In the assignments below you will find certain poems starred. Every other week, except for the last two, you are to write a paper strictly limited to one single-spaced page on the starred poem, mentioning aspects of it that you would want to draw to a class's attention if you were teaching the poem. You need not (you cannot, in one page) explore all of these aspects; what I want to see is how much you've noticed. Leave margins for me to write comments on, and use a font no smaller than 11 point. In my comments I'll try to urge you toward levels you're not noticing, or towards aspects of a single level (say, tone or architectonics) that you're missing. The aim is to make your preparation for your final paper as comprehensive as possible. Papers are due at the seminar meeting unless you bring a written medical excuse. On the alternate weeks in which you do not write a response-paper, prepare one orally and be prepared to state succinctly the points you wish to emphasize about the starred poem.

In the assignments you will also find certain poems in **boldface**. These are the poems around which seminar discussion will center, in addition to the starred poem.

Your final paper, due on **May 12**, should be an article-length critical essay (20 double-spaced pages, c. 6000 words) on a topic of your choice in Yeats's poetics and stylistics. You will be asked to submit the topic to me for approval two weeks before the end of the seminar. **NO EXTENSION** for the final paper will be given without a written medical excuse. You will need to begin work on the paper before the course ends.

The reserve book list will suggest to you reading that you should be doing as the seminar proceeds. Read in Yeats's autobiography (the first version is the Memoirs, the second Autobiographies), in the Wade Letters, and in his critical prose (Explorations, Mythologies, Essays and Introductions) as well as in the Uncollected Prose and A Vision. Skim through the Jeffares short biography or the Donoghue Modern Masters volume to see the outlines of Yeats's life. As you read the poems, read the Jeffares Commentary for each poem for its annotations; but note that these are not literary annotations, but merely factual ones (genre and metrics, for instance, are not noted). If your final paper is on a single volume, you will want to look at Yeats's original volume in Houghton.

You should not, in your final paper, write on any poem without having seen its print evolution in the Variorum Poems and its manuscript evolution (if given) in Bradford, Stallworthy, Parkinson, or the available volumes in the Cornell edition. Look through the two annual journals devoted to Yeats (the English one edited by Warwick Gould, the American one by Richard Finneran). Notice the range of response to Yeats recorded in the Jeffares Critical Heritage volume. Use the Concordance to follow up Yeats's use of a particular word.

But because it is impossible to familiarize yourself with the enormous corpus of Yeatsiana (from primary materials through secondary ones) in one semester, make it your first task to read and reread the poems, our primary text.

For each poem, as you read it, write a quick note in the margin (or, if you don't like writing in books, in a notebook) naming three things:

a) the chief theme(s);
b) the lyric subgenre(s) to which it belongs (e.g., elegy, love poem, political protest poem);
c) the metrical form (poem-length, line-length, rhythm, and rhyme scheme, e.g. "four trochaic pentameter stanzas rhyming abba").
This will help you bring together poems into groups for study as you approach your final paper. Note the relation of the poem to the volume in which it is found; Yeats took care in arranging his volumes (especially in choosing opening and closing poems).

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**Week # 1: (Feb. 4):** Xeroxed handout. Introduction: Yeats and the lyric; Yeats and modern poetry; Yeats as English poet, Irish poet, European poet, and world poet. Yeats as the last of the Romantics or the first of the modernists.

**Week # 2: (Feb. 11):** *Crossways* (1889); *The Wanderings of Oisin* (1889).  
*The Song of the Happy Shepherd* (no paper)

**The Wanderings of Oisin.**
Looking for a style: Protestant vs. Catholic; Catholic vs. Pagan.
Looking for an attitude: the naive vs. the sophisticated; the heroic vs. the languorous.
Looking for a meter in *Oisin*: tetrameter couplets (see Chaucer), pentameter couplets (see Keats's *Endymion*) and hexameter anapestic quatrains (see Swinburne).
Looking for antinomies or Blakean contraries (sad vs. happy, action vs. repose, innocence vs. experience, etc.)

**Week # 3: (Feb. 18):** *The Rose* (1893); *The Wind among the Reeds* (1899).  
*The Man Who Dreamed of Faeryland. (paper)*

**The Rose Poems** (*To the Rose upon the Rood of Time; The Rose of the World; The Rose of Peace; The Rose of Battle; To Ireland in the Coming Times)*
The adopting of a symbol: powers and dangers of the symbol
The matter of Ireland: What is an Irish poet? What is an Irish poem? What is a national literature?
The Otherworld: What is Faeryland? What use is it to a poet? What is its relation to the Judaeo-Christian myth of Eden? Syncretism vs. separation of myths.

