



**Awed by the Beauty:  
Poetry to the Theotokos**

Semester Long Class  
**Fall Semester 2022-23**  
**Tuesdays**

**Welcome!**

**Class Dates:**

Start Date: September 6, 2022

End Date: January 18, 2023

**Breaks:** Thanksgiving (Nov. 21-25), Christmas Break (Dec. 19- Jan. 6)

**Class Times:**

Tuesdays, 2:15-3:15 p.m. EST

**Instructor:** Mrs. Sarah Fothergill

**Email:** [sfothergill.schole@gmail.com](mailto:sfothergill.schole@gmail.com)

**Cell Phone:** 308-385-8726

**Office Hours:** By appointment.

## **Class Description:**

This semester-long course is for any student who has an interest in poetry- whether reading it, writing it, or both! It doesn't matter if you are just starting to write poetry or have been sharing your words for years – this course will give you the tools you need to deepen your journey as a poet.

This poetry class is designed to increase student's communications skills through reading, writing, speaking and listening, and the study of the English language. We will specifically study poetry that has been written out of love and respect for our Lord's mother, the Virgin Mary, the Most Holy Theotokos. Examples of model texts will include:

- Study of various Akathists (prayer services) offered to the Theotokos
- Hymns of the major feats of the Orthodox Church
- Prayers written to the Theotokos
- Study of Marian poems from Orthodox saints/poets and other historical sources
- Study of iconography (to be used to inspire writing)

This year students can expect to read a variety of poetry and hymns, study iconography of the Theotokos, and craft their own poetry. Poetic elements such as simile, metaphor, imagery, etc. will be studied in detail. At times, Orthodox church history will be discussed, as it plays a fundamental role in shaping the poetry studied in class. Writing assignments may include timed responses, journal writing, essays, critiques, and creative pieces. Vocabulary, spelling, and grammar will be an important part of this class and will be reinforced holistically through each composition piece. Because we are a community of learners, we will work together as a class and each student will present information to their peers in groups or individually.

Each student should have two composition books or notebooks to use for the year. One will be for their own *Interactive Student Notebook* that will be used in class for practice and growth in the areas like mastery of writing styles, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and analysis of poetry pieces through journaling, and the other for a *Poetry Journal*. Both will prepare students for discussions, retelling, and answering questions leading to definitions, examples, and comparisons of poetry. **See documents on class *Interactive Student Notebooks and Reading Journals*.**

## **Assignments and Evaluation:**

Through Schoology, our student learning management system, students will submit their assignments and will be evaluated on a point system. All assignments must be submitted by the given due date; if an extension is needed, each student is responsible for contacting the instructor.

Although we emphasize “restful” learning, we also recognize the need to provide grades for students. It's a delicate balance to achieve both restful learning and excellent academic performance.

Earning a specific grade should not overshadow achievement goals for mastery. The following grades will be assigned to your student's level of achievement: *magna cum laude* (with great praise); *cum laude* (with praise); *satis* (sufficient, satisfactory) and *non satis* (not sufficient).

Ideally, every average student working diligently should do praiseworthy work (*cum laude*). Those who excel beyond this expectation will be the *magna cum laude* students. Students who do adequate but not praiseworthy work be designated *satis*. *Non satis* means lacking sufficiency or adequacy.

Traditional percentage grades will also be provided and will be readily accessible on the *Awed by the Beauty: Poetry to the Theotokos* Schoology page. Additionally, a transcript of that grade or an evaluation narrative can be provided to the requesting parent at the end of the year.

Ultimately, at the end of the course, parents are the final authority in awarding credit and are responsible to determine a letter grade. Teachers are available for consulting in these decisions and will offer their input upon request.

- **Returned Work**

All work will be graded and returned via Schoology in a timely manner. Please allow additional time for lengthier writing assignments. Students will have an opportunity to review their graded work, and sometimes be asked to reflect or resubmit their work. These are opportunities for students to grow academically, and in the end, create a portfolio for the year.

