

Handbook
for
ENGLISH MAJORS

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Why this handbook? This handbook is designed to give both formal descriptions and informal advice about important elements of the English major. The English Department invites your comments and suggestions for improving future editions of this guide. The material in this short handbook is supplementary to the material already available in the *University Bulletin* and presupposes that material.

5/3/00

Check the Department's website for changes and updates

1. Planning Your Schedule

- ◆ See the "Guide to Curriculum Planning" in the last section of this handbook
- ◆ As with all majors, it is beneficial to have some sense of your destination, the career path that you wish to follow. Even if you are uncertain about specifics, having a general idea of the field in which you wish to work will be an immense help in planning your course of study to your advantage.

Some Suggestions:

- ◆ Complete your required core classes as soon as possible. This will allow you to have a greater freedom in selecting electives as an upperclassman and provide for a more focused approach to the major. Also, you will avoid hectic schedule juggling as a senior which has provided headaches for no small number of seniors wishing to graduate.
- ◆ **If you are planning on going to graduate school in English, it is important that you devote yourself to learning "scholarly languages": i. e., Greek or Latin, French or German.** While fulfilling the core requirements for one of these languages, take one to two upper level electives in that language as well. Language proficiency is a requirement in almost all graduate programs.
- ◆ Do not overload your schedule. When registering for classes, check your academic zeal by consulting with your advisor and considering what is feasible in your given circumstances. Often what we can do falls short of what we would like.
- ◆ **Take advantage of your advisor.** However busy he or she might be, and professors are always short of free time, you will be greatly served by asking their advice. When you go to get their signature, be prepared; tell them your plans and interests so they can better decide if your schedule is what it should be. Don't expect them to make your plans or do your work. They can be helpful to the extent that you are prepared.
- ◆ Here are words of advice from former English majors about planning your schedule:

"Take no more that 15 hours during the Junior poet semester and try to take some core courses that, as a junior, you shouldn't find too hard."

“Try to take, as electives, courses from other departments that will relate to the English classes you will have that semester, even if that relation is not direct.”

“Take a specialized class like Russian Novel, Faulkner, or James because up to this point you’ve studied genre and time period as opposed to one author’s technique or one society’s literature. These courses are not too much for a Junior. In fact, I think they are necessary for students who want to pursue English in Graduate School.”

“One of the most important habits to have for elective classes is to read the material before the class in which it will be discussed. I had a problem doing this and I regret it. Class is so much more fulfilling when you’ve read before it and not after. Also, talking to the professor and to other students in the class is part of learning, and a lot of great ideas and fine-tuned arguments can come out as a result. Through conversation, literature becomes even more loveable!”

Suggested Electives (taken from the *General Bulletin*):

Philosophy: Epistemology, Aesthetics, Philosophy of Language, Ethics

History: History of England I and II

Politics: Thucydides, Morality and Politics

Art: Art History I and II

Psychology: Foundations of Psychology as a Human Science

2. THE JUNIOR POETRY PROJECT

Literary Studies I

This project takes place in conjunction with the course Literary Studies I, taken in the fall of the junior year for English Majors. In that course, students learn to read and analyze lyric poetry -- technical matters such as prosody (meter and rhyme), the importance of poetic form, the character of poetic diction and figurative language; as well as more theoretical questions about the nature of the lyric and the ends of literary study.

The importance of this skill in reading is that lyric poetry is the most concentrated of literary forms, requiring a sensitivity to poetic language and the way in which it communicates. If one learns to read a poem well, one can read any other kind of literature with sophistication and depth.

Object

The object of your independent study is to become intimately acquainted with the major poetry of your author, so that you can recognize lines and venture interpretations of individual poems. You are asked, in a sense, to make this poet your own so that you grasp his or her major themes, characteristic style, innovations, and relative importance. This understanding is aided by a reading of secondary criticism. The purpose of the annotated bibliography is twofold: (1) Reading critical commentary speeds up your growing awareness of the themes and concerns of the poetry; (2) it requires you to place your ideas and insights in a larger community of those who have read the poetry, and to begin to clarify your positions within this conversation. You will learn to discriminate between better and poorer readings, and to argue for your own positions, with your own authority, in light of your knowledge of the poetry.