**The third-person poems** (*The Lover tells of the Rose in his Heart, The Lover mourns for the Loss of Love, He mourns, He bids, He reproves, He remembers, He gives, The Lover asks, He tells of a Valley, He tells of the Perfect Beauty, He hears, He thinks of Those, The Lover pleads, The Lover speaks, The Poet pleads, He wishes, He thinks of his Past Greatness).*
Formal experiments in stanzas; what do they mean?
What are the advantages of personae and of third-person form in analyzing and representing emotional experience? Yeats: a fin de siècle poet?

**Week # 4: (Feb. 25):** *In the Seven Woods* (1904); *The Green Helmet* (1910).  
*Adam's Curse. (no paper)*

**The Maud Gonne poems** (*The Arrow, The Folly of Being Comforted, Old Memory, Never Give All the Heart, Adam's Curse, A Woman Homer Sung, Words, No Second Troy, Reconciliation, Peace, Against Unworthy Praise).*
The making of the canon: Which of these would you rank higher, which lower, and why? What are your criteria of aesthetic success?
Aspectual poetry: which aspects of Gonne are singled out in each poem? Which might you guess are omitted? How is she contextualized (i.e. what other texts, genres, people is she placed in relation with)?
Advantages of the aspectual for complex subjects?
Transformation of the real into the symbolic; courtly love and precedent in lyric.

**Satiric and political poetry** (In the Seven Woods, The Fascination of What's Difficult, On Hearing that the Students, To a Poet, Upon a House shaken by the Land Agitation, At the Abbey Theatre).

What subgenres is Yeats using in this group? What sort of diction? How is he resolving these issues? Advantages of epigram? Effects on poetry of working in the theatre and writing dramatic pieces. Can you identify different addressees and implied or real audiences for these poems?

I'll briefly sketch the Yeatsian doctrines you'll be encountering in the reading for next week.

**Week # 5: (March 4)**: Responsibilities (1914); The Wild Swans at Coole (1919).
*The Magi (paper)*

**Tetrameter poems in Responsibilities:**

What rhythm (trochaic or iambic) governs each poem? What stanza forms can be found in these poems? Are stanzas separate or run together? Why? For what sort(s) of poems does Yeats find tetrameter useful? (Compare with later investigation of trimeters).

**Didactic poems in The Wild Swans at Coole:**

In the first two, what metrical form does Yeats choose as the medium of instruction? In the third, what forms?

Antinomies (e. g., Hic vs. Ille; Dante vs. Keats; poet vs. rhetorician and sentimentalist; Buddha vs. Sphinx, etc.): how represented in each?

Mediation between antinomies: how represented, if at all?

**Week # 6: (March 11): The Wild Swans at Coole (1919).**
*The Wild Swans at Coole (no paper)*

**Elegies in The Wild Swans at Coole:**
(In Memory of Major Robert Gregory, An Irish Airman foresees his Death, Shepherd and Goatherd, In Memory of Alfred Pollexfen, Upon a Dying Lady).

In each case, what renewal of the elegiac tradition (think of "Lycidas" or "Adonais" or "In Memoriam" for some past examples) is Yeats attempting in each poem?

Compare the three Gregory poems (In Memory, Irish Airman, and Shepherd) as three versions of "the same poem." Consider the underlying poetic that would generate each one. Compare the fourth Gregory poem, Reprisals.

**Week # 7: (March 18)**: Michael Robartes and the Dancer (1921).
*Easter 1916 (paper)*

**Relations between men and women, how conceptualized and how embodied aesthetically:**

What figures are used to represent men? women? From what spheres (e.g., nature, myth, literature, religion, or "real life") are they drawn in each case?

(You may want to think back to The Double Vision of Michael Robartes as well as forward to A Prayer for My Son in The Tower.) What problems steer Yeats towards these aesthetic solutions? (Try writing in your mind what a mother might pray for by contrast to a father, or what Yeats might have prayed for had he had his child in some year other than 1919--see the poem Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen in The Tower.)

Modes of political poetry; constructing a national consciousness:
(Easter 1916, Sixteen Dead Men, The Rose Tree, On a Political Prisoner, The Leaders of the Crowd, The Second Coming)

Consider the genres employed, and the values deployed, in these poems as vehicles for political consciousness and conscience.

