Fall 2017

**English 62: Junior Colloquium**

**The New Emily Dickinson: After the Digital Turn**

10A 10:10-noon, x hour Wed 3:30-4:20

104a Dartmouth Hall

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office hours: Thursday 12:15-2:15 pm and by appointment

“It is a tribute to the recent work by scholars such as Virginia Jackson, Martha Nell Smith, Sharon Cameron and Marta Werner that what constitutes a ‘Dickinson poem’ remains an open question for students of her work” (ix). ––Linda Freedman, *Emily Dickinson and the Religious Imagination*, 2011

Description

This colloquium offers an in-depth study of the poetry of Emily Dickinson with a particular focus on how the tools of the digital humanities have renovated our views, including unsettling just what a Dickinson poem is. Since her death in 1886, rival editors have fought over Dickinson’s canon, producing *their* versions of her poetry. Likewise, biographers have romanticized her life, characterizing her as “The Belle of Amherst,” eccentric, reclusive and even a bit mad. Then, in 1981, Ralph Franklin published *The Manuscript Books of Emily Dickinson*, an event that revolutionized Dickinson studies. Scholars began working with the extensive manuscripts, sewn booklets called *fascicles*, loose sheets, letters, and fragments, revealing how Dickinson herself preserved her poetic “performances,” often “choosing not choosing,” as Sharon Cameron describes the poet’s preservation of many variations of poems. These developments have inspired an ongoing “undoing” of a century of editorial, biographical and critical work that has been abetted by the wide availability of Dickinson’s manuscripts in digital form. This colloquium will introduce students to the “new” Dickinson that is emerging from the plethora of materialist, feminist, post-modernist, queer, and cultural studies approaches. We will use digital archives to *re*read and *re*consider Dickinson’s work and life. Finally, we will study the year 1862, an immensely productive time for Dickinson and the height of the Civil War, also the focus of an annual weekly blog I am preparing. For their final projects, students will examine one week of poetry in this tumultuous year, producing research that will be vetted for inclusion on the blog.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Close read Dickinson’s texts, analyzing the relationship between content and form.
2. Research and summarize the historical and biographical contexts of Dickinson’s poetry
3. Put Dickinson’s work into the context of her contemporaries.
4. Analyze and evaluate secondary and critical material about Dickinson.
5. Experiment with digital archives and tools and do research to contribute to a forthcoming Dickinson blog.

Required Texts (at Dartmouth Bookstore and on Reserve)

Dickinson, Emily. *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. R.W. Franklin. Cambridge: Belknap,

Harvard, 1998.

Dickinson, Emily. *The Letters of Emily Dickinson*. Ed. Thomas H. Johnson. Cambridge:

Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1958.

Pollak, Vivian and Marianne Noble, eds. *Historical Guide to Emily Dickinson*. Oxford: Oxford

University Press, 2004.

Oliver, Mary. *A Poetry Handbook*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

Recommended (and on Reserve)

Dickinson, Emily. *Emily Dickinson’s Poems: As She Preserved Them*. Ed. Cristianne Miller.

Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2016.

Miller, Cristianne. *Reading in Time: Emily Dickinson in the Nineteenth Century*. Amherst:

University of Massachusetts Press, 2012.

Jackson, Virginia. *Dickinson’s Misery: A Theory of Lyric Reading.* Princeton: Princeton

University Press, 2005.

Leyda, Jay. *The Years and Hours of Emily Dickinson*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960.

Loeffelholz, Mary. *Dickinson and the Boundaries of Feminist Theory*. Urbana: University of

Illinois, 1991.

-----. *The Value of Emily Dickinson*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.

Martin, Wendy, ed. *All Things Dickinson: An Encyclopedia of Emily Dickinson’s World.*

Greenwood, 2014*.*

Richards, Eliza, ed. *Emily Dickinson in Context*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013.

St. Armand, Barton Levi. *Emily Dickinson and Her Culture: The Soul's Society*. Cambridge

University Press, 1984.

Smith, Martha Nell and Mary Loeffelholz, eds. *A Companion to Emily Dickinson*. London:

Blackwell Publishing, 2014.

