Topics in Poetry: The 20th Century: Major Themes and Voices

Course Code: ENG27
Monday & Thursday 12:00-13:15
Room A009
Spring Semester 2019
Department of English
University of Cyprus

Course Leader: Dr Evy Varsamopoulou
Office Hours: Monday 14:00-15:00 & 16:30-17:30
Thursday 10:00-12:00
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COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course will take a critical and comparative approach to modern poetry in English and in English translation in the twentieth century. The focus will be on poetry from the UK, Ireland and the USA by poets who have achieved significant critical recognition as well as popular acclaim. The selection aims to give some idea also of the diversity of voices (writing in English) not only in these three states but also in some countries of the British Commonwealth. It also will consider the effects of major events in the 20th century on lyrical poetry, language and the individual in a wider European context by the inclusion of works by Fernando Pessoa and Paul Celan. The course lecture programme is generally arranged on the basis of movement, period, theme, but also gender, religion or ethnic background, where these last two are overtly foregrounded in the poet’s work. In addition to close reading of the poems, the lectures will also consider relevant theoretical and historical issues.

COURSE AIMS
1. To develop awareness and appreciation of the particularities and diversity of modernist and post-modernist poetry.
2. To develop critical and analytical ability in reading twentieth century poetry.
3. To understand key theoretical and critical approaches to poetry in the twentieth century.
4. To critically understand the significance of historical events and issues as shaping forces of poetics and aesthetics.
5. To reflect on the ways in which poetic language differs from other uses of language and to evaluate different definitions of poetry.
6. To acquire skill in communicating personal readings of poetry in academic essays and verbal exchanges (in class).

Coursebook
**Programme of Sessions**

**Week One: Modernity & Modernism**
Monday (14/01/19): Introductory: Modernity & Modernism


**Week Two: Modernisms**
Monday (21/01/19): e e cummings, ‘O sweet spontaneous’; Dylan Thomas, ‘The Force that Drives the Flower’

Thursday (24/01/19): Wallace Stevens, ‘Of Modern Poetry’

**Week Three: Modernisms**
Monday (28/01/19): Marianne Moore, ‘To a Snail’, ‘Poetry’

Thursday (31/01/19): William Carlos Williams, ‘A Sort of Song’

**Week Four: Imagism; T.S. Eliot**
Monday (04/02/19): H.D., ‘Oread’ & Ezra Pound, ‘In a Station of the Metro’

Thursday (07/02/19): T.S. Eliot, ‘The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock’

**Week Five: T.S. Eliot**
Monday (11/02/19): ‘The Hollow Men’


**Week Six: European Modernism: Focus**
Monday (18/02/19): Fernando Pessoa, ‘The Tobacconist’

Thursday (21/02/19): Fernando Pessoa, ‘The Tobacconist’

**Week Seven: History, Myth, Art**
Monday (25/02/19): W.B. Yeats, ‘The Second Coming’

Thursday (28/02/19): W.H. Auden, ‘Musée des Beaux Arts’,
Week Eight: WWI Poetry
Monday (04/03/19): Mid-term Test

Thursday (07/03/19): Isaac Rosenberg, ‘Break of Day in the Trenches’; Wilfred Owen, ‘Anthem for Doomed Youth’

Week Nine: Paul Celan & The Limits of Language
Monday (11/03/19): No Class – Public Holiday

Thursday (14/03/19): Paul Celan, ‘Death Fugue’, ‘Speak You Also’, ‘Radix, Matrix’

Week Ten: Adrienne Rich & Sylvia Plath
Monday (18/03/19): Adrienne Rich, ‘Diving into the Wreck’

Thursday (21/03/19): Sylvia Plath, ‘Ariel’

Week Eleven: Ted Hughes
Monday (25/03/19): No Class – Public Holiday

Thursday (28/03/19) Ted Hughes, ‘Pibroch’

Week Twelve: Ted Hughes
Monday (01/04/19): No Class – Public Holiday

Thursday (04/04/19): Ted Hughes, ‘Wodwo’

Week Thirteen: The Harlem Renaissance & The Black Arts Movement
Monday (08/04/19): Langston Hughes, ‘The Backlash Blues’

Thursday (11/04/19): Audre Lorde, ‘Story Books on a Kitchen Table’, ‘Revolution Is One Form of Social Change’

Week Fourteen: Post-Colonial & Indigenous Poets

Thursday (18/04/19): N.Scott Momaday, ‘The Eagle-Feathered Fan’; Leslie Marmon Silko, ‘Prayer to the Pacific’
Attendance of all lectures, seminars and tutorial sessions is compulsory according to UCY rules. During seminar sessions, students may be asked to work alone, in pairs or in small groups to discuss selected poems.

ASSESSMENT (3 components)

A) **Presentation**. Weighting: 10%. Students will have **5 minutes** to present a reading of a poem, or section of a longer poem, which may be a) a brief analysis of their own focusing on any aspect of the poem’s use of language b) a presentation of the cultural historical conditions to which the poem owes its genesis, or c) the critical reception of the poem.

B. There are two written assessments:

1) Week Eight: Mid-Term Test. Weighting: 40%

2) Final Exam: 3 Hour Exam. Two critical essays, each of which will include a comparative analysis of two or more poems on the syllabus: Word Length: Approximately 800-1,000 words. Weighting 50%

**Assessment Instructions:**

**Note:** Here are four crucial evaluation guidelines. Please take these into consideration in order to do your best in the presentation:

I) All presentations **MUST STRICTLY CONFORM TO THE TIME LIMITS**. Therefore, it is advisable that students rehearse their presentations before coming to class.

II) All presentations should aim towards **clear and well-structured communication**.

III) All readings of the poems **must substantiate their claims** by argument **and** reference back to the actual poem.

IV) When giving the presentation, speak loudly and articulate clearly (this will prevent you speaking too quickly and becoming inaudible or/and incomprehensible). Also, try to maintain some eye-contact with your audience if you are reading from notes or a continuous text.

**Absence from the mid-term or exam can only be for very serious reasons, such as hospitalisation or death in the family and notification must be given in advance. Evidence must be provided for cause of absence.**

**RECOMMENDED CRITICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY**


Selected Further Bibliography


*Recommended Internet Sites*

http://www.poets.org

http://www.poetrymagazines.org.uk

http://www.poetrymagazine.org

https://www.poetryfoundation.org/