

This elective course offers an intensive reading experience of America's foremost woman poet. We read 100-200 poems per week, as well as letters written to and by Emily Dickinson. In addition, students will acquaint themselves with the basic claims of the Dickinson criticism. Discussions will cluster around Dickinson as the center of the canon, women's separate spheres, issues of gender and sexuality, her visual language and abstract imagery, among others.

### Syllabus

1. September 23 -- Read poems #1-200
2. September 30 -- Read poems #200-400
3. October 7 -- *no class*
4. October 14 -- Read poems #400-600
5. October 21 -- Read poems #600-800
6. October 28 -- Read poems #800-1000
7. November 4 -- Read poems #1000-1150
8. November 11 -- Read poems #1150-1300
9. November 18 -- Read poems #1300-1450
10. November 25 -- Read poems #1450-1600
11. December 2 -- Read poems #1600-1775
12. December 9 -- *term papers due*
13. December 16 -- *Wrapping up*

### Course requirements

Students are required to (i) read all the poems assigned for that week (please read with your dictionaries); (ii) bring two poems (each) to discuss in class from that week's section that you have something to say about; (iii) write a term paper (deadline: December 9!) of ca. 8-10 pages on a topic of choice. Your term paper should not just give readings of individual poems but address critical-theoretical issues raised in class. A **Packet of Critical Writings** has been placed on Reserve in the Library: you can use it for background reading as well as research for your term paper.

## PACKET OF READINGS

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- Suzanne Juhasz, "A Privilege So Awful': The Poetry of ED," in *Naked and Fiery Forms. Modern American Poetry by Women: A New Tradition* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 6-32.
- Adrienne Rich, "Vesuvius at Home: The Power of ED," in *Shakespeare's Sisters. Feminist Essays on Women Poets*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 99-121.
- Albert Gelpi, "ED and the Deerslayer: The Dilemma of the Woman Poet in America," in *Shakespeare's Sisters. Feminist Essays on Women Poets*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 122-134.
- Terence Diggory, "Armored Women, Naked Men: Dickinson, Whitman, and Their Successors," in *Shakespeare's Sisters. Feminist Essays on Women Poets*, ed. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 135-150.
- Sandra M. Gilbert & Susan Gubar, "A Woman -- White: ED's Yarn of Pearl," in *The Madwoman in the Attic. The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1979/1984), 581-650.
- Susan Howe, "These Flames and Generosities of the Heart. ED and the Illogic of Sumptuary Values," in *The Birth-mark. Unsettling the Wilderness in American Literary History* (Hanover & London: Wesleyan University Press, 1993), 131-153.
- Harold Bloom, "Blanks, Transports, the Dark," in *The Western Canon* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1994), 272-288.
- Wendy Martin, "ED: 'A Woman--White--to be'" ("The Soul selects her Society," "Your Wayward Scholar," "A Word made Flesh," "Earth is Heaven," "The skill of life," in *An American Triptich. Anne Bradstreet, Emily Dickinson, Adrienne Rich* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984), 84-164.
- Sandra M. Gilbert, "The Wayward Nun beneath the Hill: ED and the Mysteries of Womanhood," in *Emily Dickinson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr. New Century Views 12 (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 20-39.
- Vivian R. Pollak, "Thirst and Starvation in ED's Poetry," in *Emily Dickinson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr. New Century Views 12 (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 62-75.
- Joan Burbick, "ED and the Economics of Desire," in *Emily Dickinson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr. New Century Views 12 (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 76-88.

Cynthia Griffin Wolff, "[Im]pertinent Constructions of Body and Self: Dickinson's Use of the Romantic Grotesque," in *Emily Dickinson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr. New Century Views 12 (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 119-129.

Suzanne Juhasz, "The Landscape of the Spirit," in *Emily Dickinson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr. New Century Views 12 (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 130-140.

David Porter, "Strangely Abstracted Images," in *Emily Dickinson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr. New Century Views 12 (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 141-148.

Jerome McGann, "Emily Dickinson's Visible Language," in *Emily Dickinson. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Judith Farr. New Century Views 12 (Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 248-259.