Weiss, Shira Wolosky. *Emily Dickinson: A Voice of War*. New Haven: Yale University Press,

1984.

Werner, Marta, ed. *Emily Dickinson's Open Folios: Scenes of Reading, Surfaces of Writing*. Ann

Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995.

Recommended Films (on reserve at Jones Media Center and streamed on Canvas: Course Media Gallery)

*The Belle of Amherst*. dir. Charles S. Dubin, 2004. JMC dvd 3598, 90 minutes

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| *Emily Dickinson*. dir. Veronica Young. Voices & visions, Annenberg Media, New York, NY, 2011 (c. 1988), c1988. disc 2 Program 4, 57 minutes. dvd 14438. |
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| *Angles of a Landscape; the poet in her bedroom*. Ed. Ernest Urvater. Amherst, MA : Emily Dickinson Museum c2008, 33 minutes, dvd 9983.  *A Quiet Passion.* dir. Terence Davies, c2017. 125 minutes. |
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\*\*Please download all the materials from the Canvas site or weblinks and bring it to class on the days it is assigned for discussion, either as hard copy or on your computers.

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Week 1: Introduction: The Class and the Myth

Sept 12 T

View: *The Belle of Amherst*. View either *Emily Dickinson* or one of the three *Angles of a Landscape* (JMC streamed; click on Course Media Gallery). Compare the presentations of the poet and think about how they differ.

Explore: <http://archive.emilydickinson.org/safe/> “Emily Dickinson Writing a Poem”

For Fun, look at <http://xkcd.com/788/>

Discuss Pre-class Survey and Plan class structure.

Questions to discuss and decide by class:

1. Do we want to read all the poems and letters in our editions? Do we want to assign who will make the selections for each class, how many poems and letters we will focus on in each class? NB: this can change as we go on and see how burdensome it is.

2. Do we want to do classly or weekly reading responses?

3. Do we want to submit drafts of papers for critique? How long in advance? Do we want to do peer reviews of papers? What time should papers be due?

4. Do we want to be able to see/read each other’s papers?

5. Do we want to visit The Homestead and Evergreens, Amherst Museum, Amherst College Special Collections and if so, when?

6. Please bring a Dickinson poem to class that you like for us to read.

Th Sept 14 : Biography

View: *A Quiet Passion* (streamed through JMC on Canvas’ Course Media Gallery).

Read: Vivian R. Pollak and Marianne Noble, “Emily Dickinson, 1830-1886: A Brief Biography” and “Illustrated Chronology,” in *A Historical Guide to Emily Dickinson*, ed. Vivian Pollak, pp. 13-63, 236-53.

Read: Mary Oliver, “Sound and The Line,” in *A Poetry Handbook* pp. 19-57.

Read: “Doing Close Reading” and “Scansion Made Easy” (Canvas)

Discuss: Close reading essay Assignment (see Samples on Canvas and Formatting information).

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Week 2

T Sept 19 Close Reading

Read: Mary Oliver, “Diction, Tone, Voice, Imagery” in *A Poetry Handbook* pp. 76-108.

Read: Poems: Franklin, pp. 37-66 (1859)

Read: Letters, Johnson, pp. 140-152

Thurs Sept 21

Read: Poetry: Franklin pp. 67-89 (1860)

Letters: pp. 153-158

Read for discussion, as examples of close reading: Mary Loeffelholz, “The Life of Dickinson’s Writing” in *The Value of Emily Dickinson*, 11-16 (Canvas);

Read: Poets.org Guide to Emily Dickinson’s *Collected Poems,* Part III “A Close Reading of ‘I Cannot Live with You’” (canvas).

Read: “Writing about Poetry” (Canvas)

Workshop: Present ideas for close reading (5 minutes)

Close reading draft due

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Week 3

Tues Sept 26:

Context: Dickinson in her Time

Poems: Fr pp. 91-121 (1861)

Letters: J pp. 159-163.

Read: Jane Donahue Eberwein, “’Is Immortality True?’: Salvaging Faith in an Age of Upheavals” in Pollak.