The Project

While the course gives care to fundamentals in reading, the major project in the course, which comprises most of the grade, centers around the student's choice of a major poet, from any period, writing in English. You choose this poet within the first two weeks of class, and then begin a process of independent study. Two papers in the course are analyses of poems by this author. The project culminates toward the end of the semester in the submission of an annotated bibliography of secondary criticism (the annotations representing a concise summary and evaluation of each critical article or book), and an oral examination with three members of the English Department faculty, who ask general and specific questions about the poetry and the criticism.

Choosing a Poet

You may choose any of the poets on the list below. If you choose another, this choice must be formally approved beforehand. The poet must be good enough to warrant your careful attention, otherwise the project is wasted. A poet of limited scope or of mediocre achievement will leave you without much to think or to say. Thus the poet's work must meet certain criteria: it must be serious writing, as indicated in a generally established reputation; there must be a significant enough body of criticism on the poetry to satisfy the requirements of the assignment.

As you think about your choice for a poet, keep two things in mind: you should *like* the

poet enough to enjoy his or her constant company for a few months; you should choose a poet who sufficiently challenges you, from whom you can learn and grow. The project lets you go as far as you wish -- without limits -- in taking on this challenge. Some poets are more demanding than others -- in complexity, in language, in volume of poems, in critical commentary (e.g., Donne, Keats, Yeats, Stevens). On the other hand, even a relatively minor poet, if he or she is of good quality, will teach you the nature of poetry and poetic language in the way that the project intends.

Major Poets with Representative Poems (But check with your instructor each year.)

Renaissance

Walter Raleigh: "The Lie"; "Nymph's Reply to the Shepherd"
 Thomas Wyatt: "My Galley Charged with Forgetfulness"
 Philip Sidney: Sonnets from *Astrophil and Stella*
 William Shakespeare: Sonnet 65, 94

17th Century

John Donne: Holy Sonnet 10; "Sun Rising"
 George Herbert: "The Collar"; "Virtue"
 Ben Jonson: "Inviting a Friend to Supper"; "To Celia"
 Robert Herrick: "Argument of His Book"; "Corinna's Going A-Maying"
 Henry Vaughn: "The World"; "The Retreat"
 Andrew Marvell: "To His Coy Mistress"; "The Garden"

Romantic (1798-1830)

William Blake: "The Tyger"; "Sick Rose"
 Robert Burns: "Green Grow the Rashes"
 William Wordsworth: "A Slumber Did my Spirit Seal"; "Tintern Abbey"
 Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "Frost at Midnight"
 Percy Bysshe Shelley: "Ode to the West Wind"
 John Keats: "When I Have Fears"; "Ode on a Grecian Urn"

Victorian (1830-1900)

Alfred Lord Tennyson: "Lotus Eaters"; *In Memoriam*, 7 ("Dark House")
 Robert Browning: "My Last Duchess"
 Matthew Arnold: "The Buried Life"
 Christina Rossetti: "Uphill"; "In an Artist's Studio"
 A. E. Housman: "To An Athlete Dying Young"
 Gerard Manley Hopkins: "God's Grandeur"; "Pied Beauty"
 Thomas Hardy: "Convergence of the Twain"

19th Century American

Walt Whitman: "Crossing Brooklyn Ferry"
 Emily Dickinson: "As Imperceptibly as Grief"; "After Great Pain a Formal Feeling Comes"

20th Century: British Commonwealth and America

William Butler Yeats (Nobel Prize): "Easter 1916"
 Ezra Pound: "The Return"; "The River-Merchant's Wife"

