CONTEMPORARY POETRY
READING LIST

Please note that there are two lists below. The first is the full list with the core readings in bold; the second is the core list separated out. You are responsible for all core readings and may incorporate readings from the full list into your tailored list.

PRIMARY TEXTS

A. R. Ammons, *Corson’s Inlet*
Jon Anderson, poems from *In Sepia* (in *The Milky Way*)
Rae Armantrout, *Veil: New and Selected Poems*
**John Ashbery, *Selected Poems (1986)***
John Berryman, *77 Dream Songs*, "Eleven Addresses to the Lord" in *Love & Fame*,
"Homage to Mistress Bradstreet"
Marvin Bell, *Mars Being Red*
Frank Bidart, *In the Western Night: Collected Poems, 1965-1990*
**Elizabeth Bishop, *Complete Poems***
Louise Bogan, *The Blue Estuaries*
Gwendolyn Brooks, *Selected Poems*
Lorna Dee Cervantes, *Drive: The First Quartet: New Poems*
Amy Clampitt, *The Kingfisher*
Lucille Clifton, *Blessing the Boats: New and Selected Poems*
**Robert Creeley, *Selected Poems, 1945-2005***
Toi Derricotte, *Captivity*
Mark Doty, *Fire to Fire: New and Selected Poems*
**Rita Dove, *For Thomas and Beulah in Selected Poems***
Norman Dubie, *Selected and New Poems, 1983*
Robert Duncan, *Collected Poems 1919-1979*
Russell Edson, *The Tunnel: Selected Poems*
Carolyn Forche, *The Country Between Us*
**Allen Ginsberg, *Howl, Kaddish***
Louise Gluck, *The House on Marshland, The Wild Iris, A Village Life*
**Jorie Graham, *Dream of the Unified Field***
Linda Gregg, *All of It Singing: New and Selected Poems*
Anthony Hecht, *The Hard Hours*
Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*
Brenda Hillman, *Loose Sugar*
Fanny Howe, *Selected Poems*
Richard Hugo, *The Lady in Kicking Horse Reservoir, White Center*
Major Jackson, *Leaving Saturn*

Randall Jarrell, *The Lost World,* "Woman at the Washington Zoo," "The Orient Express" in *The Complete Poems*

Denis Johnson, *The Incognito Lounge*


Weldon Kees, *Collected Poems*

Galway Kinnell, *Book of Nightmares, Mortal Acts, Mortal Words*

Kenneth Koch, *Collected Poems*

Yusef Komunyakaa, *Neon Vernacular: New and Selected Poems*

Stanley Kunitz, *Passing Through, New and Selected Poems*

Denise Levertov, *Collected Poems*

Philip Levine, *They Feed They Lion, The Simple Truth*

Larry Levis, *Winter Stars, Elegy*

John Logan, *Spring of the Thief*

Audre Lorde, *Chosen Poems, Old and New*

**Robert Lowell,** *Lord Weary’s Castle, Life Studies, Day By Day in Collected Poems*

William Matthews, *Search Party: Collected Poems*

Campbell McGrath, *American Noise*

Thomas McGrath, *Letter to an Imaginary Friend, Parts I-IV*


James Merrill, *From the First Nine: Poems 1946-1976*

**W. S. Merwin,** *Migration: New and Selected Poems*

Thylias Moss, *Small Congregations: New and Selected Poems*

Frank O'Hara, *Selected Poems*

Sharon Olds, *Strike Sparks: Selected Poems*

Charles Olson, *The Maximus Poems*

Michael Palmer, any one book

Carl Phillips, *Quiver of Arrows: Selected Poems*


**Sylvia Plath,** *Ariel, Crossing The Water in The Collected Poems*


**Theodore Roethke,** *The Lost Son, The Far Field in The Collected Poems of Theodore Roethke*

Muriel Rukeyser, *The Collected Poems of Muriel Rukeyser*

Anne Sexton, *All My Pretty Ones*

W. D. Snodgrass, *Heart’s Needle*

Frederick Seidel, *Poems, 1959-2009*

Gary Snyder, *Rip Rap*

Gerald Stern, *This Time: New and Selected Poems*

Mark Strand, *New Selected Poems*

Cole Swensen, any one book
May Swenson, Nature
Jean Valentine, Door in the Mountain: New and Collected Poems
Mona Van Duyn, Letters from a Father
Ellen Bryant Voigt, Messenger: New and Selected Poems
Derek Walcott, Collected Poems
Richard Wilbur, The Beautiful Changes and Other Poems
C. D. Wright, Deep Step, Come Shining
James Wright, Shall We Gather at the River, The Branch Will Not Break in Above the River: The Complete Poems
C. K. Williams, Tar in Collected Poems.

