

### **IDIS-303\* Mathematics and Poetry**

An exploration of the way in which the patterns that we observe in the great world about us and in the unfathomable spaces within us, can be described by language and perhaps even understood with the tools of analysis and synthesis. A collection of poems and mathematical problems will be examined in a discussion format, and students will be expected to examine similar examples on their own.

Why are mathematics and poetry together in a single course? Perhaps that's for the student to discover. By our way of thinking, they each provide a language and an aesthetic standard, mathematics for the sciences, and poetry for the arts (and maybe it works the other way around as well).

For the poetry, the emphasis will be on how to read a poem and come to an understanding of how the poet has used the technical resources of form and language to communicate the theme and achieve the effect.

For the mathematics the emphasis will be on how to look for patterns in a mathematical situation, and achieve an understanding of why they stand in a certain relationship to one another, and what "makes it work."

Assignments will be given two weeks in advance, two in Math and two in Poetry. Students will be expected to submit written accounts of their analysis, and will be evaluated both on the content of their work and on the quality of their exposition.

An important aspect of the course is the wide range of programs and backgrounds of the students. It is an unusual and valuable experience to exchange ideas and arguments in the classroom with students from "the other side" of the university.