Robert Frost: "After Apple Picking"; "Desert Places"
 T. S. Eliot (Nobel Prize): "The Love-Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"
 Wallace Stevens: "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"; "The Idea of Order at Key West"
 William Carlos Williams: "Spring and All"; "The Dance"
 Marianne Moore: "A Grave"; "The Fish"
 John Crowe Ransom: "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter"
 e. e. cummings: "my father moved through dooms of love"; "in just spring"
 Hart Crane: from *The Bridge*: "Proem: to Brooklyn Bridge"
 Allen Tate: "Aeneas at Washington"
 W. H. Auden: "Musée de Beaux Arts"; "In Memory of W.B. Yeats"
 Robert Penn Warren: "Bearded Oaks"
 Elizabeth Bishop: "The Armadillo"; "Questions of Travel"
 Derek Walcott (Nobel Prize): "Season of Phantasmal Peace"
 Dylan Thomas: "Fern Hill"
 Robert Hayden: "Those Winter Sundays"; "Bone Flower Elegy"
 John Berryman: from *The Dream Songs*
 Robert Lowell: "For the Union Dead"
 Gwendolyn Brooks: "A Song in the Front Yard"; "Sallie and Maud"
 James Dickey: "Buckdancer's Choice"
 Sylvia Plath: "Black Rook in Rainy Weather"; "Ariel"
 Adrienne Rich: "Diving into the Wreck"; "Twenty one Love-Poems (XX)"
 Richard Wilbur: "Love Calls Us to the Things of This World"
 Seamus Heaney (Nobel Prize): "Death of a Naturalist"; "The Haw Lantern"

Advice from Students

The "junior poet" project is the first major project you undertake as an English major. It will be a new experience, and you will learn much in a short period of time.

- ◆ **Choose your poet as soon as possible.** Each professor will provide a list of poets to choose from at the beginning of the course, but the list stays pretty much the same from year to year. The sooner you begin reading your poet the better off you are, so select a poet you know will be on the list, check with the professor teaching the course, and read that poet over the summer. You can never spend too much time reading your poet's work, and you will be much better served if you can read him or her at a slow, pleasurable pace.
- ◆ Devote a significant amount of time to brushing up on your ability to scan a poem, and your knowledge of technical terminology (i. e., elision, caesura, feminine rhyme, etc.). The work may be more or less tedious, but you will be at a great disadvantage if you are still trying to learn how to scan halfway through the semester. Paul Fussel's *Poetic Meter and Poetic Form* is a very helpful and readable book in this regard.
- ◆ Be sure to pace yourself. One of the worst deceptions you will experience is that, at the beginning of the semester, it seems that you have a great deal of time. You don't, and it will go by quickly. Therefore it is important that you begin working early and have a realistic grasp of how much time you have and how much you actually need. Make a long-term schedule with the deadlines that need to be met; have it well in view, and then stick to it.

- ◆ Since this will probably be your first time to deal extensively with literary critics, it is important that you not be overwhelmed by them. In fact, before you begin reading the criticism it is important that you already have a general thesis or, at least, a strong sense of what your poet's major themes are. Otherwise, it will be easy to lose independence of thought and be controlled by what the critics say. Here is some advice from a graduate: "Try to maintain your own independence, especially if there's one argument everyone else is swept up by. Don't lose all perspective on your poet and just focus on this one topic."
- ◆ It is also important to keep notes on the critics you read **as you go**. If you don't, you will forget the arguments which various critics make and will waste time reading through them again. (In fact, you will save a lot of time if you make your annotations and bibliography entries after reading each article or book). Also, keep track of the critics you find most interesting and spend more time reading their work. The same holds true for the critics who have the strongest case that disagrees with your own.

The Oral Exam

- ◆ The oral exam is your chance to shine. The professors are not there to intellectually crush you; they want you to do well. And you will, if you have worked hard during the semester and prepare yourself for the very short amount of time that you have for the oral exam.
 - Know everything there is to know about your exemplary poem. (Some will assume you have it memorized). Be prepared to talk about why that poem is "exemplary" and how it relates to the major themes of your poet.
 - Know the arguments of the major critics so that you can do them justice and relate them to your own ideas. Basically, know the points on which you agree or disagree with them.
 - Be confident and relaxed. If you have difficulties articulating ideas in front of other people, get a fellow student to give you a "mock oral exam." It will boost your confidence and give you a better sense of your strengths and weaknesses.

