

“Let us Go Then You and I”  
An International Weblog Discussion of  
T. S. Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”  
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### Rationale for Teaching & Learning

- ❑ Learning about Modernism and poetry through conversational and reflective writing and reading
- ❑ Exchanging perspectives with readers from other contexts to develop critical interpretive practices
- ❑ Extending literary understanding with multimodal expressions such as visual images and other media
- ❑ Developing contemporary composing abilities by writing and publishing at a blog
- ❑ Finding language appropriate to the discipline, audiences, and medium
- ❑ Reflecting on the poem, the process, and the learning

### Reflections

- ❑ Writing and reading on the Internet, students learned about using blogs to communicate to multiple audiences.
- ❑ By collaboration and assignment design, teachers were able to deal with variations in course levels and purposes.
- ❑ The blog helped overcome boundaries of time and place and allowed for multimodal expressions to be shared.
- ❑ Student-directed group discussions and teacher-designed overall focus demonstrated the power of interactive communication for learning the subject and for experiencing literary interpretive practices.
- ❑ Conversational discourse and the genre of letters created intercultural communities of shared interest that strengthened expertise in composing and publishing.

### Reflections

- ❑ Some students thought the conversation became repetitive.
- ❑ A few students felt that the discussion did not lead to a consensus interpretation of “Prufrock.”
- ❑ A few students were unhappy with differing levels of experience in reading and discussing poetry.
- ❑ Copyright issues meant using lyrics without audio for representing music.

## Reflections

... entries...where Oskar hit upon many major themes of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock:” the boredom, the nothingness, the contrast between and the title, the speaker’s insecurity. Other themes appeared randomly. The theme of time was one such idea that morphed throughout the blog. For instance,... Julia...found evidence that his “‘obsession’ with time [was] a clear sign of the speaker’s youth.” Hello unexpected plot twist!

I weighed in...to suggest that the speaker’s way of thinking about time could be more an indicator of his maturity than his actual age. So the discussion went from an observation of the use of time in the poem to the relevance of time to the speaker’s age to the inference that the use of time is really a function of the poet’s youth and inexperience. This was both intriguing and frustrating. I found many valuable insights that greatly extended my understanding. At other times we seemed on a wild goose chase. (Susan, Clemson, from her Portfolio Introduction)

### Assignment Details and Design: Letter 2

**Letter 2**, approximately 250 words, addressed to everybody in the group.

To preserve the conversational structure of the discussion, please provide a greeting and signature with each message, naming the group or person to whom you are writing and signing each letter.

Use either your full name or your first name with last initial and identify your class and university (for example, “Pat Smart, American Lit, Clemson” or “Maria L., Chalmers, Fiction”).

### Assignment Details and Design: Letter 2

Read all the letters already posted by members of your group. In your Letter 2, addressed to your entire group, refer specifically to at least two members of the group by name, attempting to cite at least two groupmates whose Letter 1 submissions have not already been cited by others. Please respond to at least one person not in your class.

Identify and explain how one or more keywords and reflective comments by groupmates contributed to your understanding of the poem. ... ways in which their interpretations are similar to and/or different from your own. This response can also be personal, connecting your own understanding and experience with what you learned from reading the poem and from your group. Don’t hesitate to quote briefly from your groupmates’ letters and from the poem.

## Generating Engaged Online Discussions

These guidelines should be adapted to course content, design, and emphasis, as well as to the type of electronic communication (email list, discussion board, or blog, for instance).

- Carefully integrate electronic discussions into course goals.... Participation should be mandatory, and on-time participation is crucial to establishing a conversational, academic exchange.

- Give students credit but not necessarily grades.... Without intervening in the students' discussion, you may provide feedback ...mentioning insightful ideas generated by the discussion and encouraging further reading, thinking, and conversation.

## Generating Engaged Online Discussions

- Offer precise directions with clear expectations: scope, approach, tone (courteous and respectful of various viewpoints), length (minimum and maximum—we recommend 250-350 words), diction (such as “edited conversational”), form or genre (letter or memo or report), and deadlines for each post. Perhaps provide a model of a good post.
- Consider integrating Internet research, in which students include and discuss relevant Web sites as active links in their messages to each other, for example, a misconduct case from [Ethics in Science](#) or a Pre-Raphaelite painting from the [Victorian Web](#). When appropriate, encourage students to incorporate visual images and multimedia.
- Encourage or require students to quote from the textbook, from your lectures and materials, and from their classmates' posts when they respond to each other and when they write their tests or papers on topics they discussed online. Provide a model for informal documentation for these source references.

Thank You