

**Luminous Things – Spring 2023:
Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman: Forging a New American Poetry**

The poem numbers and page numbers in this calendar refer to these texts:

The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson, T. H. Johnson, ed. These are listed by poem number.

The Complete Poems of Walt Whitman, Wordsworth Poetry Library. These are listed by page number.

Day/Class #	Theme and Suggested Poems	Session Leaders
March 21, Class #1	<p>Introductions: Personal and Poetical</p> <p>Intro. to Dickinson 288 I'm Nobody 1705 Volcanoes be in Sicily 919 If I can stop one heart from breaking 754 My life had stood, a loaded gun</p> <p>Intro. to Whitman Pg. 4 In Cabin'd Ships at Sea Song of Myself sections 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 24, 26 , Pgs. 191 – 193, As I Ebb'd with the Ocean of Life Song of Myself sections: 48, 49 52</p>	<p>Karen</p> <p>Linda</p>
March 28, Class #2	<p>Poetry and the Poet: What is the role of the poet? The uses, goal, or aims of poetry?. What are the challenges of writing poetry? Where do we see these qualities and themes in the poems?</p> <p>Session #1: The Romantic – Victorian Poetic Style: Longfellow, EB Browning, Wordsworth</p> <p>Session #2: Dickinson – relevant poems: 657 I dwell in possibility; 505 I would not paint a picture; 448 This was a Poet; 488 Myself was formed—a Carpenter; 1138 A spider sewed at night; 1126 Shall I take thee, the Poet said; 1129 Tell all the Truth but tell it slant--; 250 I shall keep singing;</p> <p>Session #3: Whitman – relevant poems: Pg. Come, Said My Soul (at Poets.org) Pg. 205 O Me! O Life! Pg. 5 To a Historian</p>	<p>Linda</p> <p>Class volunteer:</p> <p>Craig Masten</p>

	<p>Pg. 8 When I Read the Book-- Pg. 13 Poets to Come Pg. 13 Shut Not Your Doors Pg. 89 Whoever You Are Holding Me Now in Hand Pg. 5 To Thee, Old Cause; Pg. 395 My Seventy-First Year Pg. 14ff Starting from Paumanok, sections 4, 5, 6 Pgs. 24 ff Song of Myself sections 1, 2, 5, 20, 22, 27, 39-43.</p>	
<p>April 4, Class #3</p>	<p>Life, death, and reality: Both poets take the material and day-to-day world as their province, but that portrayal shapes the way they portray death. What are the qualities of life, death, and reality for these poets. How are these qualities expressed in the poems?</p> <p>Session #1: 19th century attitudes toward death</p> <p>Session #2: Dickinson – relevant poems: 712 Because I could not stop for death; 465 I heard a fly buzz when I died; 187 How many times these low feet staggered; 449 I died for beauty; 315 He fumbles at your Soul; 444 It feels a shame to be alive; 1078 The bustle in a house;</p> <p>Session #3: Whitman – relevant poems: Pg. 8 When I Read the Book Pg. 186 Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking Pg. 276 This Compost Pg. 322 To Think of Time Pg. Thoughts (Poets.org) Pg. 24 ff Song of Myself sections 6; 20; 30, 31; 48 – 52</p>	<p>Karen</p> <p>Linda White</p> <p>Harriet Magen</p>
<p>April 11, Class #4</p>	<p>Nature: All aspects of the natural world are important concerns for both poets, but Dickinson often portrays nature in its glory for itself as well as for its transcendent moments—and for the limits of knowing through the natural world. This class we devote to Dickinson as a poet of nature. What does that mean in terms of her poems?</p> <p>Session #1: Transcendentalism; collections; categorization</p> <p>Session #2: Dickinson – relevant poems: 155 The Murmur of a Bee 1735 To make a prairie</p>	<p>Linda</p> <p>Liz Kaplan</p>

	<p>Session #3: Dickinson 986 A narrow fellow in the grass 12 The morns are meeker 824 The wind begun to knead the grass 285 The Robin's my Criterion for Tune</p>	Margery Connor
April 18, Class #5	<p>Religion and spirituality, spirituality without religion: Organized religion was central to American life and culture from its beginning. Revival meetings This period of revivals began around 1800 and reached its peak in the early 1830s. It was a period of religious fervor called the Second Great Awakening. Both Dickinson and Whitman were deeply spiritual, they were both deeply concerned with the soul and the afterlife, but neither routinely participated in organized religion. How is religion and spirituality expressed and explored. How central are these themes to their poetry?</p> <p>Session #1: Spirituality and religion. The Puritan / Calvinist tradition; Quakers; religious revivals</p> <p>Session #2: Dickinson – relevant poems: 1551 Those dying then 1545 The Bible is an antique Volume 835 Nature and God – I neither knew 185 Faith is a fine invention 61 Papa above 18 The gentian weaves her fringes (Franklin has the last 4 lines as a separate poem, 23 In the name of the Bee) 324 Some keep the Sabbath going to church</p> <p>Session #3: Whitman – relevant poems: Pg. 14 Starting from Paumanok sections 5-6 Pg. 112 Song of the Open Road, sections 1 – 8 Pg. 196 On the Beach at Night Alone Pg. 191 As I Ebbd with the Ocean of Life Pg. 290 Miracles Pg. 306 A Passage to India, sections 1 – 2 Pg. 333 A Noiseless Patient Spider Pg. 24 ff Song of Myself, sections 42, 43, 46, 48 - 52</p>	<p>Karen</p> <p>Bonnie McDonald</p> <p>MaryAnn Lambing</p>
April 25 Class #6	<p>Sex, gender, identity: Sex, gender and identity were taboo topics in the literature of the 18 – 19th century America, but these topics are front and center for Whitman and often for Dickinson. How are sex, gender and identity explored and portrayed in their poems?</p>	