More Advice from Graduates:

"Read the poetry over and over. Then read the biography. Then read criticism. The criticism is not worth it if there is not a familiarity with the body of poetry. Since we really don't study criticism junior year, it is best to look at book-length studies or reputable journals. It is easy to keep the arguments straight in the criticism (even if you don't know anything about criticism) if you know the work very well."

"To prepare for the oral exam I taped myself reading all of my poet's poetry in his collected works and listened to it all the time in the car and before I went to bed. This is time-consuming, but amazingly effective. Take the night off before the exam!"

3. The Senior Novel Project

The Senior Thesis Project serves as a culmination of the student's English major at the University of Dallas. Drawing on the previous year's experience in creating a scholarly bibliography for the Poet Project, the student focuses on one English or American novel and gains familiarity with the critical debates associated with that novel. In the Senior Thesis, the student presents a distinct argument concerning that novel and takes his or her own stand. The formal presentation of one's thesis and the defense of it in a question and answer period familiarizes the student with the demands of teaching and scholarship. The course itself acquaints the student with current critical trends and, above all, with the history and characteristics of the novel.

Advice from Graduates

Much of the advice for the "Junior Poet" project will hold true for the Senior project as well. In fact, when you begin this project, you will be much more experienced and have a greater sense of how to manage a long-term project. Nonetheless, there are still some things that would be good to keep in mind.

- ◆ **Know your novel forwards and backwards.** You should read it in its entirety at least twice, and preferably three times. Read it first quickly to get the "lay of the land"; secondly, analytically; thirdly, integratively. Carefully read two other novels by your author so that you will have a broader sense of his or her work.
- ◆ This course will provide you with a lot of reading, so you will have to make the most of your time. Have a book with you at all times, so that you might utilize small amounts of free time that crop up. You might seem obsessive-compulsive to your friends, but in fact you are just being a good student. Short fifteen minute periods of reading can add up to a lot.
- ◆ At this point in your career, you should be more discriminating about your reading. In other words, figure out if a book or article has anything to do with your thesis, and if it doesn't, don't waste your time.
- ◆ It might also be good if, during the semester of your senior project, you were to take electives that focus on modern thought. It will provide you with useful knowledge that you can draw on, and even help clarify some ideas.

More Advice from Graduates:

"Read your novel at least twice and then read the criticism after you've begun to shape your own argument. The critics can then help fine-tune the argument you've already made."

"Choose a book or an author who will sustain your interest, (or with whom you will really disagree because this will keep your interest too). Start early so you can go at a slow pace.... Go out to happy hour and have fun, but spend time first on the work. Make fun a reward for finishing a particular goal you have for yourself. Lastly, realize that you love the major, (if you don't, that is a shame by this point) and this is your last major accomplishment in the field you love as an undergrad. Take pride in your argument and 'senioritis' won't hit too badly!"

4a. Comprehensive Exam: How to Prepare

The time when you should begin studying for your comprehensive exams is your freshman year. You should invest some effort into reading and studying the materials of your literary tradition courses. Either you do the work as a freshman and sophomore, or you will have to catch up as a senior. To avoid this:

- ◆ Take good class notes and keep them in an orderly fashion so that you might easily refer to them. Be diligent when it comes to taking notes on the major themes of the works.
- ◆ Keep your old tests and papers.
- ◆ Do not sell your lit. trad. books.
- ◆ Here is some advice from a graduate on how to prepare for the comprehensives while taking the Literary Tradition sequence: "Read carefully and pay attention to how the works fit together thematically, stylistically, and historically. My interest in this did not develop until the upper level classes where this is emphasized." This is a crucial point. One of the main goals of the essay section of the comprehensives is to achieve a subtle and intelligent synthesis of the works you have studied. Keeping this synthesis in mind as you go will not only make the classes more interesting and rewarding, but will also prepare you for your senior year.

