

English 354-01 – *Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson*
Spring 2006 / TuTh 3:00-4:15 / King 343

Jed Deppman, 28 Rice Hall. Visiting Hours: Friday 9-12 and by appointment.

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This course is a comparative study of America's two most important 19th-century poets: Walt Whitman, the public, exuberant, democratic being who celebrated himself, and Emily Dickinson, the private, thoughtful soul who selected her own society. Using a variety of critical approaches, we will examine their poetry, prose, and correspondence as well as the literary, cultural, and historical contexts in which they were written, e.g. the Second Great Awakening, Romanticism, Transcendentalism and post-Lockean philosophy, the Hudson River School, the Civil War, the influx of immigrants, the decline of Calvinism, and the ascendancy of science and commerce.

Required Texts:

Dickinson, Emily. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. R. W. Franklin, ed. Harvard UP: 1998.

Whitman, Walt. *Poetry and Prose*. Justin Kaplan, ed. Library of America, 1996.

NB: Other required materials will be distributed in class.

Grading:

40%: 20% each; two 4-6 page papers.

30%: Final Project (10 - 12 pages).

20%: Participation: attendance, informed discussion, short writing assignments.

10%: 1 in-class presentations. Guidelines given in class.

Please note that to participate in this class, you must understand and adhere to Oberlin's Honor Code. See http://www.oberlin.edu/students/links-life/rules-regs05/06honor_code.pdf. Note also that attendance is mandatory; unexcused absences lower your grade. If you miss class, it is your responsibility 1) to turn in your work on time and 2) learn the material you have missed – including class discussion – before the next class. Late assignments are reduced one full letter grade per day.

Reading Schedule

- T. 2/7 Intro. 19th-century poetry and other contexts for WW & ED.
- Th. 2/9 ED. Poetics. 439, 445, 446, 738, 782, 1033, 1091, 1092, 1157, 1173, 1356, 1374.
- T. 2/14 ED. *Letters*. Selections on ERES.
- Th. 2/16 ED. Religion. 373, 544, 581, 615, 632, 689, 691, 1173, 1547, 1577, 1752.
- T. 2/21 WW. Preface to 1855 edition of *Leaves of Grass* (5-26). *Chronology*: (1371-1375).
- Th. 2/23 WW. Begin 1855 *Leaves of Grass* (27-145); *Emerson Correspondence* (1350-1361)
- T. 2/28 WW. Continue 1855 *LG*. (27-145). *The 18th Presidency!* (1331-1349)
Whitman's anonymous self-reviews and other contemporary responses. [ERES]
- Th. 3/2 ED. Mind & Consciousness. 304, 563, 584, 585, 598, 784, 867, 1112, 1234, 1401, 1486.
- T. 3/7 ED. '2s.' 194, 200, 205, 227, 255, 264, 269, 292, 459, 497, 554, 571, 656, 841, 967, 1742
Noble. "The Revenge of Cato's Daughter: Emily Dickinson's Use of Sentimental Masochism."
- Th. 3/9 WW. 1891-2 *LG*. *Children of Adam*; *Calamus* 248-87.
- T. 3/14 *No Class*. *We like March – his shoes are purple*. (Dickinson in 1871; Fr1194).
- Th. 3/16 *No Class*. *Who could be ill in March, that Month of proclamation? Sleigh Bells and Jays contend in my Matinee, and the North surrenders, instead of the South, a reverse of Bugles.*
-- Dickinson in March 1885 letter to Helen Hunt Jackson.
- T. 3/21 WW. 1891-2 *LG*. *Salut au Monde*; *Crossing Brooklyn Ferry* 287-313.
Song of the Broad-Axe 331-341.
- Th. 3/23 ED & WW. "Literature and Philosophy." Deppman Lecture / Room TBA.
- F. 3/24 *Paper #1 due*.
- Spring Break.**
- T. 4/4 ED. Loneliness, pain: 339, 372, 570, 760, 833, 903, 1119.
Bee & bee-flower: 113, 134, 909, 979, 1213, 1351, 1426, 1650.
- Th. 4/6 ED. Death: 124, 344, 479, 591, 605, 1092, 1100, 1154, 1588.
- T. 4/11 WW. Live Oak, With Moss (on BB).
1891-2 *LG*. *Birds of Passage*; *Sea Drift*. (369-404)
- Th. 4/13 WW. 1891-2 *LG*. *Drum Taps*; *Memories of Lincoln*. 416-468.
- T. 4/18 WW. 1891-2 *LG*. *The Sleepers*; *To Think of Time*; *Whispers of Heavenly Death*. 551-568.
Specimen Days (Selections). (713-949)
- Th. 4/20 WW. *Backward Glance O'er Travelled Roads*. (656-672) *Specimen Days*, continued.
- T. 4/25 ED. Art, image: 174, 327, 348, 448, 533, 603, 669, 772, 778, 895, 962.
- Th. 4/27 WW & ED. Class in the Allen Memorial Art Museum.
- F. 4/28 *Paper #2 due*.
- T. 5/2 ED. Nature: 122, 207, 327, 803, 1140, 1142, 1413, 1596, 1656, 1668
- Th. 5/4 WW. *Democratic Vistas*. 953-1018. *November Boughs* (Selections). 1159-1272.
- T. 5/9 ED. Writing & Reading: 436, 466, 569, 627, 788, 867, 955, 1268, 1476.
- Th. 5/11 WW. *November Boughs* (Selections). 1159-1272. ED. Times and Seasons. 1354, 1789.
- F. 5/19. Final paper due by 7 pm.