

DEPARTMENT OF AESTHETICS AND PHILOSOPHY

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY, HYDERABAD

Course title	AESTHETICS AND HERMENEUTICS OF POETIC EXPERIENCE
Category	New Course
Course code	MAAPHE 512
Semester	Semester II, January – May 2026
Number of credits	4 credits
Maximum intake	30
Day/Time	Monday and Wednesday 4:00 pm to 6:00 pm
Name of the teacher	Dr. SREEDHARAN. T.
Course description	<p>Aesthetics and hermeneutics of poetic experience are deeply interwoven concepts that together illuminate how poetry is both encountered as art and understood as meaning. Aesthetics focuses on what makes the poetic experience beautiful, moving, or powerful, while hermeneutics concerns itself with how poetry is interpreted and meaning is constructed.</p> <p>Aesthetic experience in poetry arises from sensory, emotional, and intellectual engagement with the text. This includes enjoyment of its rhythm, sound, imagery, structure, and emotive power. Such engagement fosters both emotional resonance and cognitive development, allowing readers to critically analyse and deeply feel the artistic qualities of a poem.</p> <p>Hermeneutics is the art and philosophy of interpretation, concerned with how readers derive meaning from poetry. It moves beyond recognising poetic features to asking profound questions about what a poem means—personally, culturally, or existentially. Hermeneutical aesthetics does not treat art as merely a source of pleasure, but as the site where truths—about self, world, and culture—are disclosed. The process is fundamentally dialogical: both reader and work “speak” to one another, and poetic language becomes a space where beauty and meaning coalesce. Interpretation deepens aesthetic experience, and aesthetic engagement makes interpretation possible, as the poem’s artistic qualities invite reflection and exploration of meaning.</p> <p>In the course we will consider poems of Rilke, Rumi, Hafiz, Kabir, Neruda, Antonio Machado, Akka Mahadevi, Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Yeats, Valery, Eliot, Coleridge, Auden, Thom Gunn, Browning, Tennyson, Basho, Issa, Ikkyu, Tagore, Quasimodo, Borges, Paul Celan, Vicente Aleixandre, Wisława Szymborska, Jacques Prévert, Archibald MacLeish, Czeslaw Milosz, Alice Walker, Mirza Ghalib, Wole Soyinka, Derek Walcott, Wallace Stevens, Mary Oliver, Maya Angelou, A.K. Ramanujan, D.H. Lawrence, St John of the Cross, Juan Ramón Jiménez, Brodsky, Denise Levertov, Tu Fu, Li Po.</p>

	<p><b>LEARNING OUTCOMES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To discover, if possible, the truth of Hans-Georg Gadamer’s contention that aesthetics serves as an analogy for hermeneutics, as understanding is a dialogical process where the interpreter is affected and potentially transformed by the text. Or, as Ānandavardhana and Abhinavagupta propose, the aesthetic effect (such as <i>rasa</i>) arises from a deeper level of meaning (<i>dhvani</i>).</li> <li>• To see how reading poetry aesthetically and hermeneutically invites both emotional openness and critical inquiry.</li> <li>• To recognize how hermeneutic reading of poetry foregrounds personal encounter, collaborative dialogue, and cultural-historical context.</li> <li>• To pay attention to language, historical context, the poet’s intent, and the reader’s own perspective.</li> <li>• To understand, how the aesthetics and hermeneutics of poetic experience involve a unified, dynamic interplay: poetry is not just an object to be admired for its beauty but a living event to be understood, where meaning and beauty are co-created by text, reader, and context.</li> </ul>
Course delivery	Lecture and discussion
Evaluation scheme	<p>Internal Assessment: 40%</p> <p>Written examination (40 marks)</p> <p>Final Assessment: 60%</p> <p>Written examination (60 marks)</p>
Reading List	<p>Clifton Fadiman, John S. Major, Katherine Washburn. <i>World Poetry: An Anthology of Verse from Antiquity to Our Time</i>.</p> <p>John Lennard. <i>The Poetry Handbook</i>.</p> <p>Ruth Padel. <i>52 Ways of Looking at a Poem: or How Reading Modern Poetry Can Change Your Life</i>.</p> <p>Christopher Ricks. <i>The Force of Poetry</i>.</p> <p>Jane Hirshfield. <i>Ten Windows: How Great Poems Transform the World</i>.</p>