

## The Poetry of Ted Hughes

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**Start date** 17<sup>th</sup> February 2017**End date** 19<sup>th</sup> February 2017**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge**Tutor** Jem Poster**Course code** 1617NRX062**Director of Programmes**

Emma Jennings

**For further information on this  
course, please contact**Public Programme Coordinator, Clare Kerr  
[clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:clare.kerr@ice.cam.ac.uk) or 01223 746237**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

Professor Jem Poster

Emeritus Professor of Creative Writing, Aberystwyth University; Affiliated Lecturer, University of Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education.

Jem Poster worked as an archaeologist, surveying and excavating a range of sites on behalf of the Inspectorate of Ancient Monuments, before taking up an administrative post with Cambridge University's Institute of Continuing Education in 1987. From 1993 to 2003 he was University Lecturer in Literature with Oxford University's Department for Continuing Education and a fellow of Kellogg College. From 2003 to 2012 he was Professor of Creative Writing at Aberystwyth University, and is now Emeritus Professor. He is the author of two novels, *Courting Shadows* (2002) and *Rifling Paradise* (2006), as well as a collection of poetry, *Brought to Light* (2001), and has recently completed volume 3 of the six-volume Oxford University Press *Edward Thomas: Prose Writings*. He has won prizes in major poetry competitions including first prize in both the Cardiff International Poetry Competition in 1995 and the Peterloo Poets Open Poetry Competition in 2001.

He has been Chair of the editorial board of Wales's leading literary journal, *New Welsh Review*, and is currently Programme Advisor to the Cambridge Institute of Continuing Education's MSt in Creative Writing and Director of its International Summer Programme in Creative Writing; he is an Affiliated Lecturer of the Institute. He is Director of Academic Programmes for the Financial Times Oxford Literary Festival and in 2014 spent four months as Writer in Residence at Arizona State University.

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## Course programme

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### Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

19:00	Dinner
20:30 – 22:00	Session 1 Introduction; <i>The Hawk in the Rain</i> (I)
22:00	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Saturday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 2 <i>The Hawk in the Rain</i> (II)
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 3 <i>Lupercal</i> (I)
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 16:00	Free
16:00	Tea
16:30 – 18:00	Session 4 <i>Lupercal</i> (II)
18:00 – 18:30	Free
18:30	Dinner
20:00 – 21:30	Session 5 <i>Wodwo</i>
21:30	Terrace bar open for informal discussion

### Sunday

07:30	Breakfast
09:00 – 10:30	Session 6 <i>Crow</i>
10:30	Coffee
11:00 – 12:30	Session 7 <i>Birthday Letters</i> ; conclusion
12:45	Lunch

**The course will disperse after lunch**

## Course syllabus

### Aims:

1. to explore the relationships between Hughes' work and its wider context;
2. to analyse the poems under review;
3. to gain a clearer sense of the writer's achievement.

### Content:

Skilfully crafted, imagistically vivid and possessed of a ferocious energy, the best of Ted Hughes' work confirms him as one of the finest poets of the twentieth century. Drawing primarily, though not exclusively, on the compelling early collections – *The Hawk in the Rain* (1957), *Lupercal* (1960) and *Wodwo* (1967) – we shall be looking in detail at his subjects and techniques, and placing his work in the context of the troubled life that helped to shape it. The following poems are likely to figure prominently in our discussions:

The Hawk in the Rain, The Jaguar, The Thought-Fox, The Horses, Meeting, The Casualty, Bayonet Charge, Mayday on Holderness, Strawberry Hill, A Dream of Horses, Esther's Tomcat, Hawk Roosting, To Paint a Water Lily, The Bull Moses, Relic, Wilfred Owen's Photographs, Thrushes, Pike, Snowdrop, Thistles, Second Glance at a Jaguar, Full Moon and Little Frieda, Wodwo, Crow's Song of Himself, Littleblood, St Botolph's, The Bee God.

Unless you have the individual collections in which these poems appear, you will need the *Collected Poems*; the *Selected* omits a number of important poems on the list. At around £20 this is rather more expensive than is usual for a weekend course poetry text, but is well worth it. We shall be looking closely at the listed poems: **please read them in advance and bring the book to every session of the course.**

### Presentation of the course:

The course will take the form of a series of seminars, in which group discussion will be actively encouraged; the majority of these discussions will focus on the poems themselves, which will be analysed in detail.

**As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

1. place the writer in his wider context and understand more clearly the implications and meaning of his work;
2. gain greater confidence in their approach to the analysis of literary texts in general.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below is a text that might be of interest for future reference, but does not need to be bought (or consulted) for the course.

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Author	Title	Publisher and date
Bate, Jonathan	<i>Ted Hughes: The Unauthorised Life</i>	Collins, 2015

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 10 November 2016