Thur Sept 28

Dickinson and her Contemporaries

Poems: pp. 122-160 (1862 part 1)

Letters: pp. 165-170.

Read: Cheryl Walker, “Dickinson in Context: Nineteenth-Century American Women Poets” in Pollak

Fri Sept 29 Essay 1 Close Reading due 10 pm.

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Week 4

Tues Oct 3: Using Contexts

Read: Poems: pp. 161-196 (1862 part 2)

Read: Letters pp. 171-176

Read Thomas Wentworth Higginson. “Letter to a Young Contributor.” *The Atlantic Monthly* (April 1862; <http://archive.emilydickinson.org/higgyc/yct1.html>) and find one poem in the poems for today that this letter illuminates in some way.

Discuss: Context essay assignment and look at samples

Visit: Wendel Cox, our English Librarian, to discuss finding and using sources.

Midterm Evaluations of course in class.

Thurs Oct 5: The Context of War

Poems: pp. pp. 197-227 (1862 part 3)

Letters: pp. 176-80

Read: Shira Wolosky, “Public and Private in Dickinson’s War Poetry,” in Pollak.

Explore: one of these websites and find a context that illuminates at least one of the poems for our reading today. Be prepared to report on how the context illuminates the poem:

[The Civil War, Class & the Dickinsons](http://www.classroomelectric.org/volume2/smith/) by Martha Nell Smith

[A Nosegay to Take to Battle: The Civil War Wounding of Emily Dickinson](http://www.classroomelectric.org/volume2/werner/) by Marta

Werner et al.

[Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, and the Civil War](http://www.classroomelectric.org/volume2/folsom/) by Ed Folsom

[Whitman, Dickinson, and the Elegy: Death and Dying During the Civil War](http://www.classroomelectric.org/volume2/belasco/) by Susan

Belasco

Foregrounds and Apprentices: <http://www.classroomelectric.org/volume1/belasco/>

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Week 5

Tuesday Oct 10 [Talk about context paper]

Editing Dickinson/Dickinson Editing

Meet in Rauner Special Collections, for seminar with director, Jay Satterfield.

Read: Jonathan Morse, “Bibliographic Essay” in Pollak

The Fascicles: Read: Eleanor Elson Heginbotham, “Reading Dickinson in her Context: The Fascicles” in *A Companion to Emily Dickinson* 288-308 (Reserves)

Poems: pp. 228-270 (1863 part 1)

Letters: pp. 181-83

Explore: <http://archive.emilydickinson.org/mutilation/index.html>

and

Jen Bervin, “The Dickinson Composites Series, <http://www.jenbervin.com/projects/the-dickinson-composites-series>

Thurs Oct 12:

What is a Dickinson Poem and how have digital tools changed that?

Read: Poems pp. 271-311 (1863 part 2)

Read: Tanya Clement, “A Digital Regiving: Editing the Sweetest Messages in the Dickinson Electronic Archives” in *A Companion to Emily Dickinson* 415-36 (Reserve)

Explore: “The Letter Poem, A Dickinson Genre” <http://archive.emilydickinson.org/letter/index.htm>

Fri Oct 13 Context Essay due 10 pm.

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Week 6

T Oct 17

Working with Manuscripts

Read: Carolyn Vega “The Realm of Fox: The Dispersal of Emily Dickinson’s Manuscripts” in

*The Networked Recluse* pp. 5-12 (canvas)

Read: Ellen Louise Hart, with Sandra Chung, “Hearing the Visual Lines: How Manuscript Study Can Contribute to an Understanding of Dickinson’s Prosody” in *A Companion to Emily Dickinson,* pp. 348-67 (Reserve)

Explore: The Emily Dickinson Archive <http://www.edickinson.org/> and prepare a short presentation (2-3 minutes) in preparation for the archival assignment. Pick one poem from the current reading and compare a manuscript image of a poem with its printed version in Franklin (or another edition). Consider: What were the challenges in this comparison? What were the results? You should consult Franklin’s short “Introduction,” in which he explains how he made his choices in this printed readers’ edition. For the archival assignment, you will write up the comparison in more detail and draw out the implications of what you discover.

