HNRS 210 Poetry as a Way of Knowing
Midterm Self-Evaluation
Fall 2026

Introduction

A mid-term evaluation process is a generative opportunity: to reflect on the work you have completed and to learn from that reflection what you have accomplished as a student in the course. The self-evaluation offers us a common baseline, too, for assessing the ongoing development of your skills in reading, thinking, and writing during your first semester of college.

The self-evaluation has three parts: 1) answering questions about your learning process; 2) writing a narrative evaluation of your intellectual work in the course; and 3) completing a list of learning "outcomes." Your responses should provide relevant evidence of your learning process.

Each of the areas has a numerical score (1-4). And at the end of the self-evaluation you will derive a holistic grade (or grade-range) based on the evidence you provide.

Process

- Download a copy of the self-evaluation.
- Complete the three parts. (A useful (productive) self-evaluation will likely take a few hours to complete as it involves revisiting and rereading and reflecting on seven weeks of intellectual work.)
- Delete the instructions page (this page).
- Attach the completed evaluation to an email and send to mlong@keene.edu no later than Sunday night at midnight.

Name:

Date:

Part One: Reading and Thinking and Writing

Process

Describe what you have learned about your thinking and writing process in this course. For instance, have you learned (or refined) your thinking and writing process? Do you believe there are habits of mind and skills that will be useful (transferable) to other writing tasks in college? Explain.

Have you managed your time effectively in this course this semester? Managing your time is important for you (and for me) to sustain the deliberate but sustained sequence of tasks you are required to complete this semester.

Did you turn in your written work on time on the due dates?

Have you set up your digital portfolio on Blogger? (yes or no)

Did you collaborate effectively with Mark? (Collaboration includes making comments or asking questions in class, writing follow-up notes in the Hypothes.is annotation tool, asking for feedback when you need help, or engaging with Mark's process guidance either in our class sessions or in the "Teacher Talk" essays.)

The correlation between class attendance and academic progress is well documented. Please list the number of class sessions you missed and the dates of your absences.

Reading

What have you learned about reading this semester? This may be the place to account for your reading process in the Description Annotation Explication Analysis exercise with a poem.

How many annotations did you complete using the social annotation tool Hypothes.is? Was this tool useful for you? Might you use it in other reading tasks?

Describe your experience with reading poems. What have you learned about reading in general, and reading poems in particular? (One way to focus this answer is to describe the "How Things Work" poem you completed.)

Describe what it was like for you to read Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas.* Reading Whitman's speculative essay is perhaps best described using his term, a "gymnast's struggle." How did this struggle unfold for you? Did "starting with the text" help you with processing the text? If so, explain.

Did the collective reading of *Democratic Vistas* (choosing passages and discussing them and connecting them to other passages) teach you anything about reading and/or your own reading process?

What did you learn from reading Walt Whitman's *Democratic Vistas*? (about yourself, about democracy, about culture, about literature, about reading, and so on)

Thinking

Describe or list (general and specific) *ideas that have engaged you* in the readings during the first weeks of the semester? (Walker Percy The Loss of the Creature, José Ortega y Gasset, Man Has No Nature, Adrienne Rich Claiming an Education, Mary Harrington, Thinking is Becoming a Luxury Good, James Baldwin, The Creative Process, Walt Whitman *Democratic Vistas,* Ralph Waldo Emerson, Circles or any of the other links to optional reading I provided on the course web site.)

What have you learned so far in this course about the art of poetry?

Write a paragraph or two about what you have learned by reading the "Teacher Talk" essay/lectures I have composed during the past seven weeks of the course. Be specific. There are 12 essay/lectures. (You might need to reread selected pieces to recall the points that have made a difference for you.) Quoting from the text of one or more of these pieces would likely be helpful for you.

Score for the thinking and writing process (1-4):

Writing

Review the writing you have completed in the first half of the class: 1) the Narrative Essay on Reading and Writing in School; 2) the Description Annotation Explication exercises); 3) the "how Things Work" poem; and 4) the first of two commentaries on Walt Whitman. In your view, what piece of writing best represents your skills as a writer? How?

What *specifically* have you learned about writing (and/or yourself as a writer) during the weeks dedicated to writing you first commentary on a poem from Walt Whitman's book *Leaves of Grass?*

What have you learned in writing the first commentary that will help you write the second commentary? Be specific.

Research

Describe what you learned about research thus far in this course. I am particularly interested in your reflections about what you learned about finding, evaluating, and using evidence in the research process, using a digital archive, The Walt Whitman Archive.

Talk about your experiences with other research portals and sites you have used, such as materials in other archives, essays or articles in a database, or books on the shelf in the Mason Library.

Have you used a GenAI tool in any of your work in the is class? (For reading and/or for writing and research?) If so, explain which product(s) and then elaborate (with details) how you used it (prompts, etc.). Be specific about how this tool has been helpful (or has been a hindrance) in your writing process.

What has been the most challenging part of writing a literary commentary? How have you met that challenge?

Score for the thinking and writing process (1-4):

Part Two: **Learning Narrative**

Write a brief (one page) narrative that explains what you have learned as a thinker and writer this semester. The answers to the questions above are especially useful, allowing you to step back and reflect and articulate your learning process. A narrative like this is a useful way for you to organize this story of what you have learned, first and foremost, but is also an opportunity to consider how what you have learned will help you in other courses and/or in your life outside of school.

Writing is among the more difficult practices you will learn in school, and it is something that will reward those who write effectively. The ability to clearly communicate ideas is a way to convey arguments, persuade people, and demonstrate that you can think with others about the complexity of ideas in real-world contexts. Are you in a different place than when you started the semester?

Part Three: List of Learning Outcomes

List five learning outcomes (one sentence each) that articulates what you have learned in the course this far. "I have learned to think differently about. . ." "I have learned to understand. . ." "I have learned to do. . ."

1. I have learned to put effort into my researching process
2. I have learned to revise my work more often
3. I have learned to read poetry with more clarity
4. I have learned to interpret the messages behind poems
5. I have learned to hold myself to higher standards regarding turning in assignments

Now that you have completed this self-assessment, derive a holistic assessment of your work this semester using the college's grading scale of A, AB, B, BC, C, DC, D, F. This scale can be explained as follows: a C is acceptable work, a B is skillful and articulate work, and an A is creative, unique, in-depth work.

Estimated course Grade (or grade range) at Midterm: