

John Donne's *Songs and Sonnets*: Love and Death in the Elizabethan Age

An Honors (Un)common Read Course

IDH2930

Section 2307

Fall 2023, Class #28546

F 1:55-2:45 (7th Period)

Little 119

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Office: CSE 576; Office phone #352-294-0077

Office Hours 12-2:00 Wednesday (and by appointment)

Course Description:

Considered the greatest love poet in the English language, John Donne wrote a collection of short lyric poems, published as *Songs and Sonnets* in 1633. We will focus on 19 of the 54 short poems in that volume, which trace the passion and fervor of a religious and social renegade obsessed with, among other things, the union of souls in and beyond death. Drawing on the language of sacraments, alchemy, Greek myth, legal arguments, martyrdom, astronomy, and New World discovery, Donne's poems offer a glimpse into one of the most brilliant minds of Renaissance England. Fired from his diplomatic job when he eloped with his boss's neiece and briefly imprisoned, Donne also carefully navigated political requirements that he change his religion when he later became Royal Chaplain to King James I of England and Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London. This class will be a deep dive into Donne's poetry, with each meeting a master class in close reading, where your hunches and instincts will guide our discussion as we grapple with Donne's breathtaking voyages of love, sex, and death in the tempestuous Elizabethan age.

Texts:

The Songs and Sonets of John Donne, ed. Theodore Redpath (2nd ed.). Harvard UP, Cambridge, Mass. 1983; 2009.

Course Requirements:

In-Class Participation/Attendance	20%
Longer Canvas Comments/Replies	35%
Weekly Canvas Comments	25%
Final Exam (take home)	20%

Learning Outcomes:

Critical Thinking

Students will be able to:

- Identify and analyze key elements, biases and influences that shape John Donne's thought in his lyric poetry.
- Approach issues and problems within the study of English Renaissance lyric poetry from multiple perspectives.

Communication

Students will be able to:

- Communicate knowledge, thoughts and reasoning regarding the structure and content of Donne's lyric poetry clearly and effectively in written work and in class discussions.

Course Expectations:

Read all poems by the date assigned for class discussion. You will access additional required readings in Canvas. I will also provide weekly Reading Guides to guide your reading for that day—these will mainly be composed of questions, but will also include key terms and concepts we will discuss in class and which you will be expected to know. Each week you will complete a "Weekly Canvas Comment" of 3-4 sentences. You will also post 3 Longer Canvas Comments (at least 250-wd) throughout the semester and 3 responses to another student's Canvas post. See "Canvas Comment Assignment" below. You will take a final exam, which will account for 20% of your grade. For class each day, you should be ready to discuss the poem or poems for that day, and to pose questions regarding any confusions or difficulties you have with language,

allusions, structure, argument, etc. Class participation will influence your final grade (for the better or worse in any borderline cases), and you will be evaluated according to your level of preparation for each day's discussion (see "In-Class Participation" below).

Description of Graded Work

1. In-Class Participation and Attendance: 20%

- a. 10% of your total course grade is based on verbal, in-class discussion participation: an exemplar participant shows evidence of having done the assigned reading before each class, consistently offers thoughtful points and questions for discussion, and listens considerately to other discussants. See participation rubric below.
- b. 10% of your total course grade is based on attendance. On-time class attendance is required for this component of the course grade. You may have two unexcused absences without any penalty. Starting with the third unexcused absence, each unexcused absence reduces your attendance grade by 2/3: an A becomes a B+, and so on. Excessive tardy attendance (3 or more) will also reduce your attendance grade: for each 3 tardies, your attendance grade will be reduced by 1/3.
- c. Except for absence because of religious holiday observance, documentation is required for excused absences, per [UF attendance policy](#). Excessive unexcused absences (6 or more) will result in failure of the course. If you miss 6 or more classes (excused or not), you will miss material essential for successful completion of the course.

2. Longer Canvas Comments and Replies: 35%

- a. You will post three 250-wd "Longer Comments" on Canvas throughout the semester. You will post these in the "Discussion" area of our Canvas page. These will be assigned by sign-up sheet at the beginning of the semester. See details in syllabus below. These will count for 25% of your course grade. You must pose a question based on the poem's content, and you must quote the poem at least twice. See grading rubric below.
- b. You will post three 100-wd "Longer Replies" on Canvas to another student's "Longer Comment" three times throughout the semester. Your reply must directly respond to issues raised in the "Longer Comment" and these will count for 10% of your course grade. You will post it directly in the reply area to a particular student's post in that week's "Longer Comment" discussion in the "Discussion" tab on our Canvas page.

3. Weekly Canvas Comments: 25% [Separate from the "Longer Canvas Comments/Replies"]

- a. Every week you will post a three-four sentence Canvas Comment on the reading for that day, due Thursday by noon before our Friday class. You will post these in the "Discussion" area of our Canvas page. You must post even if you are

assigned a Longer Canvas Comment that week. See details below.

4. Final Exam: 20%

- a. I will provide more information on Canvas regarding the final exam, which will be a take-home exam.