Week # 8: (March 25): NO CLASS: Spring Break

Week # 9: (April 1): The Tower (1928)
*Sailing to Byzantium (no paper)

The Yeatsian sequence:
The Tower, Meditations in Time of Civil War, Ninetten Hundred and Nineteen, A Man Young and Old. You may want to look forward to A Woman Young and Old in TheWinding Stair and backward to Upon a Dying Lady in The Wild Swans at Coole.

What subjects press Yeats towards writing a sequence rather than a single lyric? Why do you think he avoids the isometric sequence (one in which all units have the same metrical scheme as in, say, the usual sonnet sequence, or Tennyson's "In Memoriam")? As you note each metrical and stanzaic form in these sequences, can you see reasons why Yeats uses these forms where he does, e.g., in the opening or closing of a sequence?

The construction of the "I" in each sequence: how is it accomplished?

If you think of the two political sequences, are there aspects of civil war that are omitted? are emphasized? are personal to Yeats? are particular to the Irish situation? are particular to a post-World-War I mentality, etc.?

Why, do you suppose, does Yeats affix Roman numerals to each stanza of the poem in Sailing to Byzantium and his ode Among School Children?

Think back to The Man Who Dreamed of Fairyland and The Wanderings of Oisin: how has Yeats's Otherworld changed when we meet it in Sailing to Byzantium? How does it change in next week's starred poem, Byzantium?

Week # 10: (April 8): The Winding Stair (1933)
*Byzantium (paper)

Slide presentation of paintings mentioned in The Municipal Gallery Revisited, as preparation for next week.

Writing in the other gender: Words for Music Perhaps, A Woman Young and Old. Look back to The Ballad of Moll Magee in Crossways; see also the last Crazy Jane poem, Crazy Jane on the Mountain, and the sequence The Three Bushes, in New Poems.)

What are the advantages and disadvantages in appropriating the voice of the gender not one's own? (Cf. precedents in such poems as Donne's "The Break of Day" and Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads.) Relation to dramatic creation; to Catholic (peasant) Ireland; to colonial status; to madness; to the domina of the courtly love poems, to female troubadours.

The Antinomies revisited: Dialogue of Self and Soul, Blood and the Moon.
Why is a Dialogue in two parts? (Think back to Hic and Ille in Ego Dominus Tuus, and to Aherne and Robartes in The Phases of the Moon as previous essays in dialogue.) How would you define the Yeatsian self as against the Yeatsian soul? Why do they speak in the same stanza-form? What is the effect of the metrics of this stanza-form?
The dead (wisdom), the living (blood), and the moon (purity) are the three categories animating Blood and the Moon. Can you give a thematic name to each of its four parts? What are the oppositions among the categories?

Week # 11: (April 15):

Parnell's Funeral and Other Poems (1935); New Poems (1938).

*The Gyres (paper)

The Poetry of Retrospect: The Municipal Gallery Re-visited: we will look forward to The Circus Animals' Desertion in Last Poems and Among School Children.

Week # 12: (April 22):

Submit in writing your proposed topic for your final paper.

Last Poems (1938-39). (See also, in Additional Poems, Why should not Old Men be Mad?, Crazy Jane on the Mountain, A Statesman's Holiday, and The harlot sang to the beggarman, comparing the last of these [drawn from Yeats's play The Death of Cuchulain] to The Statues.)

*News for the Delphic Oracle (no paper)

Stylistic Revisionism: "It is myself that I remake."
(News for the Delphic Oracle vs. The Delphic Oracle upon Plotinus from The Winding Stair; High Talk vs. A Coat from Responsibilities; Cuchulain Comforted vs. Cuchulain's Fight with the Sea from The Rose.)

Manifestos: The Statues; The Choice; Sailing to Byzantium; etc.

Week # 13: (April 29):

Modernizing the genres,

The sonnet: When you are old; The fascination of what's difficult; At the Abbey Theatre; Leda and the Swan; The Second Coming; Meru

The ode: Among School Children, Byzantium, Prayer for My Daughter

Ottava Rima: Sailing to Byzantium, Nineteen Hundred and Nineteen (I), The Circus Animals' Desertion, Among School Children, The Choice, Meditations in Time of Civil War (I: Ancestral Houses; IV: My Descendants), The Gyres

Rime Royal: A Bronze Head

Trimeters: Easter 1916, The Tower (III), The Fisherman

The ballad stanza: News for the Delphic Oracle