This course will center on Francesco Petrarch’s ground-breaking 14th-century collection of lyric poetry, the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (also known as *Il Canzonieri*), one of the first works of literature written in Italian vernacular. Engaging in a holistic reading of the collection, we’ll explore the world of conflict that Petrarch creates between secular love and spiritual impulses and how his obsessive structuring of his poetry collection captures his metaphysical musings on time and mortality. We will also consider the lasting impact of the *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* on poetry and cultural construction not just in Europe, but globally.