Preparing Before the Exam

- ◆ Novels take a great deal of time to read, so complete reading these early — ideally, during the summer *before* your senior year.
- ◆ Review the poems and list of literary terms over the Christmas break. Have them mastered by the time the semester begins. Since this portion of the exam is straightforward and objective, you should aim for a perfect score on these sections.

In studying for the poetry IDs, take the list of poems and ask yourself what is the specific action or "locus of interest" in each. Since it will be different for each poem, you should then consider what individual lines can only belong to that particular poem. (See Appendix I for another possible way of studying for this section of the exam.)
- ◆ Spend time thinking about the sample essay questions, putting your thoughts on paper. Even if those particular essays are not on the exam, they will help you bring things together in your mind and see new relationships.
- ◆ Pace your study time. Six hour blocks of studying several days before the test are rarely beneficial. You will retain much more and have a sharper mind if you are consistent and spread out your studying over time.

4b. Comprehensive Exam: What to Expect

There are five sections in the comprehensive exam. They are listed below with a brief description of what they entail.

Identifications: The identification of lines from poems is based on the list of lyrics on the Reading List; the identification of literary terms is based on the list appended to the Reading List.

Poem Analysis: You will be given a poem perhaps unknown to you at the time of the examination. You will be expected to give a detailed and coherent reading of the poem, showing awareness of technical matters such as figures of speech, form, and scansion, as well as of thematic or theoretical dimensions.

Novel Question: This will be a broad question on some thematic or theoretical aspect of the novel, requiring some understanding of technical aspects of fiction (e. g., point of view, narrative style, temporal shifts in narrative, etc.). You should also be able to discuss novels in light of the particular cultural moment that they reflect: thus you should attempt to place these novels chronologically in relation to the period in which they were written. You may be asked about specific novels, or you may be given a choice of novels to consider.

Period Question: You will choose one of two questions on specific literary periods (for example: one question on the Romantic period, another on the Renaissance). In answering this question, you should know the following things about the period: its dates and the dates of major historical or literary events within it, the implications of this historical context upon the literature, some predominant themes or questions which the literature of the period addresses. You should have in mind for each period a group of representative writings which you can draw upon in your response. The periods upon which you may be examined upon are the following: Medieval, Renaissance and Seventeenth Century, Eighteenth Century, Romantic, Victorian, American (nineteenth and twentieth century).

Integrative Question: This question tests your ability to make defensible generalizations upon the works of literature from widely separated historical epochs – drawing upon your knowledge of the materials in the Literary Tradition sequence as well as upon a range of English and American literature. It may pose a larger thematic or theoretical issue to examine in several works.

5. After UD

5a. Planning for Professional Life

-Whether you are interested in teaching, medicine, law, business, editing, media, or the dozens of other professional possibilities, it is important to get experience in some aspect of that field during jobs or internships in the summer or during the school year. Talk with people who know you well and discuss with them types of work that you should explore. Visit the Office of Academic and Career Development.

5b. Obtaining Letters of Recommendation

Although you will probably not be concerned about letters of recommendation until your senior year, it is still good to keep them in mind. However, you may need them before this time if you apply for summer internships as an undergraduate. Either way, follow a more or less standard protocol.