Poems: pp. 312-353 (1863 part 3)

Th Oct 19

T Digital Dickinson

Read: Poems pp. 354-87 (1864)

Read: Letters pp. 185-86

Lara Vetter, “Editing Dickinson in an Electronic Environment” in A Companion to Emily Dickinson, pp. 437-52 (Reserve)

Read: Mary Loeffelholz, “Networking Dickinson: Some Thought Experiments in Digital

Humanities” in *Dickinson Journal,* vol. 23, 1(2014) (Canvas).

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Tu Oct 24

Dickinson and Power.

Visitor: Renee Bergland, Professor of English at Simmons College and Review Editor for the *Emily Dickinson Journal*

Read: Adrienne Rich, “Vesuvius at Home: The Power of Emily Dickinson” (Canvas)

Read: The third "Master Letter." The manuscript of "If you saw a bullet hit a Bird" (the third "Master Letter"), <https://acdc.amherst.edu/view/asc:909> and the transcription of the manuscript

<http://archive.emilydickinson.org/correspondence/anon/l233.html>

Read: Franklin’s introduction to the “Master Letters.”

<http://archive.emilydickinson.org/classroom/spring99/edition/franklin/f-master.htm>

Each student please prepare by reading the letter and then choosing a poem that connects to it in some way.  Please come to class ready to explain how the poem you have selected picks up on a theme from the letter.

Read: "Excuse Emily and her Atoms” in the two ms. versions provided:

<http://archive.emilydickinson.org/working/hb103.htm>

<https://acdc.amherst.edu/view/asc:6378>

Read: short essay by Jen Bervin on scale:

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/70065/studies-in-scale

Th Oct 26: *The Networked Recluse*: The Morgan Library Exhibit 2017

Read *The Networked Recluse*, “Introduction,” “The Life and Poetry of Emily Dickinson” (the exhibit) and Marta Werner, “Emily Dickinson: Manuscripts, Maps, and a Poetics of Cartography” (Canvas)

Read: Poems, pp. 388-454 (1865)

Read: Letters, pp. 186-88

Fri Oct 27 Essay 3 Archival Assignment due 10 pm.

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Week 8: Thinking about the Digital

**Tu Oct 31 Review of Digital Sitesn**

Read and Explore: Editorial statement on Dickinson Electronic Archive. 1 and 2. <http://archive.emilydickinson.org/index.html>

Compare: Emily Dickinson Archive. Harvard University. <http://www.edickinson.org>

Emily Dickinson Digital Archive. Amherst College. <https://acdc.amherst.edu/collection/ed>

For an example of a digital archive critique, see [Tanya Clement, "A Digital Regiving" part 2, pp. 420-36.](https://canvas.dartmouth.edu/courses/22306/files/3072589/download?wrap=1)

Criteria:

Criteria for Reviewing Digital Edition/Web Sites

* **Content** (Is the scholarship sound and current? What is the interpretation or point of view?)
* **Form** (Is it clear? Easy to navigate? Does it function effectively? Does it have a clear, effective, and original design? Does it have a coherent structure?)
* **Audience/Use** (Is it directed at a clear audience? Will it serve the needs of that audience?)
* **New Media** (Does it make effective use of new media and new technology? Does it do something that could not be done in other media–print, exhibition, film?)

**source:** "Digital History Reviews." The Journal of American History. Organization of American Historians, n.d. Web.

Read: Poems, pp. 455-87 (1866-71)

Read: Letters, pp. 190-216

**Thurs Nov 1 A Week in the Life: Final Projects**

Read: Poems, pp. 488-520 (1872-75)

Read: Letters, pp. 216-231

Suggested Reading: David Cody, [“When one’s soul’s at a white heat”: Dickinson and the “Azarian School.”](https://canvas.dartmouth.edu/courses/22306/files/3072597/download?wrap=1) The Emily Dickinson Journal, vol. 19, no. 1, 2010: 30-59

Pick your week in 1862

[WordPress instructions](https://canvas.dartmouth.edu/courses/22306/files/3072596/download?wrap=1): visit from Scott Millspaugh

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Week 9 Complications

Tues Nov 7 Close Reading Revisited

Read: Barbara Herrnstein Smith, “What Was ‘Close Reading’? A Century of Method in Literary Studies.” Minnesota Review (87, 2016): 55-75 (Canvas)

Read: Poems, pp. 521-578 (1875 -1881)

Read: Letters, pp. 232-77

Thurs Nov 9: Context Revisited

Read: Poems, pp. 579-636 (1882- undated)

Read: Letters, pp. 277-330

Read: Rita Felski, “Context Stinks,”  *New Literary History* 2011, 42: 573-591 (Canvas)

Fri Nov 10 Website Review due, 10 pm.

