



Continuing Education

# Music for the Human Voice

Teaching Poetry in the  
*Collège* Classroom

October 29, 2025

## Content

Maya Angelou argued that poetry was «music for the human voice». Poetry, the oldest form of literature, is about sound and pleasure, emotion and self-expression. It is meant to be spoken and sung before it is committed to a page and read silently. Poetry gives voice to an individual speaker and invites readers to share that voice or to add their own. Since lyric poems are short, and since every word is packed with meaning and reference, poems are ideal teaching tools for high school teachers, even when their students are not yet accomplished speakers of English. Students look for ways to express themselves, and this workshop will allow teachers to approach poetry as a tool of language learning and self-discovery for their students.

Here, we don't start with poetic forms or with metrical nomenclature. If participants want a refresher on poetic forms, it can be provided near the end of the day. Instead, we start with sound and music. American and English poems from the 19th century onwards all the way to present-day «instapoetry» will serve as our examples. The workshop will include:

- An interactive lecture on the many voices of anglophone poetry
- A detailed phonic and semantic study of three or four sample texts
- A basic writing workshop: the six-word poem
- An introduction to treasure troves of poetry on the internet
- A session for lesson planning in small groups

## Goals

- Participants will (re-)appreciate the sounds and phonic elements of poems that produce their meaning.
- Participants will engage in discussion with each other and the seminar leader as they investigate poems for their «teachability».
- Participants will receive a set of texts (a list of URLs of pertinent websites) that contain poems suitable for teaching at the Swiss secondary school level.
- If desired, the seminar leader will give a «refresher» on basic elements of prosody such as meter, rhythm and line.

### **Seminar Leader**

Prof. em. Dr. **Thomas Austenfeld**, Fribourg

### **Date and Place**

Wednesday, October 29, 2025, 9:15 a.m.–4:45 p.m.

Continuing education center, University of Fribourg

### **Course Fee**

CHF 250.–

### **Registration deadline**

September 29, 2025

### **Cancellation Policy**

Your registration is binding. Cancellations must be made in writing and will incur a fee of CHF 50.–. Cancellations made four weeks prior to the date of the course will incur half the course fee. Cancellations made two weeks prior to the date of the course will incur the full course fee.

If there are too few registrations, the Continuing education center reserves the right to postpone or cancel the course. In the event of cancellation or a postponement to a date on which you are unavailable, you will receive a full refund of the course fee.

Online registration > **[www.unifr.ch/weiterbildung](http://www.unifr.ch/weiterbildung)**

**Registration and organization**

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