- ◆ Keep in mind, as you begin your UD career, that it is good to foster relationships with your professors. This does not involve ingratiating yourself or trying to be "liked." Rather, you should let the professors you have in class get to know you not only in class, but by discussing things with them outside of the classroom setting as well. Besides being a very important and beneficial aspect of your education, when it comes time for them to write letters, they will be in a better position to do so.
- ◆ If at all possible, ask for your letter of recommendation in person. Remember that the professor is doing you a favor. It is appropriate to ask if it is likely that you will receive a positive recommendation, and to look elsewhere if you won't.
- ◆ You will help your recommender if you provide current and specific information about your activities and interests. "Rehearse" that information for them; remind them of projects, class discussions, or other successful activities you have done with them.
- ◆ Give them sufficient notice. As the old saying goes, "A lack of planning on your part does not constitute an emergency on theirs."
- ◆ If letter of recommendation forms are provided, give them to the professor with a stamped, addressed envelope.
- ◆ Be prepared to provide papers that you have done for them in the past or a resume, so that they might have something concrete to look at when writing the letter.
- ◆ Be sure that you are **very clear about when the letter is needed**; mentioning it in passing is not enough. Write it down for them! Also, it is not rude but helpful if you remind them a week or so before you need the letter.

5c. Interested in Graduate School in Literature? Preparing Is Essential

- ◆ The best long-term preparation is simply this: read the best works. This enables you to develop a refined palate, and you will be delightfully surprised how such well-chosen reading will improve your diction, your style, and every aspect of your own writing.
- ◆ If you plan to go to graduate school in English or think that you might like to at some point, do as much "outside reading" as you can. *And* you are encouraged to do an independent research project that can be presented at a national literature conference of college students. Your first priority, obviously, is the reading that you have for class; completing that will be more than enough work during the regular semester. Nonetheless, during Christmas and summer breaks you would do well to read works of literature, whether they be novels, poetry, or drama, that you may not cover in your course work, but are nonetheless important (check the Reading List first, however). As a sophomore, read some classic works of literary criticism, since this will not only familiarize you with important works but help to develop your critical skills as well.
- ◆ Check with the professor of your English class at the end of the semester, to see what he or she would recommend you work on, in light of your plans to go to graduate school. They will have helpful suggestions about how you might improve your writing and will be in a position to assess your strengths and weaknesses as a reader of literature. In this way it will be easier for you to have focus and to make greater progress from semester to semester.
- ◆ Although this point was made early in this handbook, it is so important that it should be repeated: learn the scholarly languages (the more the better), Latin or Greek, French or German.
- ◆ Prepare for the GRE tests and reserve a good portion of the summer before your senior year. That summer is the time to take the general GRE test, select graduate schools, and write your personal statement.

◆ A Schedule to Consider

Junior Year

Spring: Buy the GRE prep books and begin reviewing.

Summer: Take the GRE General Test; choose five graduate programs to which you will apply; plan your financial strategy (in case you are not offered a fellowship or assistantship); write your personal statement.

Senior Year

Take the GRE Subject Test in Literature

Take a literary criticism course.

6. A Calendar for English Majors

- Summer before your Junior year: Choose your poet, get approval from the professor teaching the "Junior Poet" course, and begin reading.
- Junior Year, first semester: Pace yourself well; there's much work to do!
- Junior Year, December-January: Look for summer internships in the field you think most likely to be your professional interest. If you are planning to go to graduate school in literature, see 6c above.
- Summer before your Senior year: Complete reading for the Senior Comprehensives; continue working on professional plans after UD. This is the time to take the Graduate Record Exam and to work on your resume and personal statement.
- Senior year, second semester:
 - Late January: Sections I & II of the Comprehensive Exams (Poetry Identification and Rhetorical Terms)
 - Early February: Sections III-VI of the Comprehensive Exams
 - March & April: Senior Projects

CURRICULUM GUIDE FOR ENGLISH MAJORS

CORE

Philosophy

1301 (Eth. Life) _____
R 2323 (Phil. Man) _____
3311 (Being) _____
Elective _____

Literary Tradition

1301 _____
1302 _____
R 2311 _____
2312 _____

Math / Art & Drama (3 + 6, or 6 +3)

Math: 1301 (Geom) _____

M/A, D _____ (Art 1311-12,
2311, or Music
1311, or

M/A, D _____ Drama 1311-12)

Science (1 lab course in life sc.,
1 in physical sc.)

