

## FORM AND THEORY OF POETRY

### BOOKS, ETC.:

Fenton, James. *An Introduction to English Poetry*. (ISBN: 0-374-52889-6)

Koch, Kenneth. *Making Your Own Days: The Pleasures of Reading and Writing Poetry*. (ISBN: 0-684-82438-8)

Well-edited websites maintained by the Poetry Foundation (poetryfoundation.org), the Academy of American Poets (poets.org), and the Poetry Archive (poetryarchive.org) offer free access to many classic and contemporary poems. We'll often take advantage of those free resources.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This section will offer an advanced introduction to prosody—i.e., the nuts and bolts of versification—and figurative language. The emphasis will generally be on *poetics* (how poems work) as opposed to *hermeneutics* (how to interpret them), following the leads of Kenneth Koch in *Making Your Own Days*, James Fenton in *An Introduction to English Poetry*, and Jonathan Culler in *Structuralist Poetics* and *Theory of the Lyric*. From time to time, we'll also look at a number of poems about poetry.

### WRITTEN WORK:

There will be two exams, two papers (8-10 pp. each), and weekly reading journal entries.

#### POET'S WORK

Grandfather  
advised me:  
Learn a trade

I learned  
to sit at desk  
and condense

No layoff  
from this  
condensery

Lorine Niedecker (1903-1970)

#### SUBSTANTIAL PLANES

It doesn't  
matter

to me  
if

poems mean  
nothing:

there's no  
floor

to the  
universe

and yet  
one

walks the  
floor.

#### POETRY

I, too, dislike it.  
Reading it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in  
it, after all, a place for the genuine.

Marianne Moore (1887-1972)

A. R. Ammons  
(1926-2001)