

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
Department of English Language & Literature
Graduate Course Descriptions
Spring Quarter 2010

33211 Populist American Poetry

Poetry in English is often thought of as an elite and/or avant-garde art form enjoyed by an educated minority, but many twentieth-century poets developed work they hoped would appeal to and empower “the people.” We’ll look closely at the poetry associated with specific populist countercultures, including the work of “Chicago Renaissance” poets, “Wobbly” and Communist Party poets, New Left poets, Caribbean nationalists and contemporary “gangsta” rappers. Secondary readings will include theories and histories of populism, including work by Laclau, Žižek, Kazin and Postel.

Regan, Matthias

SPRING, 2010

34307 Advanced Poetry Writing

This course will ask—and respond to—what it means to be “contemporary” in verse. Positing from the first (along with an eruption of texts at hand) that lyricism is a profoundly social, even collective, endeavor and that self-expression is never conducted in a vacuum, we will read widely as we compose—studying poetics tracts from Agamben and Bernstein through Yau and Zukofsky in conjunction with poems archaic and new by Coolidge through Wyatt. We will direct additional attention to hybrid and emergent genres of poetry, including sound poetry, the lyric essay, performance work, concrete poetry, digital poetry, textual installations, and artists’ books. A new piece will be expected of each participant each week. Absolute attendance at workshop and a certain number of readings/performance, a reading/process journal comprising creative and critical response, and written commentary on the work of peers will be required in addition to the production of a chapbook of poems.

Scappettone, Jennifer

SPRING, 2010

34901 Cosmopolitanisms

Course meets the critical/intellectual methods course requirement for students majoring in Comparative Literature. This course explores notions of cosmopolitanism in philosophy, historiography, and literature. Topics to be addressed include ancient world systems, world literature, hospitality, and hybridity. Readings may include Derek Walcott’s *Omeros*, the Hellenistic *Life of Aesop*, early Chinese prose-poetry, Derrida, Frank, Spivak. Tamara Chin. Spring 2010.

Chin, Tamara

SPRING, 2010

36011 Frankenstein

This course is designed to give students a chance to engage in-depth with a major work of literature, to position it within its literary and cultural context, and to consider its legacy in our own. The readings for this course thus fall into four basic groups. First, *Frankenstein* itself. Second, literary and philosophical sources for *Frankenstein* (on Enlightenment and Romanticism, the new science, the French Revolution). Third, representative recent criticism, designed to introduce students to different critical methods and approaches. Fourth, later versions of the tale, looking particularly at its afterlife in film (from explicit adaptations by Whale and Branagh to Truffaut’s *The Wild Child* or Scott’s *Bladerunner*).

Keenleyside, Heather

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 10:30-11:50

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36180 Travellers on the Silk Road

We will read some of the major travel narratives of the Silk Road and Tibet, from Xuanzang, the most famous of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who went West, through Marco Polo and others, who went East, including a diplomat like Clavijo, who went to see Tamerlane, to modern travellers like the spies the British government sent from India to explore and map the area, the prototypes for Kipling's Kim, and archaeologists like Aurel Stein who went both ways on the Silk Road. Choice among all the travelers will be limited, of course, by time and by the availability of texts. Through slide lectures students will gain a sense of the physical characteristics of the region and its art at various periods. At the same time the student will learn indirectly about the different religions and political regimes travelers experienced, which changed dramatically over the eleven centuries and more which we will cover in the course. Crosslisted courses are designed for advanced undergraduates and graduate students.

Murrin, Michael

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 9:00-10:20

36202 Spenser

The class reads all of *The Faerie Queene*, plus *The Shepheardes Calendar*, the *Amoretti*, *Epithalamion*, and *Prothalamion*. Requirements are a final essay and perhaps an oral examination.

Murrin, Michael

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 1:30-2:50

41110 Journalism and the British Novel

This course seeks to study the mutually constitutive relation between journalism and the novel. In several case studies, it examines the formation of the journalistic version of the man (and woman) of letters, the development of literary criticism in journals, of the rise of the foreign correspondent, and the assumption of the star system of "yellow" journalism late in the nineteenth century - all in relation to developments in the novel. We will read novels by Dickens, Trollope, Gissing and Meredith and journalism by Arnold, Carlyle, George Eliot, Francis Power Cobb and W.T. Stead.

Hadley, Elaine

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 12:00-1:20

41400 Virginia Woolf

Readings will include *The Voyage Out*, *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, *Between the Acts*, and selected essays.

Ruddick, Lisa

SPRING, 2010 MW 1:30-2:50

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44506 Before and After Beckett: Theater and Film

This course is for juniors, seniors and graduate students only. PQ: one or more college level courses in drama and/or film. Working knowledge of French would be very helpful but is not required. Those with French will also take a weekly Friday tutorial to discuss (in English) original French texts by Beckett and others.

Beckett is conventionally typed as the playwright of minimalist scenes of unremitting bleakness but his experiments with theatre and film echo the irreverent play of popular culture (vaudeville on stage and film including Chaplin and Keaton) as well as the artistic avant-garde (Dreyer in film; Jarry and Artaud in theatre). This course will juxtapose this early twentieth century work with Beckett's plays on stage and screen, and those of his contemporaries (Ionesco, Duras) and successors. Contemporary authors will depend on availability but may include Vinaver, Minyana, Lagarce in France, Pinter, Greenaway in the UK; Foreman, Wellman in the US. Theoretical work may include texts by Artaud, Barthes, Derrida, Josette Feral, Peggy Phelan, Bert States and others.

