

**SYLLABUS**  
**ENG 514: Modern Poetry**  
**Section 01, T 6:00-9:00, KE 137**  
**Spring 2010**

Professor: Gabriel Scala  
Email: gscala@deltastate.edu  
Office: Kethley 257  
Office Phone: x 4059  
Office Hours: M 11-12, W 8-10, F 8-10 and by appointment  
Writing Center: Kethley Hall – Second Floor

**Course Description:**

Modernist poetry emerged in the late 1800s in response to the indulgent, sentimental and mannered poetry of the Romantic era. Centering itself in the experimental, the formally complex, and the image, Modernist poetry most often concerns itself with cultural apocalypse and disaster. In this course, we will explore a selection of poems and essays by Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, e.e. cummings, and others. We will also look at the long Modernist poem as exemplified in H.D.'s *Trilogy*, T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, and Hart Crane's *The River* as artistic thermometers of the cultural impact of Modernity before and after the turn of the twentieth century.

**REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS**

Doolittle, Hilda (H.D.). *Trilogy*. New York: New Directions, 1998.

Eliot, T.S. *Four Quartets*. New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1971.

Ramazani, Jahan, et. al. *The Norton Anthology of Modern Poetry: Vol I*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003.

**Secondary Materials Provided:**

Antin, David. "Modernism and Postmodernism: Approaching the Present in American Poetry." *Boundary 2* 1:1 (Autumn 1972): 98-133.

Baker, Houston A. Jr. "Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance." *American Quarterly* 39:1 (Spring 1987): 84-97.

Chinitz, David. "T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide." *PMLA* 110:2 (March 1995): 236-247.

Greenberg, Clement. "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." *Partisan Review*, 1939.

Hughes, Gertrude Reif. "Making it Really New: Hilda Doolittle, Gwendolyn Brooks, and the Feminist Potential of Modern Poetry." *American Quarterly* 42:3 (September 1990): 375-401.

Kristeller, Paul Oskar. "The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics (II)." *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13:1 (January 1952): 17-46.

Moulin, Joanny. "Remanent Romanticism in Modern Poetry." *Cercles* 12 (2005): 1-13.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

### **Weekly Critical Responses:**

We will read a collection of poems for each class – for each grouping of poems, you are to write a two page critical response in which you “stake your claim.” These responses should go beyond a simple description of the poems to offer an analysis of something in the poem(s) that stands out or speaks to you. These short critical responses will be due by email no later than 5 p.m. every Sunday. You should be prepared to defend your claim and discuss at length in class. The weekly responses will account for 20% of the final grade.

### **Annotated Bibliography:**

Each of you will be responsible for creating an annotated bibliography of the extant scholarship on a particular poet. On the evening we are scheduled to discuss your poet, you should be prepared to offer a thorough introduction to the scholarship currently available on the poet. Your annotation should include a correctly formatted MLA citation for each entry and a brief (1 paragraph) description of the major arguments being put forth in each entry. Note that you should also include a comprehensive list of book-length works of scholarship that deal primarily or predominantly with your poet; however, you need not annotate these works. The annotations should be of journal articles only and should be comprehensive. Please email a copy of your annotated bibliography to me so that I may distribute it to the class. By the end of the semester, you should have collected an impressive array of annotated bibliographies that will be very useful when writing the final paper. The annotated bibliography will account for 20% of the final grade.

### **The Broadside:**

What are broadsides? Broadly defined, broadsides are any single, unbound, printed sheet of poetry. They can include any range of technique and materials to include silk screen or letterpress prints to photocopies, posters, postcards, political fliers and museum quality works of art. From the early seventeenth century to the present, many major poets have had some work published in this form, and most often the broadside is used to make some political, social or cultural statement. For our class, you are to select a poem from the Modernist tradition and create a broadside of it which reflects the poem’s cultural impact. You may use any medium you choose – as long as you have a reason for doing so. The broadside will account for 20% of the final grade.

### **Critical Essay:**

The final essay of the semester is a long critical analysis of any poem(s) you choose. This essay should be of high quality and intellectual rigor and should challenge or contribute substantially to the ongoing conversation taking place in the extant scholarship on the poem(s). The biographies and annotated bibliographies will be of great use to you in writing this essay. The final essay should be 15-20 pages in length. The critical essay will account for 30% of the final grade.

