

Fall 2017

Scansion

Chelsea Dingman

University of South Florida, cdingman@usf.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/eng_dtf_dpr

Scholar Commons Citation

Dingman, Chelsea, "Scansion" (2017). *All Digital Pedagogy Resources*. 9.
http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/eng_dtf_dpr/9

This Creative Writing Courses is brought to you for free and open access by the English Department Digital Teaching Fellows: Digital Pedagogy Resources at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Digital Pedagogy Resources by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact scholarcommons@usf.edu.

CRW 3221 Poetry II: Scansion and Stressed and Unstressed Syllables
Chelsea Dingman

~speech typically consists of stressed (emphasized) and unstressed syllables. What syllables do you emphasize in a word like CAR-i-BE-an or Carib-BE-an? Occasionally, we will come across a line that two people will scan (for stresses) differently.

~longer words can create more rhythm, as can the use of articles in a line.
~shorter words tend to be more blunt and slow rhythm.

~iambic foot: /x (rising meter)

~pyrrhic foot: xx (two unstressed)

~spondee: // (two stresses)

~trocheic foot: x/ (falling meter)

*sometimes a trochee can begin a line of iambic verse or come after a strong pause within a line of iambic feet. This creates a strain or dislocation (unease) within the line. Shakespeare used it to call attention to violence in the content/thought. This is irregular meter. An extra syllable in iambic pentameter became so common, it was hardly felt, but a dropped syllable was never done, which means it is purposeful when it occurs.

~anapest: xx/ (two stressed, one unstressed syllable)

~Have students scan "Stop all the clocks:" where are the stressed syllables? What metric feet is Auden using?

~ Go to the University of Virginia's website on prosody and scan at least five poems for stressed and unstressed syllables, as well as the type of meter that is being employed. Bring to class one short poem that you scanned correctly, typed in a word document. You must list the stressed/unstressed syllables and what type of meter is being used. Do this as a class.

<http://prosody.lib.virginia.edu>

Testimonial for the site: "for better for verse" is simply a wonder, as the site takes on the most challenging element of poetry pedagogy: teaching rhythm and meter. Authored by Herbert Tucker, this site is beautifully designed, interactive, intuitive, and most importantly, succeeds in its objectives. For any student who wishes to test and build their skills with scansion, the site provides a sizable number of poems that may be selected according to difficulty, type, or author. Once a poem is selected, users mark stressed and unstressed syllables (simple mouse clicks), divisions between metric feet, rhyme, and identify meter by type and length (for example, anapestic trimeter). The submitted scansion is automatically checked for accuracy. Beyond these essential nuts and bolts, for better for verse also includes notes that help explain how specific elements of the rhythm and meter connect to the poem's overall content, which is the larger pedagogical aim.

~monometer (one foot line), dimeter, trimeter, tetrameter (common, move quickly, crisper than pentameter), pentameter, hexameter (slower), heptameter (can mimic landscape, etc, being stretched across the page), octometer. The number of feet controls the speed of the line and speaks to the content of the poem.

Read: "The Charge of the Light Brigade," "The Weary Blues," & "Satchmo Returns to New Orleans." What is the effect of differing line lengths, meter, rhythm, if meter is the backbone of the poem and rhythm is the poet's word choice (like words being put to music)?

HW: Creative Response: Write in the voice of a character unlike yourself. Do so in blank verse (unrhymed pentameter). This character is telling a story to someone else about a problem she/he is having. As you tell the tale, use your lines and breaks to dramatic effect so your enjambments underline or emphasize the psychology of your character. Try to work the poem toward a killer ending: a final line with power and memorability.