Foreign Language

History

1311 (Am Civ) _____
1312 (Am Civ) _____
R 2301 (Ws Civ) _____
2302 (Ws Civ) _____

Politics

1311 (Am Civ) _____

Economics

1311 (Prin.) _____

Theology

1310 (Und. Bible) _____
R 2311 (W Theo Trd) _____

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Junior Year

3323 (Med) _____
3324 (Lyric) _____
3326 (Early Mod.) _____
3327 (Rom. Trad.) _____

Senior Year

4360 (Amer.) _____
4362 (20th Cent.) _____
English Elective _____
4363 (Prose Fic.) _____

Strongly Recommended (2 of these):

4359 (Shakespeare) _____
4370 (Dante) _____
4371 (Southern Lit.) _____
4373 (Russian) _____
4374 (Menippean) _____

An Imaginative but Practical Approach to Recognizing Poetry Quotations

1. Get the right attitude. Remember the professor is not out to trick you but to assess whether you have read and properly appreciated the assigned poetry. An English major presumably, you love poetry so give your study the appropriate amount of time and you will find this exercise surprisingly enjoyable. Once accomplished, you will reap the benefits for the rest of your life. Relax and approach it like a contest, a board game, or a quiz show—all of which you can win. Besides, this beats calculus.
2. Get organized. Mark your Norton Anthology at the edge of each page with a stick-on label so you can find a particular author or poem in seconds. Use different colors for different authors or categories—you never know, a certain color might trigger a connection that leads to recognition of a poem. Highlight significant words or lines in related colors. Limit poems to three or four a sitting. Reading poetry is like testing perfume—too much at once and your senses go.
3. Get a study buddy, preferably someone who has the same interest level that you have. Test each other in person or over the phone with likely quotations. Once you begin to correctly identify a few, you gain confidence. Share your insights and associations (some are more memorable than others). Often it's the conversations you have about the poem that helps recall. Encourage each other's efforts and *keep at it*.
4. Learn all the titles of the poems and their respective authors. This is the only memorizing you will have to do but it is the most important. It is essential to know the exact titles for your test. A partly accurate answer does not get full points. Be sure to know whether it is *Richard* not Robert Crashaw, or *Robert* not Richard Herrick, for example. Some of the titles are long and involved—be prepared to write them out and test yourself many times.
5. Use strategy. When studying the assigned poetry, try to guess ahead of time which quotation your professor will most likely select for the test. You will be surprised at how often they can be predicted. There are several ways to assess probability. Judge which lines best typify the poem or nail down the theme. Which lines appeal to you? In all probability, they appeal to your professor, also. In class, keep track of the professor's preferences, in particular to which lines he directs your attention. Know that he will *not* always choose the best known lines (for instance, from *A Valediction Forbidding Mourning*, "If they be two, they are two so / As stiff twin compasses are two;) although occasional gifts *do* occur, so don't ignore the obvious. Keep in mind that in all fairness, the professor must choose something that is representative of the poem, something that is recognizable, and that the two or three lines should stand-alone, that is, they should make some sense when isolated from their context.
6. Start with Shakespeare's sonnets. Although easily recognizable as sonnets and as the work of Shakespeare, it is harder to differentiate between them, applying the correct number to the appropriate sonnet. In our assigned sonnets, 18, 29, 30, 55, 60, 65, 73, 94, 116, 129, and 146, I was able to connect the title with the number through association (sometimes obvious, sometimes creative). For instance, #18, "Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?" is (on the surface, at least) about loving someone at his peak, say, 18. Once this association is made, try to find a word in every other line that picks up a thread that reinforces the theme. For example, one associates peak with mid-summer, and one finds many references throughout the sonnet that repeat this theme—"summer," "temperate," "too hot," "gold," "shines" etc. as well as their opposites, "death" and "shade" in the turn or the couplet. Once the association is made and no matter which lines you are given on your test, any of these words should trigger the number 18. This method works equally well for the other poetry.

