

3325: Structures of Poetry  
Sally Connolly

This course will consider the various rhetorical features, metrical patterns and poetic forms of verse, both recent and traditional. We will start with localized effects such as imagery and rhetorical uses of language and then broaden our discussion to take in larger structural considerations such as external form, poetic genre, and the creation of a collection of poetry. Is it true, as Robert Frost said, that writing free verse is a bit like playing tennis without a net? We will ask how significant the links between form and content are in poetry. What can poetry express that prose cannot? You will be asked to consider if there are certain subjects that are better suited to verse than others. Why is this? We will also think about what it means to be a poet and what role the poet serves in society. Can there ever be one definitive version of a poem's meaning? Might poetry's greatest strength lie, rather, in its frequent ambiguities? What does it mean to interpret a poem and how does one go about this process? What makes a good poem good and a bad poem bad?