

## **ENGL 441: Lyrics Before the Lyric**

Spring 2012, W 2 pm – 4:30 pm, CONV 208

Professor Ingrid Nelson

Office: **Webster 104**; Johnson Chapel 14

Office hours: By appointment: <http://www1.mysignup.com/cgi-bin/view.cgi?datafile=inelson>

No word for lyric poetry is in use in Europe until the sixteenth century. This course examines the poems written before and at the dawn of the definition of lyric poetry, in order to form our own working definition of a short, musical poem. We will read poetry by Sappho, Horace, Pindar, anonymous medieval writers, and Chaucer, along with classical and medieval tracts on poetry and poetics. The course will conclude with readings from sixteenth and seventeenth century lyric poets (Wyatt, Surrey, Shakespeare, Donne) alongside the treatises that defined lyric for the first time (such as Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*). Does the "lyric" poem change once it is defined? How do later works speak to the earlier tradition? This course satisfies the pre-1800 requirement for majors.

**Note:** Where necessary, readings will be provided in translation.

### **Required Books**

*Classical Literary Criticism* (Various, trans. Murray and Dorsch; Penguin, 978-0140446517)

*The Complete Odes and Epodes* (Horace; ed & trans David West. Oxford, 978-0199555277)

*Lark in the Morning: The Verses of the Troubadours* (Univ. of Chicago, 978-0226429335)

*Middle English Lyrics* ed. Hoffman & Luria (Norton, 978-0393093384)

Petrarch, *Selections from the Canzoniere and Other Works* (Oxford, 978-0199540693)

*Oxford Shakespeare: Complete Sonnets and Poems* (ed. Colin Burrow, Oxford, 978-0199535798)

**Order online** (not available from Amherst Books):

*Sir Philip Sidney's Apology for Poetry and Astrophil and Stella* (ed. Peter C. Herman, College Publishing, 978-0967912110)

### **Other Readings**

All readings marked "handout" will be available on the course website under the "Course Documents" tab. Please download and print them to bring to class.

### **Signing Up for Office Hours**

This semester, I am trying a new system of by-appointment only office hours. I will list my availability in an online signup sheet at <http://www1.mysignup.com/cgi-bin/view.cgi?datafile=inelson>. You may sign up for a time slot by clicking the appropriate button. The time slots will change weekly, depending on my commitments that week. It is my hope that this system will allow maximum flexibility for you and for me in scheduling appointment times that work for both of us. **You must sign up for a slot at least 24 hrs in advance.** I will not guarantee that I will be available if you sign up less than 24 hrs from the slot.

### **Assignments**

- 1) **Blog Posts:** Each of you will be required to post on the course blog (beforelyric.wordpress.com) periodically throughout the semester. Your posts should be informal but insightful, concise, and reasonably well edited. The posts must appear by midnight the day before the class meeting (i.e., Tuesday at midnight). Each post should comment on some aspect of the week's reading and ask (at least one) discussion question.
- 2) **Short Papers** (5-7 pages): Detailed assignments to follow; due on the dates marked on the syllabus.
- 3) **Prospectus:** A brief description of your plan for your long paper. The prospectus should clearly state your argument, the primary text(s) you will engage, and the kinds of critical and theoretical questions you will engage.
- 4) **Annotated Bibliography:** Each student must compile and present to the class an annotated bibliography of at least 5 critical and/or theoretical sources. These should be sources germane to the text that the student will focus on in the final paper, or to the student's critical/theoretical interests.
- 5) **Long Paper** (18-20 pages): Each student will write a research paper that combines their reading of selected poems with theoretical and critical background. Although this paper requires secondary research, its primary purpose is to present an argument about the poems, either by considering it through the lens of a critical theory, by contributing to an ongoing critical discussion, or by situating the text in its cultural and historical milieu.
- 6) **Participation** is an important part of your grade! This includes attendance and thoughtful engagement in class discussions.

### **Policy on Extensions**

No extensions will be given on assignments except in case of emergency, to be documented with a signed college official's note.

### **Policy on Absences**

More than 1 absence will lower your final grade by one-third of a letter grade (e.g., B+ to B.)

### **Schedule of Readings and Assignments**

**Jan. 25:** Introduction

**Feb. 1:** Classical origins (1) \*\*\***Virtual meeting**\*\*\*

Horace, *Art of Poetry* (in *Classical Literary Criticism*)

Horace, Odes (from *Complete Odes and Epodes*)

**Assignment: Post on blog (all)**

**Feb. 8:** Classical Origins (2)

Aristotle, *Art of Poetry* (in *Classical Literary Criticism*)

Sappho (handout)

**Feb. 15:** The Problem of Lyric

Genette, *The Architext* (handout)

Pindar, *Odes* (handout)

**Feb. 22:** Medieval Latin Lyrics

Geoffrey of Vinsauf, *Poetria Nova* (handout)  
*Middle English Lyrics*, section I (“Worldes bliss”) and II (“All for Love”)

**Feb. 29:**

From *Lark in the Morning*:

Introduction

Guillem de Peitus

Marcabru

Bernart de Ventadorn

Guiraut de Bornelh

Bertran de Born

Comtessa de Dia

Maria de Ventadorn and Gui d’Ussel

Arnaut Daniel

Peire Cardenal, “A New Protest Song”

Guiraut Riquier

**Mar. 7:**

Rosemary Woolf, Introduction (handout)

*Middle English Lyrics*: section IV (“Swete Jhesu”), VIII (“I sing of a maiden”) and IX (“A God and yet a man?”)

**Short Paper Due**

**Mar. 14:**

Ardis Butterfield, “Lyric” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval English Literature* (available online through library.)

Chaucer, lyrics (handout)

\*\*\*\*\***Spring Break**\*\*\*\*\*

**Mar. 28:**

Virginia Jackson, *Dickinson’s Misery*, from “Introduction” (handout)

Petrarch, *Selections from Canzoniere* (all)

**Apr. 4:**

Library: Research training

**Short Paper Due**

**Apr. 11:**

Greene, from *Post-Petrarchism* (handout)

Sidney, *Astrophil & Stella*

**Apr. 18:**

Sidney’s *Defense of Poesy*

Wyatt and Surrey (handout)

**Apr. 25: Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography Due**

Paper workshop

**May 2:**  
Shakespeare: Sonnets

**May 4: Long Paper Due**