

What are poets for?

Exam revision (2014)

Overview of exam

- The exam is 2 hours, in which you need to answer two questions from a choice of eight.
- There is no reading time (reading time is only given in papers that ask you to write a commentary on a passage included in the exam paper).
- You cannot take any reading material into the exam with you.
- Each question includes its own rubric. Some questions will ask you to discuss two poems *studied on the module*. Other questions are more open, and allow you to write on poems not studied on the module. Other questions still allow for a focus on Heidegger's philosophy through the field of poetics.
- You cannot repeat material from your assessed essay, or within the exam. You *can* use material from your unassessed essays on this module.

Revising

- The exam has two objectives: (i) to assess your ability to discuss Heidegger's reading of poetry and poetics; (ii) your ability to close read poetry in the light of Heidegger's philosophy.
- Choose 2-4 themes from the list below, or choose 2-4 questions from the mock exam.
- Write out your answers in essay form and use them to revise from.
- If you don't want to/haven't got time to write out full essays, write short 500-word summaries of your potential exam answers, which you can then develop during the exam in the context of specific questions.
- For each potential answer, map out a six-eight paragraph plan detailing your essay.
- Try and balance your reading of Heidegger with your sense of how his philosophy opens up your reading of particular poems
- You are welcome to use critics if they are useful, but the essay should ideally bring together Heidegger's ideas with poetry

Answering the question

- Each answer should be a clearly structured, planned response to the question: do not write down everything you know.
- As with assessed essays, start with an introduction where you outline your argument.
- Remember that an argument is **not** an interesting or complex idea: it is an idea that you have a point about which you wish to prove.
- A good argument is specific rather than general and comprehensive (making an argument means having an angle on your topic and being able to defend this interpretation).
- Do not make general or sweeping claims: think about which poems you're going to refer to in your answer and use them to form the basis of the close reading that supports your argument.
- Remember that some of the questions are deliberately open in order to allow you to answer on what you know rather than what you don't.

Revision themes

- "Poetizing" and thinking
- Science/empiricism
- Heidegger's poets (Hölderlin; Rilke; Trakl)
- The gods / God
- World picture and world view
- Technology and art
- Being
- Dwelling
- Thing theory
- Metaphysics
- Eco-criticism
- Poetic form