Note: If any of these books are out of print, be sure to consult collected or complete texts and read the appropriate poems.

British and Irish Poetry:
Eavan Boland, Outside History: Selected Poems 1980-1990
Ciaran Carson, The Irish for No
James Fenton, Children In Exile
W. S. Graham, Selected Poems (Faber)
Thom Gunn, Selected Poems
Tony Harrison, V and Other Poems
Seamus Heaney, Opened Ground: Selected Poems, 1966-1996
Geoffrey Hill, Selected Poems
Ted Hughes, Collected Poems
Philip Larkin, Collected Poems
Patrick Kavanagh, Selected Poems
Medh McGuckian, Marconi’s Cottage
Derek Mahon, Selected Poems
Paul Muldoon, Selected Poems
Craig Raine, History: a Home Movie
Robin Robertson, A Painted Field
Stevie Smith, Selected Poems

II. SECONDARY WORKS

Robert Bly, Leaping Poetry
Eavon Boland, Object Lessons
Terrence Des Pres, Praises & Dispraises
Louise Glück, Proofs and Theories
Richard Howard, Alone With America
Robert Hass, Twentieth Century Pleasures
Seamus Heaney, *The Government of the Tongue*
Randall Jarrell, *Poetry and the Age*
Alicia Ostriker, *Writing Like a Woman*
Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*
Robert Pinsky, *The Situation of Poetry*
Adrienne Rich, *What Is Found There*
Muriel Rukeyser, *The Life of Poetry*
Helen Vendler, *Part of Nature, Part of Us*
Alan Williamson, *The Poetry of Introspection*

**RECOMMENDED CRITICAL TEXTS**
Jack Myers, David Wojahn, ed. *A Profile of Twentieth Century American Poetry*.  

**ANTHOLOGIES**
Students may also wish to consult Donald Hall's *Contemporary American Poetry* (1962) and Donald Allen's *The New American Poetry* (1960) for countervailing representations of contemporary poetry as it existed through the fifties. We also strongly suggest A. Poulin Jr.'s *Contemporary American Poetry* (1985) if only for its superb overview essay, "Contemporary American Poetry: The Radical Tradition," and *Naked Poetry*, for its introduction and author essays. Finally, see also the introduction to *Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology* (ed., Paul Hoover).

**Core List: Primary Sources**

1) John Ashbery, *Selected Poems (1986)*
2) John Berryman, *77 Dream Songs*, "Eleven Addresses to the Lord" in *Love & Fame*,  
   "Homage to Mistress Bradstreet"  
3) Elizabeth Bishop, *Complete Poems*  
4) Eavan Boland, *Outside History: Selected Poems 1980-1990*  
5) Robert Creeley, *Selected Poems, 1945-2005*  
6) Rita Dove, *For Thomas and Beulah in Selected Poems*  
9) Jorie Graham, *Dream of the Unified Field*  
12) Philip Larkin, *Collected Poems*  
13) Robert Lowell, *Lord Weary's Castle, Life Studies, Day By Day in Collected Poems*  
14) W. S. Merwin, *Migration: New and Selected Poems*  
   in *The Fact of a Doorframe: Poems 1950-2001*

18) Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems*


20) James Wright, *Shall We Gather at the River, The Branch Will Not Break* in *Above the River: The Complete Poems*

**Core List: Secondary Sources**

1) Robert Bly, *Leaping Poetry*

2) Louise Gluck, *Proofs and Theories*

3) Robert Hass, *Twentieth Century Pleasures*

4) Seamus Heaney, *The Government of the Tongue*

5) Randall Jarrell, *Poetry and the Age*

6) Alicia Ostriker, *Writing Like a Woman*

7) Marjorie Perloff, *The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage*

8) Robert Pinsky, *The Situation of Poetry*


10) Helen Vendler, *Part of Nature, Part of Us*