

Fall/Winter 2017-2018

AP/EN 4115 6.0A (Y)

Contemporary Poetry and Poetics

Course Director:

Andy Weaver
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Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Mondays 11:30am-2:30pm

Description:

This course examines major Canadian and American poets from the early 1960s to the present. We will read a selection of both poems and theories of poetics by leading contemporary poets and critics. Rather than treating these writings as documents written by solitary geniuses, we will examine how poets interact with their societies, how poets try to shape and make sense of the contemporary world, and how different styles and theories of poetry portray and enact different ideological stances. In particular, we will examine topics such as how poets use language both to construct and deconstruct conventional linguistic codes of meaning, how poets use poetic forms both to challenge and uphold notions of communal and individual identity, how poets investigate language as a meaning-making system, and ideas of mimesis in written texts. Particular attention will be paid to the ongoing (and at times bitter) dispute between different poets over the proper ways to use language to bring about social and political change, an argument that could be summarized by this question: should poets focus on constructing new ideas of the world, or should they focus on deconstructing received ideas? A significant part of this course will involve the careful reading of statements of poetics (those writings in which poets discuss their aesthetic, political, and linguistic practices) and on relevant theoretical and critical texts that shed light on the ideological underpinnings of the poems (which students will be encouraged to think of as the texts in which poets enact and expose their ideological bents).

Category:

B

Area:

6 or 7

Period:

3

Historical Requirement:

N/A

Requirements:

Fall term essay, 2500 words (25%)
Winter term essay, 3000 words (30%)
Class participation (15%)
Fall term seminar presentation, 15-20 mins (15%)
Winter term seminar presentation, 15-20 mins (15%)

Reading List:

Texts (TENTATIVE—this list will likely change):

Lyn Hejinian, *My Life*

Erin Moure, *Sheep's Vigil by a Fervent Person*

Harryette Mullen, *Recyclopedia*

Dennis Lee, *Testament*

Juliana Spahr, *This Connection of Everyone With Lungs*

Derek Beaulieu, *Fractal Economies*

Susan Holbrook, *Joy is so exhausting*

Roger Farr, *Surplus*

Jordan Abel, *Un/inhabited*

Adam Dickinson, *The Polymers*

Claudia Rankine, *Citizen*

Sharon Thesen, ed., *The New Long Poem Anthology*, 2nd edition (2001)

Ramazani, Ellmann, and O'Clair, eds., *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, 3rd edition, volume 2: Contemporary Poetry (2003)

Additional readings from various internet sites will supplement these texts.

Open To:

Yr 4 Honours