanced understanding of the craft of poetry.
- participate in a read-around in which they share their ode or elegy.
- participate in writing groups in which they draw upon concepts from the course to give fluid and insightful feedback, demonstrate apt use of poetic language, and connect elements of style and structure to meaning.
- document their growth throughout the semester by creating a poetry portfolio.
- participate in at least one writing conference with the teacher.
- share portfolio with classroom community or other community.

#### Senior English Independent Study Project

- decide format for presentation, utilizing oral, written, visual, and/or technological components for effectiveness.
- determine audience.
- organize research for audience.
- write first draft.
- revise for audience.
- present project.

#### **Skill Objectives**

Students will:

- use dash and ellipses.
- punctuate quotations within quotations, using single quotation marks.

#### **Assessments**

- 1 original poem per week with corresponding entry in a graded Writer's Journal
- Poetry Portfolio (meets the requirements for the Senior Independent Study Project)

The portfolio will consist of:

- 5 pieces of original writing that students deem exemplary
- Each of the 5 pieces will be coupled with a piece of art (visual or written)
- Narrative reflections analyzing why that piece of writing is exemplary and articulating the thematic connection to the artwork chosen
- A creative introduction and a conclusion that demonstrates the student's style, vision, and ideas

The portfolio is worth 20% of the fourth quarter grade

#### **Pacing**

3 weeks

**Texts such as:**

**Unit 1**

Mary Oliver’s “Introduction,” “Getting Ready,” “Reading Poems,” “Revision,” and “Workshops and Solitude” from *A Poetry Handbook: A Prose Guide to Understanding and Writing Poetry*

*The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms* eds. Mark Strand and Eavan Boland – Read chapters for relevant forms

Models of poetic prose essays

At least 3 teacher-selected poems about the writing of poetry

At least 4 student-selected poems

**Unit 2**

Mary Oliver’s “Imagery,” and “Imitation,” and “Diction, Tone, Voice,” from *A Poetry Handbook: A Prose Guide to Understanding and Writing Poetry*

*The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms* ed. Mark Strand and Eavan Boland – Read chapters for relevant forms

At least 10 selected poems that model use of figurative language, exacting diction and detail

Selected poetic prose essays

**Unit 3**

From Mary Oliver’s *A Poetry Handbook: A Prose Guide to Understanding and Writing Poetry* “Sound,” “More Devices of Sound,” “The Line,” “Some Given Forms,” “Verse That is Free.”

*The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms* ed. Mark Strand and Eavan Boland – Read chapters for relevant forms

At least 10 selected poems that model use of sound devices, metrical patterns, effective line and stanza structure, varied styles

Selected essays on poetry

**Unit 4**

From Mary Oliver’s *A Poetry Handbook: A Prose Guide to Understanding and Writing Poetry* “Conclusion”

*The Making of a Poem: A Norton Anthology of Poetic Forms* ed. Mark Strand and Eavan Boland – Read chapters for relevant forms

At least 8 selected poems (ode, elegy, narrative poems)