

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)