A Languages across the Curriculum grant for a tutorial taught by a TA with fluent French. French remains 'helpful' rather than 'required' but expect everyone with some French should take that tutorial.

Kruger, Loren

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 1:30-2:50

45800 The American Novel and the Death of Jim Crow

Taken as a whole the fiction of Richard Wright, Willam Faulkner, Ann Petry, Paule Marshall, Ralph Ellison, Flannery O'Connor and James Baldwin constitutes a powerful testament to the common humanity of black and white Americans in a nation where "separate but equal" in matters of race was deemed consistent with the law of the land. How decisive was the humanistic eloquence of these writers in helping to shift the nations legal climate against de jure segregation? How Successful was the American novel of race in coming to terms with the turbulent social reality of the civil rights era?

Warren, Kenneth

SPRING, 2010 TUTH 3:00-4:20

47213 Love Songs

This course will examine certain themes in poems and in popular song-lyrics. The themes: devotion, sentiment, serial desire, bought love, aged love, Many of the song-lyrics we study will be tin pan alley tunes, often in their jazz versions. Students will be encouraged to bring in songs that have particularly strong lyrics. The poems will come from various historical periods; the Norton Anthology of Poetry will be our source.

von Hallberg, Robert

SPRING, 2010

47214 Film Noir, French and American

This course will focus on film noir in a broad sense, including neo-noir. We will attend to some of the conventions of the genre in terms of plot, characterization, and cinematography. However, the course will have a thematic focus as well: how is trust constructed in these films? What are the features of trust that most directly affect political systems? Is trust among men much different from that among men and women in heterosexual relationships? We will interpret a set of films as utopian efforts to imagine trusting lives. The films we watch will include: The Maltese Falcon, The Big Sleep, Kiss Me Deadly, Out of the Past, Touch of Evil, Notorious, Narrow Margin, Blast of Silence, Night and the City, Criss Cross, The Postman Always Rings Twice, Gilda, Double Indemnity, Rififi, Chinatown, LA Confidential, Band of Outsiders, Bob le Flambeur, Le Samourai.

von Hallberg, Robert

SPRING, 2010 TU 1:30-4:20

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51500 Perfection and Utopia in Late Medieval England

A course on the relations among social history, social theory, ethics, and psychology in fourteenth-century England. Primary readings from Chaucer, Langland, Gower, *Gawain*-poet Margery Kempe, penitential texts, saints' lives, and mystical literature. Substantial secondary readings in the social history of late medieval England.

Miller, Mark

SPRING, 2010 W 12:30-3:20

55503 The Matter of Modernism

The gambit of this course is to begin by conceiving of Anglo-American literary modernism (1910-1930) not as an inquiry into the subject (the complexities of consciousness and the unconscious), nor as an investigation of language, but as a new scrutiny of the power of the inanimate object world—an exploration of the role of objects (and what Georg Simmel called “objective culture”) in “modern life,” what came to be conceptualized as the experience of modernity. While this means thinking through the “thingness” registered by Hulme’s eagerness to “prove that beauty may be in small, dry things” or by Williams’s conviction that there should be “no ideas but in things,” it also means tracking the dynamics of production, distribution, consumption, and collection as these are dramatized both in narrative prose fiction and lyric verse. No less, it means posing new formal and material questions about the literary artifact as a thing among things. Most intensely, we will engage work by Joyce, Woolf, and Mansfield, as by Williams, Larsen, and Stein. We will address theories of art (Roger Fry, Clive Bell, Herbert Read), look at some relevant painting and sculpture, and take a comparative glance at Europe (Simmel, Bergson, Breton, Benjamin), while also reading some new critical accounts of modernism and modernity. (Students must have read *Ulysses* before the class begins.) Two supplementary classes will be scheduled—one in Special Collections, and one at the Art Institute. Assignments for the course will include a report on a modernist journal (*New Age*, *Contact*, *Blast*, &c.) or a manifesto; a presentation of your research project; and the final paper.

Brown, Bill

SPRING, 2010 TU 10:30-1:20

64900 Lyric Forms from Blake to Hardy

This course will study forms of lyric poetry that are recorded or translated, revived, imitated, and transformed in the practices of nineteenth-century British poets. Using selected romantic poems as a point of departure (instances from Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience* and Wordsworth's and Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads*, together with Keats's adaptations of romance and a few of Shelley's lyrics), we will follow such forms as the ballad, the song, the romance, and the sonnet through the rest of the century, looking also at Victorian additions to these lyric forms, particularly the classical idyl and various forms of dramatic lyric. Poets from whom examples will be drawn will include John Clare, Emily Bronte, Tennyson, both Brownings, Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, Morris, Swinburne, and Hardy. We will also look at some key defenses of a primarily lyric poetry (Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Arthur Hallam, Browning, *The Germ*, Swinburne) and some modern reflections on the nature of lyric - attempting both to come to a better understanding of the term and to attend to shifts in the understanding of lyric and changes in the symbolic content and the contours of particular forms in more local historical contexts.

Helsing, Elizabeth

SPRING, 2010 TH 10:30-1:20