

Synopsis - The Art of Writing Poetry Course

Module 1: Introduction

Welcome – how to proceed – importance of reading other people's poetry – reading list – be contemporary – small press magazines – starting to analyse markets and poems – poetry groups – writers' circles – contacting other poets.

Module 2: Getting Started

Why write poetry – opportunities – starting to write – a poet's essential outlook – taking notes – getting ideas – sources of stimulation: postcards, past experiences, creative reading, the value of travel, music, time limits, new viewpoints – keep practising – development work.

Module 3: Style, Theme and Subject Matter

Your own individual style – matching style and theme – listen to your poem – style and the message – trying different styles – working through a theme – matching the theme and subject matter – developing a theme – how to select subject matter – keeping it tight and clear – development work.

Module 4: Grammar, Punctuation and Trimmings

Grammar in poetry – differences between prose and poetry – punctuation – its purpose – enjambement – levels of meaning – line breaks – the use of metaphor and simile – word order – allegory – personification – paradox – symbolism – viewpoint – experimentation – imagery and word pictures – development work.

Module 5: A Way with Words

Using words in poetry – the best words in the best order – dangers to avoid – keep a balance – be precise – modern vocabulary – avoid clichés – new images – dangers and advantages of repetition – inverted words – invigorate your language – implications of words – the importance of listening – development work.

Module 6: Rhythm and Metre

The patterns of poetry – what is rhythm – importance and place of rhythm – what is metre – why understanding metre helps – where it is essential – stress patterns fully explained – the iambic pattern – counterpoint – male and female endings – developing metrical impact – more forms of metre – development work.

Module 7: Rhyme

To rhyme or not to rhyme – three golden rules – dangers to avoid – writing full rhyme – different types of full rhyme – slant rhyme – alliteration – consonance – assonance – eye and sight rhyme – unaccented rhyme – half rhyme – writing free verse – development work.

Module 8: Form

Various forms discussed in detail – ballad stanza – Chaucerian roundel – limerick – minute – pantoum – rondeau – rondel – rubai – sapphic – sestina – sonnets, English and Italian – terza rima – triolet – villanelle – concrete poetry – syllable count poetry – the cinquain – how to create your own forms – development work.

Module 9: The First Draft

Where to begin – making notes – a worked example – filtering your ideas – getting the first draft down – revising while writing – outside stimuli – the evolving poem – allowing the work to mature – one area stimulates another – the title – the creative process – development work.

Module 10: Revision

Revision is essential – the two objectives of revision – the importance of time – two levels – 12 point check list to follow – reading aloud – balance – enough material – suitable title – form – line divisions – effective imagery – good vocabulary – punctuation – literary devices – rhyme – metre – seeking advice – development work.

Module 11: Case Studies

In this module Alison examines and discusses in detail two of her poems from initial stimulus, through the first draft and extensive revision to the finished piece. Each won first prize in competitions.

Module 12: Poems for Special Occasions and Special People

Commemorating events – writing to commission – research – be precise – six point code to guide you – verse stories and monologues – poetry for seasons – writing on holiday – writing lyrics – a poem to music – collaboration – message – length – structure – performance – important exercises – recordings – poetry for children – poetry for greeting cards – development work.

Module 13: Publication of Your Work

Your objectives – market research – the small press and its importance – literary stature – coverage – availability – sources of information – targeting – how to present and submit your work – protecting your copyright – assembling a poetry collection – vanity publishing – self-publishing – other outlets – record keeping – development work.

Module 14: Entering Competitions

Competitions: the different types – types of poem required – doing your best – selecting material – line limits – theme/form restrictions – other competitors – submitting your poems – market study – reducing the element of chance – 12 essential guidelines from Alison's own experience – development work.

Module 15: Poetry and Performance

Performance pieces – writing for performance – sounds and content – originality – clichés – convoluted sentences – remote references – abstractions – be direct – maintaining interest – different forms – audience appreciation – programme balance – using two voices – variety and theatricals – ensuring speakability – pauses – selecting your programme – delivery – payment – development work.

Module 16: Endpiece

The value of practice – steep yourself in poetry – further outlets for your work – be imaginative – visit schools – further the cause of poetry – final message – useful addresses.

Module 17: Glossary of Poetry Terms

The most common poetry terms fully explained to help you throughout your studies.

12 Assignments marked by your personal tutor