Dr. Melissa Mentzer  
Carroll Hall 315  
(860) 832-2742  
mentzer@ccsu.edu  
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 8:30-9:15, 1:30-3:00  
Tuesday, Thursday 1:30-2:00  
and by appointment.

Course Description: This class is an intensive study of the poetry of Emily Dickinson. We will closely analyze individual poems and letters and also explore the literary history and the changing criticism of Dickinson's work. We will study the legends, facts and controversies surrounding this giant of nineteenth-century poetry. The class format is lecture and discussion. Please be ready to offer your analyses of the poems and the assigned readings.


Please note: The Emily Dickinson Museum in Amherst, Massachusetts has a very useful website that includes a biographical sketch of Dickinson and other resources. The website is www.emilydickinsonmuseum.org

Scholarly articles on Dickinson can be found in many journals including electronically available journals on our Library's website. For access to The Emily Dickinson Journal, go to the ProjectMUSE database on the Library’s homepage and search for the journal.
Course Requirements:

Attendance and participation are mandatory. **10% of the final grade.** Each student is allowed two unexcused absences. Excused absences include illness and family emergencies. If you miss a class, please get the notes from another student and see me about making up any missed assignments as soon as possible.

*Please do not come to class if you are ill. I will ask you to leave.*

**Short papers:** These are one to two page responses on assigned poems and readings. These are due once a week at the start of class on Tuesdays. **30% of final grade.**

**Two Research Papers:** **30% each** (60% of final grade). The research paper is 8 to 12 pages in length, typed, double-spaced with one-inch margins. Use the **MLA format** for the paper format and the research. The MLA style guide for citations and bibliographies can be found on the Library’s website and online. I am happy to read **rough drafts and to discuss ideas and research questions.**

We will discuss paper topics and research in class.

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**Reading Schedule (subject to change)**

**Week 1 8/29-8/31** Introduction to Emily Dickinson’s life.
“Dickinson’s Local, Global and Cosmic Perspectives” Jane Donahue Eberwein
“Dickinson’s Literary Background” Gary Lee Stonum
Poems 285, 312, 613, 448, 465, 1545

**Week 2 9/5-9/7** Reading Emily Dickinson
Excerpt from *A Poet’s Grammar* chpts 2, 4
Poems 49, 365, 280, 510, 286, 1058, 673, 675, 754

**Week 3 9/12-9/14** Dickinson and Romanticism
Suggested reading: excerpt from *The Roots of Romanticism* Isaiah Berlin (on reserve in library).
Excerpt from *The Long Shadow* Clark Griffith intro, chpts 1,2.
“Emily Dickinson’s Circumference: Figuring a Blind spot in the Romantic Tradition” Laura Gribbin

**Week 4 9/19. Class cancelled Thursday 9/21.**

The Romantic and the Gothic
“Circumstance” Harriet Spofford
Week 5  9/26-9/28  
Dickinson and Religion and Death  
E. Miller Budick “When the Soul Selects…”  
Alan Blackstock “Dickinson, Blake and the Hymnbooks of Hell”

Week 6  10/3-10/5  Possible research paper topics due in class Tuesday 10/3  
Religion and Death  
“Emily Dickinson, Homiletics, and Prophetic Power” Beth Maclay Doriani  
“Where-Omnipresence-Fly?” Calvinism as Impetus to Spiritual Amplitude” Jane Donahue Eberwein

Week 7  10/10-10/12 Thesis for research paper due in class Tuesday 10/10  
Nature and nature  
Cecily Parks “The Swamps of Emily Dickinson”  
Aaron Shackelford “Dickinson’s Animals and Anthropomorphism”

Week 8  10/17-10/19  Research Paper #1 due at start of class Thursday 10/19  
Art and the poet  
Margaret Freeman “A Cognitive Approach to Dickinson’s Metaphors”  
Josef Raab “The Metapoetic Element in Dickinson”

Week 9  10/24-10/26.  
The poet and poetry: questions of Romanticism and Modernism  
“Scarlet Experiments: Dickinson’s New English and the Critics” Karen L. Kilup

Week 10  10/30-11/2  
Dickinson and the Civil War  
Margaret Dickie “Emily Dickinson in History and Literary History”  
David Cody “Blood in the Basin: The Civil War in Emily Dickinson’s ‘The Name of It is Autumn’”

Week 11  11/7-11/9  
Margaret Dickie “Feminist Conceptions of Dickinson”  
Adrienne Rich “Vesuvius at Home”  
“Emily Dickinson in History and Literary History” Margaret Dickie

Week 12  11/14-11/16  
“Compound Manner:' Emily Dickinson and the Metaphysical Poets” Judith Banzer

Michelle Kohler “Dickinson and the Poetics of Revolution”
Week 14  11/28-11/30
Isabel Campos “The Haunted House of Nature—Immanence’s Infinity”

Week 15  12/5-12/7
Daneen Wardrop  “The Poetics of Political Involvement and Non-Involvement”
Cristanne Miller  “Whose Dickinson”

Final Exam time: Thursday 12/14  10:30  Research Paper Due and brief class meeting.