	<p>Session #1: Nineteenth century attitudes towards sex and gender</p> <p>Session #2: Dickinson – relevant poems: 1090 I am afraid to own a body; 84 Her breast is fit for pearls; 249 Wild nights; 251 Over the fence; 508 I’m ceded—I’ve stopped being Theirs; 199 I’m “wife”—I’ve finished that; 1737 Rearrange a “Wife’s” affection!; 1401 To own a Susan of my own; 648 Promise This—When You be Dying; 1219 Now I knew I lost her--; 14 One Sister have I in our house; 461 A Wife—at Daybreak I shall be-; 462 Why make it doubt—it hurts it so (from the Master letters); 156 You love me;</p> <p>Session #3: Whitman – relevant poems: Pgs. 70 – 86 Children of Adam, (Includes “I Sing the Body Electric” pgs. 72 – 78) Pg. 87 Scented Herbage of My Breast Pg. 24 ff Song of Myself section 6, 28</p>	<p>Karen</p> <p>Gloria DePaola</p> <p>Howard Rubenstein</p>
<p>May 2, Class #7</p>	<p>Democracy and America: Whitman is widely acknowledged as the poet of democracy. He embraced the task of portraying democracy and the America of his day to the world and to Americans, themselves. What qualities of democracy and America do we find in the poems? But he US Civil War and Lincoln’s assassination deeply challenged Whitman’s vision of America. How is this crisis portrayed in his <i>Drum Taps</i> poems? And in his very famous poems on Lincoln’s assassination?</p> <p>Session #1: Whitman’s America – relevant poems: Pg. 12 I Hear America Singing Pg. 90 For You O Democracy Pg. 376 America Pg. 3 One’s-Self I Sing Pg. Song of Myself sections 10, 12, 15</p> <p>Session #2: Whitman and the Civil War – relevant poems: Pgs. 210 – 245 Drum Taps</p>	<p>Linda</p> <p>Penney</p>

	<p>Session #3: Memories of Lincoln – relevant poems: Pg. 246 – 254 When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloomed Pg. 253 O Captain, My Captain Pg. 254 Hushed Be the Camps Today</p>	Linda
<p>May 9, Class #8</p>	<p>Gems – Coordinators’ choice: This class and the next we devote to a selection of special poems, those gems, that we did not read in our thematic survey, poems we love and want to discuss with you.</p> <p>Session #1 Dickinson – relevant poems: 536 the heart asks pleasure first; 241 I Like a look of Agony; 670 One need not be a chamber to be haunted; 258 There’s a certain slant of light; 365 Dare you see a soul at white heat 280 I felt a funeral in my brain 214 I taste a liquor never brewed 1052 I never saw a moor 49 I never lost as much but twice 579 I had been hungry all the years 937 I felt a Cleaving in my Mind</p> <p>Session #3 Whitman Pg. 85 Once I Passed Through a Populous City Pg. 97 I Saw in Louisiana A Live Oak Growing Pg. 121 Crossing Brooklyn Ferry Pg. 204 When I Heard the Learned Astronomer</p>	<p>Karen</p> <p>Linda</p>
<p>May 16, Class #9</p>	<p>Gems - Your choice – Short but Spectacular: This is the second of two classes devoted to a selection of poems we love, this time, poems selected by you. Four sessions of 20 – 25 min., each. These will be chosen after the midterm.</p> <p>Session #1 Dickinson: 67 Success is counted sweetest 1510 How happy is the little stone Or ?</p> <p>Session #2 Dickinson TBD</p> <p>Session #3: Whitman TBD</p> <p>Session #4: Whitman TBD</p>	<p>Class volunteer:</p> <p>Class volunteer:</p> <p>Class volunteer:</p> <p>Class volunteer:</p>

May 23, Class #10	Reputations, Legacies, Influences Session #1: Dickinson Editing of Dickinson; the fascicles Session #2: Whitman Shifts in his reputation; his influence on various poets. Session #3: Final thoughts	Karen Linda
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