Weekly Canvas Comments (Due Thursday by noon)

ALL students are required to post a question or comment on that week's reading on Canvas by Thursday at noon, including those students assigned to longer Canvas Comments. There is no length requirement for these posts--your interests and questions will help to structure and focus our discussion for that week—three to four sentences are sufficient. You may simply pose a question of fact, such as the literal meaning of a phrase. You might also ask a question regarding the meaning of a metaphor. For example: "In 'The Sun Rising,' ll. 11-12, is the speaker asking the sun if it thinks its beams are strong? If so, is he asserting that the lovers have an energy, fueled by their love, that makes the sun redundant? Or is the point more specifically about how the sight of his beloved eclipses any light the sun might provide?" A Weekly Canvas Comment is considered late if it is posted at any time after noon on Thursday. Late responses (after 12:00) will have a full grade deducted from the grade received for each day the response is late (An A will be reduced to a B, etc.). You will receive full credit (an "A") for meeting the minimum requirements described above. Points are taken off only for late comments.

Longer Canvas Comments (Due Thursday by noon) and Longer Canvas Replies (Due Friday by 9 a.m.)

Each week, 3 students will post a **250-word "Longer Comment"** on the reading assigned for that day, which typically consists of one or two poems. In your comments **you must offer TWO quotes** from the particular Donne poem(s) assigned for that day, though you are free to also quote from other Donne poems assigned for the course. You may discuss content, subject matter, tone, theme, allusions, argument structure, dramatic scenario, etc. You may also pose a number of questions in your comment, as if you were opening up a discussion at the beginning of a class period. If you are assigned a **"Longer Reply"** that day, you must post at least **100 words in response** to a **"Longer Comment"** to which you have been assigned. There are no requirements in terms of quoting for the replies, but your reply must directly respond to the issues raised in the student's longer comment. A sign-up sheet for these longer comments and replies will be circulated the first week of class. You will be assigned 3 longer comments

and 3 longer replies all semester, and this will comprise 35% of your grade (25% for Comments; 10% for replies).

Grading Rubric for Longer Canvas Comments and *Replies *(excepting length and quoting requirements)

A—At least 250 words; utilizes concepts presented in class and reading, linking them in interesting ways to the topics you raise; uses at least two quotes from the poem or poems assigned that day (you may choose only one poem to discuss); quotes correctly and cites line numbers; provides nuanced readings of quotes in question and offers a carefully structured argument; perfect grammar and spelling

B—225-250 words; utilizes course material adequately but not excellently, mentioning one or two course concepts; utilizes quotes but may not contextualize them completely or explain relevance to larger argument; less nuance or complexity than an "A" response; one grammar or spelling error

C—200 words; may mention course concepts but does not link them adequately to topic or display relevance to quotes from text; any quotes from text do not clearly support the larger argument; citation form missing or incorrect; argument is simple and no attempts are made to find patterns in the text; two to three grammar and/or spelling errors

D—Fewer than 200 words; utilizes one course concept but uses it incorrectly; discusses the text too broadly with few specifics; quotes text once; citation form incorrect; no conceptual links between examples in the text

E—100 words or fewer; no attempt to incorporate course concepts; does not quote text; no argument; grammar and spelling errors throughout

Class Participation

Grading for class discussion follows a *general* rubric of A=speaking 2-3 times each class period; B=speaking once a class period; C=speaking every other week or so; D=speaking a couple times a semester. F=attending class but not speaking at all. If you have trouble speaking up in class, feel free to prepare beforehand a question or two to pose during class, and that counts as contributing to productive class discussion.

I will provide on Canvas short "reading guides" for all readings, corresponding to the poems assigned for that day's reading. Ideally you should prepare answers to the questions posed in the reading guides, as I will call on students for their responses—of course, if you volunteer your answers first, I won't have to call on you 😊. Additionally, you may have a follow-up question to some of the questions I have posed, and those are always welcome.

VI. Required Policies

Grading Policy

A minimum grade of B is required to earn Academic points towards your Honors Completion Requirements. Once you have earned a final grade in this course, please upload the course information and final grade from your Unofficial Transcript into your Honors Canvas Cohort: Honors Completion module to earn Honors Completion credit.

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.ua.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate

personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Campus/Academic Resources:

Honors Program

The Honors Program office is found at 201 Walker Hall, 352-392-1519. Questions for an Honors advisor can be directed to advisor@honors.ufl.edu. You may also schedule an Honors advising appointment via Microsoft Bookings at <https://bit.ly/ufhonorsadvising>.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/> , 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

In-Class Recordings

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A "class lecture" is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To "publish" means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited

to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Reading</u>
Aug. 25	Introduction; "The Flea"
Sept. 1	"The Sun Rising"; "The Good Morrow"
Sept. 8	"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"
Sept. 15	"The Canonization"
Sept. 22	"The Funeral"; "The Relic"
Sept. 29	"The Curse"; "The Message"; "Love's Diet"
Oct. 6	No Class: Holiday
Oct. 13	"Air and Angels"
Oct. 20	"A Lecture Upon the Shadow"; "The Dream"
Oct. 27	"The Bait"; "Negative Love"

Nov. 3	"The Ecstasy"; "A Valediction: Of the Book"
Nov. 17	"The Will"
Dec. 1	"A Nocturnal upon St. Lucy's Day; being the shortest day"
Dec. 8	Reading Day