In a similar fashion, I associated Sonnet # 29 with the crisis many experience when they approach 30, often characterized by a bitter state of self-pity, self-doubt, and a wish that they had accomplished more. I highlighted the words "disgrace," "outcast," "state," "curse," "possessed," "desiring," "contented least," "sullen," and "scorn," and noted the opposite tone but similar language in the couplet.

Another example is Sonnet #30 which uses the stockbroker/lawyer/ banker/ accountant metaphor, and my association was the end of the month, around the 30th, when one usually pays the bills. At this time one regrets past expenditures, balances one's checkbook, or considers suing people. The obvious trigger words are "sessions," "summon," "lack," "waste," "flow," "canceled," "expense," "account," "pay," and "losses." Come across any of these words in a quotation and you will think 30!

Sonnet #55 I associate, rightly or wrongly, with a man's mid-life crisis. The tone is grandiose and yet uncertain, as if the writer is convincing himself of his own importance—just like a man of 55. (!) The themes are building and eternity and the words I highlighted are "monuments," "outlive," "stone," "time," "statues," "masonry," "living record," "room," "posterity," "judgment," and "dwell."

Similar associations can be made for #65, #73, #94, and with a little imagination, #116 and #129. For instance, Sonnet #116 is about marriage and constancy—I came up with a bride and groom (two numeral *ones* standing forever side by side) and their *six* attendants (3 each—see how alike they are?). The trigger words repeat the theme—"marriage," "impediments," "alteration," "ever-fixed," "never-shaken," "alters not," and "bears it out." As for Sonnet #129, the one about lust, due to my much repeated association, had it been on the test, this would undoubtedly have been the single most correctly identified quotation in the history of UD. To work effectively, associations must be meaningfully memorable and can be as outrageous as you please.

7. Pay particular attention to those poems with similar subject matter. For instance, you are likely to confuse *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* (John Milton) and *In the Holy Nativity of Our Lord God: A Hymn Sung as by the Shepherds* (Richard Crashaw). Although thematically similar there are crucial, identifying differences between the two poems. Concentrate on the contrasts. For instance, the Crashaw poem has a different *tone*. Spoken by the shepherds, Tityrus and Thyrsis, they refer to themselves as "shepherds," "we," or "our," as well as the singular in parentheses "(said I)". In addition, the tone is more exuberant (with exclamation marks) simplistic, and humble, reflecting the unsophisticated attitude and language of the shepherds. The Christ child is depicted as pure, innocent, and sweet. The second and fourth lines are indented and each line contains mostly 8 syllables with the longest being 9. If you include the chorus, the last four lines of each stanza all rhyme.

In contrast, the Christ-child in Milton's poem is presented as a more active force. He "releases," "works," "chooses," and "controls" and there are ominous allusions to His coming crucifixion as well as the result, that of Redemption for all mankind. Anyone familiar with Milton's *Paradise Lost* might recognize a similar style in his *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*. In this poem, Milton's language is distinctively different from Crashaw's; he uses more colorful imagery ("lusty paramour") and loftier, more cosmic language ("While the Creator great / His constellations set, / And the well-balanced world on hinges hung, / And cast the dark foundations deep, / And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep" as well as many classical references in his poems. Notice the different form; every *third* line is indented and his longest line contains 12 syllables. Additionally, I kept the titles straight by noting that there are *six* words in the title, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity* just as there are *six* letters in Milton's name.

8. Lastly, don't panic. On the test, start with the quotations you know for sure. Go back to the ones you are uncertain about. If you are really stuck on some of them, finish the rest of your test—you may find some clues in the other questions, or they serve to trigger your memory. Remember, there are sometimes easy ways to figure out the poem without actually knowing it. For example, if you come across weird words or unusual spelling, then it is *The Faerie Queen*, if it doesn't rhyme then it is *Samson Agonistes*, if it is heroic couplets combined with heavy irony, then it is *Rape of the Lock*. Any "shaped verses" are George Herbert, anything that makes much of virgins is likely to be Robert Herrick.