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Week 10

Tues Nov 14 Presentations of Final Projects

Nov 19

Sun Final Projects due 10 pm

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Requirements

Class Preparation: Please read all texts before the class for which they are assigned and come prepared with comments and questions. Your participation in class discussions is important for your learning and for our group process.

Participation: I do take attendance, and regular attendance in class is essential as a way to register your interest in and commitment to the course. After two unexcused absences, please notify me if you must miss class. I reserve the right to take points off your final grade for poor attendance, consistent lateness, and lackluster participation. Participation comprises 15 % of your final grade.

Assessments:

1. Weekly Selection Assignment, 10%

2. Close Reading, 5 pages. 15%

3. Contextual Reading, 5 pages. 20%

4. Archival Assignment, 3 pages, 10%

5. Website Evaluation: you will choose a website or database of Dickinson materials, analyze, evaluate it, write up to present to class, 3 pages. 10%

5. Final project: With a partner, you will research the three contexts (national events, personal correspondence, poem biography) and a response for 7 days in 1862 that will contribute to *The Emily Dickinson blog*. 25%

6. Participation: 10%

Honor Principle: All work you submit must be your own. Plagiarism—putting your name on someone else's work accidentally or intentionally—is a violation of Dartmouth's honor code that instructors must bring to the attention of the disciplinary committee. We will abide by Dartmouth’s Academic Honor Principle: The Faculty of Dartmouth College, in recognizing the responsibility of students for their own education, assumes intellectual honesty and integrity in the performance of academic assignments, both in the classroom and outside. Each student upon enrollment at Dartmouth College accepts this responsibility with the understanding that any student who submits work which is not his or her own violates the purpose of the College and is subject to disciplinary actions, up to and including suspension and separation. You can read more about the honor code at <http://www.dartmouth.edu/~deancoll/documents/handbook/conduct/standards/honor.html> For questions about correct citation and use of scholarly sources, consult me and see “Sources and Citations at Dartmouth” at <https://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>.

Course etiquette: We will listen and speak to each other respectfully and abide by the Dartmouth Principle of Community: The life and work of a Dartmouth student should be based on integrity, responsibility, and consideration. In all activities each student is expected to be sensitive to and respectful of the rights and interests of others and to be personally honest. He or she should be appreciative of the diversity of the community as providing an opportunity for learning and moral growth.

I encourage you to bring laptop computers to class to take notes, check the web, and consult the Blackboard site. However, use of computers for activities that are not course-related is rude and distracting. Violations will result in the loss of the privilege to bring your computer to class.

Special Accommodations: If you have a documented disability or other special need, please let me know at the beginning of the term and I will accommodate you. All discussions will remain confidential. If you have questions, please consult with Ward Newmeyer, Director of Student Accessibilities Services.

Sexual Assault: Dartmouth’s policies and resources related to sexual respect and sexual assault can be found at <<http://www.dartmouth.edu/sexualabuse/>>. In addition to campus resources, the [WISE](http://www.wiseuv.org/on-campus.html) hotline provides 24-hour free, confidential and privileged support and advocacy at 877-770-3010. [WISE at Dartmouth](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~tucker/service/local/food/wise.html) is a student organization focused on raising awareness, and Dartmouth's [Sexual Abuse Peer Advisors](http://www.dartmouth.edu/sexualrespect/get-involved/sapa.html) are available to provide support and resources.

Office hours: I welcome your visits and comments and reactions to the course. If my posted hours are not convenient for you, please email me to set up an appointment. I am happy to consult about all assignments for the course.