- **Projects**

Projects will be assigned at various times throughout the year. An evaluation rubric will be given for each of these projects. Each one will require planning and/or research. Other requirements may be given when the project is assigned.

- **Academic Dishonesty:**

Students are on their honor to abide by [Scholé Academy's Learning Philosophy](#) which assumes the personal cultivation of *Student-Virtues* described in the *Student-Parent Handbook*.

Additionally, please be mindful regarding plagiarism. Any copying of someone's work, online sources, or traditional sources without citing where said information came from is plagiarism. Students should consult their chosen manual of style to cite sources. If found, students who have plagiarized will be asked to resubmit their work and consequently will be given a lower point value for that particular assignment.

**Required Materials:**

Composition Book or Notebook for *Interactive Student Notebook*

Additional Composition Book or Notebook for *Poetry Journal*

**Books and Texts**

*Provided by the instructor throughout the course. Students will have the option to print electronic resources if desired.*

**Student Conduct and Expectations:**

All students are to strive for the *Two Greatest Commandments*; to love God and to love their neighbor as themselves.

Students should endeavor for, develop, and hone five *Executive Function Skills* during this course:

1. **Being an Engaged Student:** Stepping into the arena of class discussion, asking questions, supplying answers, generating the internal dialogue necessary to determine if what's being discussed is important and necessary.
2. **Note Taking:** Taking notes in their *Interactive Student Notebook* during and after class engaging content material important and relevant in an organized fashion. These notes would then be consulted, independently, for application in assignments and assessments. **See document on class *Interactive Student Notebooks*.**
3. **Attention to Detail & Preparedness:** Consistently adhering to deadlines, submission requirements, adhering to style guides and codes, confirming technology is working prior to the start of class, being responsible to determine how to proceed after an absence, being responsible for consulting the course syllabus and adjusting as the class proceeds, etc.
4. **Employing Critiques:** After receiving feedback to their submissions, this feedback is applied to future assignments rather than repeating mistakes. Information is gleaned from the live class critiques of fellow students and after taking note, through learning from others, these mistakes are avoided as well.

5. **Initiative/Maturity:** Throughout the course, when necessary, questions, comments, and concerns will be addressed by taking initiative and meeting with the instructor during office hours or contacting the instructor via email.

### **The Virtual Classroom:**

We will be using the free online “virtual classroom” software provided by Zoom, one of the leading companies that provides such software. The virtual classroom will provide students with interactive audio, text chat and an interactive whiteboard in which texts, diagrams, video and other media can be displayed and analyzed. We will provide students with a link (via email) that will enable students to join the virtual classroom.

Specific information regarding the technology used by Scholé Academy (including required technology) can be found by visiting the [Technology in the Classroom](#) section of the Student Parent Handbook. Please note, students should have their cameras on during class.

Students will submit documents by scanning and uploading them to their personal computer, then attaching those files as .pdfs to an email. They will submit their work to the *Awed by the Beauty: Poetry to the Theotokos* assignment page (access granted after enrollment is secured).

### **About the Instructor:**



**Mrs. Sarah Fothergill** has been teaching for 13 years. She holds a BA in 7-12 English and History Education and an MA in Secondary Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Nebraska at Kearney. Throughout her career, Sarah has taught writing, literature, poetry, and speaking to both middle and high school students. Sarah is excited to offer St. Raphael School students her passion for studying literature, poetry, and history, and looks forward to helping them learn, grow, and reflect on “the good, the true, and the beautiful” in everything.

In addition to teaching, Sarah also enjoys leading Sunday school and Vacation Church School classes, and serving as a youth ministry coordinator and chanter at St. George Orthodox Church in Kearney, Nebraska. She also loves spoiling her two young nieces, reading, writing, gardening, and spending time with her husband and two adorable kittens. [sfothergill.schole@gmail.com](mailto:sfothergill.schole@gmail.com)