INTRODUCTION TO POETRY

RATIONALE:
Introduction to Poetry is designed to provide student teachers with some basic concepts about the features, range, forms and historical development/evolution of poetry. By exploring various definitions from the poets’ and critics’ perspective, the student will come into his/her understanding of this genre.

The course seeks to empower students as a specialist in the field by strengthening their critical and creative skills. Hence student teachers will hone their analytical skills and enhance the ‘poetic experience’ by engaging in exploring, crafting and sharing in this creative event.

OBJECTIVES
Students should be able to:

1. formulate their definitions of poetry.
2. explore and express the pleasure of reading and creating poetry.
3. understand what distinguishes poetry from other genres.
4. identify and understand the basic features of these categories of poetry
   - Narrative
   - Lyric
   - Dramatic
5. explore thematic threads in poetry e.g. love, death.
6. devise strategies to elicit themes and techniques.
7. identify and discuss figurative language in poetry.

8. understand/appreciate poetic language e.g. “compactness”, denotation, connotation

9. relate poetic concerns to one’s life/community paying attention to
   - problem-solving skills
   - relationships
   - sustainability e.g. environmental concerns
   - didactic nature of some forms e.g. ballads
   - poetry as cultural construct e.g. portraying the needs of races, gender, belief systems

11. publish and share created “texts”

12. find a place for oracy e.g. choral readings, reading aloud, recordings

13. write critical analyses on seen/unseen poems
UNIT 1 : 6 Hours

TITLE : Explore what is Poetry

1. Students’ Perspective on Poetry - ‘What I like/don’t like about poetry

2. The Critics’ Perspective – (see articles on work of particular poets)

3. The Poet’s Perspective on Poetry
   e.g. Lawrence Ferlinghetti in “Constantly risking absurdity” - poet portrayed as a
tightrope dancer; Lorna Goodison, “The Tightrope Walker” - poet portrayed as a
tightrope walker; Mutabaruka in “Call me No Poet”
   Wordsworth (1770-1850) in Lyrical Ballads -
   “Poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings; it takes its origin
   from emotion recollected in tranquility.”

4. A Space for Sharing
   - Writing Poetry
   - Responding to poems in newspapers e.g. The Observer, Gleaner
   - Listening to songs that are ‘poetic’
   - Reading/listening to hymns (many have the ballad stanza)
   - Attending Poetry Readings e.g. Red Bones Blues Cafe; Edna Manley School
     of Visual and Performing Arts

**Encourage the keeping of a journal/log
   - Students may begin the conversation on perceptions, challenges of poetry
UNIT 2 – 8 Hours

TITLE: Narrative Poetry

1. The Origins of Poetry
   - The Oral Tradition (Excerpts may be taken from The Iliad, Beowulf, Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales, )

2. Basic features and concerns of narrative poetry to include form, language, themes
   - The Ballad: traditional, literary
   - The Epic: primary/oral
     secondary/literary
   - Modern narrative poetry e.g. Robert Frost’s ‘Death of the Hired Man’

Suggestions:

Ballads
“Edward”
“Ballad of Sixty-five”
“La Belle Dame Sans Mercí”
Country and Western Ballads
Excerpts from epics
(*May be accessed from the Internet)

UNIT 3 – 15 Hours

TITLE: The Lyric

- The Sonnet
  - Elizabethan/Shakespearean and Petrarchan/Italian
- The Ode
- The Elegy
  - origin, characteristics, examples of each
    - Begin analysis of poems
      Devise checklist covering areas such as:
      What is the poem about/paraphrase poem
      Who is the speaker
      What is the tone
      Discuss the imagery
The meter
The effectiveness of allusion, symbol
Other figurative devices

Suggested Readings to introduce students to range of lyrics

- Sonnets should range from Wyatt (1503-1542) to Derek Walcott, consideration being given to Edmund Spencer, Sidney, Shakespeare, Donne, Milton, Elizabeth Browning, Hardy, Yeats, Frost, Claude McKay, Gwendolyn Brooks, Derek Walcott

- Ode
  Keats
  Shelley

- Elegy
  At least one of these three major ones:
  Milton \(\rightarrow\) “Lycidas”
  Shelley \(\rightarrow\) “Adonais”
  Arnold \(\rightarrow\) “Thyrsis”

References to be made to the following terms: tone, mood, quatrain, couplet, sestet, octave, allusion, symbol, point of view, imagery, monody, dirge, paradox, meter and feet

UNIT 4 – 5 Hours

TITLE: Dramatic Poetry

- The Dramatic Monologue
  - characteristics e.g. use of dramatic irony

Suggested Readings
“My Last Duchess” - Robert Browning
“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” - T.S. Eliot
“The Carpenter’s Complaint” - Edward Baugh

UNIT 5 – 6 Hours

TITLE: Explore Free Verse

- Characteristics
• The Difference between Free Verse and Blank Verse
• The Range of Free Verse - including Dub Poetry

Suggested Readings
- Contemporary West Indian poems
- Dub poets (some may be taken from among students)
- Some Dance Hall lyrics

UNIT 6 – 5 Hours

TITLE: Pulling it together

• What is poetry?
• Comparative Analysis poems from various eras
• Publication, displays, readings
• Submission of kits/ portfolios

SUGGESTED READINGS


*Highly Recommended
This may be used along with any of the West Indian Anthologies listed above.

**SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES**

- **Short tasks to encourage understanding and appreciation.**
  - comment on the theme
  - identify and discuss figurative device
  - discuss keyword/phrase/line

- **Research (Group/Individual)**
  - Selected poet(s)
  - Specific eras e.g. Elizabethan, Postcolonial, Harlem Renaissance
  - Poets/poems from specific geographical locations American, African, West Indian
  - Subgenres
    - dub, sonnets, epics
  - Thematic
    - love poetry, war/death, resistance
  - Annotated anthologies targeting age and interest in the Secondary school

- Compiling a glossary e.g. A to Z in Poetry

- Developing a Poetry Corner

- Taped/Live Readings

- Compiling checklists

- Displays
  - students’ work and published work

- Dramatizations/dramatic readings/choral reading

- Creating “Mini Manuals”
  - e.g. “How To ______” activities

- Using other art forms (music, dance, painting) to stimulate poetic appreciation

- Quizzes/short answer activities

- Writing critical analysis of seen/unseen poems
• Journal/Log
• Portfolio/Poetry kit of some relevant activities for later use in the classroom
• Publish and share created texts

EVALUATION

Course Work  60%
Examination  40%

Suggested Coursework
1. Essay – critical analysis done under exam conditions (10%)
2. One take-home task (research on poet showing how his/her works reflected the concerns of a particular period -individual or group work) (10%)
3. Kit/portfolio (individual) (40%) – to include
   • a report of a poetry reading
   • log of 5 entries (approx 100 words) giving their personal response to a variety of poems – using a checklist
   • select a poem or poems that deal with a sustainability issue (i.e. socio-economic, environmental, cultural etc)
     a) identify the poet’s response  b) design a ‘solution’ based on interaction with members of a selected community

Examination
Two essays - A critical analysis of two poems reflecting the various forms taught in the course. One poem should be unseen.