

This course focuses on what Paul Fry, Professor of English at Yale University, has called ‘the most perfect lyric in the English language’ – John Keats’s ‘To Autumn’ (1820). We will be close-reading the poem from a variety of key critical positions from Sir Philip Sidney’s *Defense of Poesy* to the present. Further critical approaches will include those of William Wordsworth, Eric Donald Hirsch, Frederic Jameson, Jerome McGann (against whose criticism Fry defended Keats), Marjorie Levinson, and Paul Fry, among others. Our primary objective will be to work out whether, ultimately, any one of these approaches will ‘naturally’ suggest itself with respect to ‘To Autumn’, hence claim authority over the others, and what that means for literary criticism in general and Fry’s above-cited verdict in particular. A course reader will be provided in PDF format on AGORA, which you will then need to print off and bring to our seminars. No further purchases required.

**Recommended reading:**

- John Keats, ‘To Autumn’ (1820), any edition
- select entries on Philip Sidney and others (see above) from David H. Richter, *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin’s, 2016)

**Requirements for successful completion:**

*Studienleistung*: regular attendance and in-class participation; presenting on a critical approach of your choice and leading the subsequent discussion on ‘To Autumn’