



VNIVERSIDAD
D SALAMANCA

CAMPUS OF INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

American Poetry and Poetics

*6 creds.,
1st semester*

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Aims and Objectives

This course aims to promote the enjoyment of contemporary poetry, to help students make informed literary responses to poetic texts, and to stimulate thesis research. It will provide students with a critical understanding of the poetic tradition and increase their familiarity with the major American poets of the past and present. It also seeks to enhance their knowledge of the Anglo-American and European historical and cultural contexts of poetic expression.

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Discuss intelligently and interestingly the work of the major poets of the Romantic, Modernist and Postmodern period
- Analyze the various ways of talking about a writer's imaginative and technical concerns
- Understand poetic techniques and resources and be aware of strategies of transgression and renewal of poetic language
- Become familiar with avant-garde concerns and the philosophical perspective of modernism; with radical experimentation and innovation in the arts; with a wide range of models and formal strategies, poetic topics, theories, and forms
- Understand poetic conventions and the way rules can be successfully transgressed
- Possess a greater creative, critical, and aesthetic understanding of poetic disciplines
- Read poetic texts with confidence, enjoy poetry, be puzzled or frustrated by it
- Learn to appreciate poems and rely on them later in life

Course Program

The course considers the emergence and the formal development of American poetry. It centers on the poetics of American Romanticism, Modernism, Postwar and Postmodern poetry. It analyzes poetic theories and practice of the most prominent movements, schools, and groups of the avant-garde. It considers the philosophical matrix that lies at the foundation of a new poetic idiom and the strategies of transgression and renewal of different poetics.

The course considers the experimentation with language and form and the cultural and intellectual context in which that experimentation took place. The poetic avant-gardes of the XXth century are seen as part of a much larger aesthetic that also involves visual arts. The course explores the degree to which different art forms converge on common philosophical, structural and stylistic principles. It analyzes different and changing notions of the function of poetry and the role of the poet. The focus lies on the historical development of poetic thought. The course follows shifting ideologies and social contexts, and examines the way literary movements and counter-influences defy each other, shaping a new poetic idiom.

This course covers the body of modern American poetry, its characteristic techniques, concerns, and major practitioners, movements and schools. Primary attention will be given to the major representative figures of each period considering key poets in the context of the aesthetic developments that gave rise to Modernism and its legacy for later poets.

Methodology

Methodology:

Class meetings will consist of lectures, group discussions, as well as analysis of texts by students. Students are expected to present their own interpretations of poetic texts. The course will place strong emphasis on oral discussions and on exercises designed to stimulate writing skills.

The course will include close study of primary texts and will introduce the students to a variety of theoretical approaches. Students will read both the poetry and poetics of selected authors with an eye to the history and evolution of poetic forms, and to the techniques of fragmentation, collage, juxtapositions, and silence. Close attention will be given to technical characteristics and to themes, form and content.

Skills: Students will

- critically analyze and appreciate poetry known and unknown
- become confident on issues of voice, imagery, tone and meaning of poems
- become familiar with various lyrical forms
- master structure and style and understand how a variety of poetic forms function.
- understand how individual poems work and how poets use the formal resources of verse.

Assessment

You will have to read each assigned text before class and come prepared to discuss it. In addition, each student will have to prepare oral presentations.

Those students who miss one class will have to turn in **an assignment** for the lecture they have missed.

Assessment on this course is based on class work, participation to discussions, oral presentations, and written qualifying assignments. Three page commentaries to either a long single poem or a couple of shorter poems. There will be a final paper or project (**10 pages long**). Please turn in your paper by **November 30**.

Those students who do not attend classes have to turn in a final paper (**10 pages long**) and, in addition, they have to turn in several assignments on the poets we have studied. **They have to be submitted during the course and no later than November 30. Also an interview is required. The final paper is due by November 30.**

Participation and oral presentation: 30 %

Written Assignments: 30%

Final paper 40%

Bibliography and Resources

Recommended Readings and Resources:

<http://americanpoetry.usal.es/>

Sourcebook with texts and poems are to be picked up at DOSA. Fotocopias. c/ Iscar Peyra 31-33. (next to the Plaza Mayor)

Set books:

T. S. Eliot. La tierra baldía. The Waste Land. Edición bilingüe. Madrid: Cátedra, 2005.

Patea, Viorica and Paul Scott Derrick eds. *Modernism Revisited: Transgressing Boundaries and Strategies of Renewal in American Poetry.* Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2007

Recommended editions:

Ezra Pound *Cantares Completos* I, II, bilingual edition, Javier Coy ed. Madrid: Cátedra, 1994.

Ezra Pound, *Personae*, bilingual edition, Madrid: Hiperión, 2000.

Wallace Stevens. *De la simple existencia. Antología Poética bilingüe.* Ed. A. Sánchez Robayina. Barcelona. Debolsillo. 2006. 10.

Selected Poems of Wallace Stevens, New Directions, Faber & Faber.

Wallace Stevens. *The Rock/ La roca.* bilingual edition. Madrid: Lumen. 2008.

William Carlos Williams. *Antología bilingüe.* Alianza Editorial. 2009.

e.e.cummings. *Buffalo Bill ha muerto. Antología poética bilingüe 1910-1962*. Madrid. 2007. Hiperión.

Robert Lowell *Por los muertos de la Unión y otros poemas/ For the Union Dead*. Bilingual edition. Madrid: Cátedra. 1990.

Sylvia Plath. *Poesía Completa*. Edición bilingüe. Bartleby. 2008.

Bibliography:

Charles Altieri. *Enlarging the Temple: New Directions in American Poetry During the 1960s*. Associated UP 1979.

Charles Altieri. *Painterly Abstraction in Modernist American Poetry: The Contemporaneity of Modernism*. Cambridge UP. 1990.

Charles Altieri. *Postmodernisms Now*. Pennsylvania State UP. 1999

Charles Altieri. *Subjective Agency: A Theory of First-Person Expressivity and Its Social Implications*. Blackwell Publishers. 1994.

David Perkins. *A History of Modern Poetry*. Cambridge: Harvard UP. 1976.

Helen Vendler. *On Extended Wings*. Wallace Stevens' Longer Poems. Cambridge: Harvard UP. 1969

Helen Vendler. *Part of Nature, Part of Us*. Modern American Poets. Cambridge: Harvard UP. 1980.

Helen Vendler. *Soul Says*. Harvard UP. 1995.

Hugh Kenner. *A Homemade World*. Baltimore. Johns Hopkins UP. 1975

Hugh Kenner. *The Pound Era*. Berkely: University of California Press. 1973.

Marjorie Perloff. *The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP. 1985

Marjorie Perloff. *The Poetics of Indeterminacy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1981.

Marjorie Perloff. *Wittgenstein's Ladder: Poetic Language and the Strangeness of the Ordinary*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press 1999.

Patea, Viorica and Paul Scott Derrick eds. *Modernism Revisited: Transgressing Boundaries and Strategies of Renewal in American Poetry*. Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi, 2007

Patea, Viorica, ed. *T. S. Eliot. La tierra baldía*. Madrid: Cátedra, 2005.

Zhaoming Qian. *Orientalism and Modernism*. Durham: Duke UP. 1995.