### **Attendance & Participation**

Daily attendance is required for this course. If you are excessively absent, for any reason, you will not pass the course. Students are allowed a maximum of two (2) absences during the semester. If you miss more than two (2) classes, your final grade will be dropped a full letter grade. More than four (4) absences is cause for failing the course. Students who miss a class are responsible for any assignment due at the next class meeting. There is no such thing as an “excused” absence. Furthermore, this is a discussion based course. The quality and frequency of your contributions to our class discussions will weigh heavily in the calculation of the attendance and participation grade. If you are uncomfortable speaking in class, this is not the course for you. Attendance and participation will account for 10% of the final grade.

## DAILY ASSIGNMENTS

### Week 1

#### Introduction to Poetry

Tuesday, January 12

**Assignment:** Read Joanny Moulin's essay, "Remanent Romanticism in Modern Poetry" (available on Blackboard) as well as T.S. Eliot's essays, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" and "The Metaphysical Poets" in the Norton anthology (941-953). Also read the following poems: Percy Shelley's "Triumph of Life" and John Keat's "Hyperion"

### Week 2

#### Romanticism & Modernism

Tuesday, January 19

**Assignment:** Read W.B. Yeats, Thomas Hardy, A.E. Housman, Edgar Lee Masters, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Carl Sandburg, Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfrid Owen. Two page responses due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

### Week 3

#### Imagism

Tuesday, January 26

**Assignment:** Read Robert Frost – 1<sup>st</sup> student biography due / 1<sup>st</sup> annotated bibliography due next week. Two page responses due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

### Week 4

#### Imagism

Tuesday, February 2

**Assignment:** Read Clement Greenberg's essay, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" and David Chinitz's essay, "T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide." Read Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, and William Carlos Williams – student biographies due / annotated bibliography due next week. Two page responses due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

### Week 5

#### Black Mountain Poets

Tuesday, February 9

**Assignment:** Read T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets* and *The Wasteland*. Student biographies due / annotated bibliography due next week. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

### Week 6

#### T.S. Eliot

Tuesday, February 16

**Assignment:** Begin reading Hart Crane's *The Bridge*. Student biography due / annotated bibliography due March 2<sup>nd</sup>. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday, February 28.

### Week 7

#### T.S. Eliot

Tuesday, February 23

**Assignment:** Finish Crane's *The Bridge*. Student biographies due / annotated bibliography due next week. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

### Week 8

#### Hart Crane

Tuesday, March 2

**Assignment:** Begin reading H.D.'s *Trilogy*. Student biography and annotated bibliography due March 16<sup>th</sup>. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday, March 14.

### Week 9

#### Hart Crane

Tuesday, March 9

**Assignment:** Finish H.D.'s *Trilogy*. Student biographies due / annotated bibliography due next week. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

**Week 10****H.D.**

Tuesday, March 16

**Assignment:** Read Gertrude Reif Hughes' essay, "Making it Really New: Hilda Doolittle, Gwendolyn Brooks, and the Feminist Potential of Modern Poetry"

**Week 11****H.D.**

Tuesday, March 23

**Assignment:** Read Houston A. Baker Jr.'s essay, "Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance" and Langston Hughes' essay, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain." Also read poems by James Weldon Johnson, Claude McKay, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, and Gwendolyn Brooks. Student biographies due / annotated bibliography (Harlem Renaissance) due next week. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

**Week 12****Harlem Renaissance**

Tuesday, March 30

**Assignment:** Read:

**Week 13****Harlem Renaissance**

Tuesday, April 6

**Assignment:** Read Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Hayden, Robert Lowell, and Philip Larkin. Student biographies due / annotated bibliography (?) due next week. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

**Week 14****The Beats & The New York School**

Tuesday, April 13

**Assignment:** Read Allen Ginsberg, Ann Sexton, and Sylvia Plath. Student biographies due / annotated bibliography (?) due next week. Two page response due by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

**Week 15****Language Poetry**

Tuesday, April 20

**Assignment:** Complete your broadside projects and final critical essay – due next week.

**Week 16****Last Day of Class**

Tuesday, April 27

**In Class Activities:** Presentation of broadside projects – final critical essay due.

## **ENG 414/514: Modern Poetry Weekly Critical Responses**

We will read a collection of poems for each class – for each grouping of poems, you are to write a two page critical response in which you “stake your claim.” These responses should go beyond a simple description of the poems to offer an analysis of something in the poem(s) that stands out or speaks to you. These short critical responses will be due by email no later than 5 p.m. every Sunday. You should be prepared to defend your claim and discuss at length in class. The weekly responses will account for 20% of the final grade.

Questions to Consider:

Technical Elements –

How are elements such as meter, line breaks, form, rhyme scheme, diction and syntax impacting the way we read the poem? Why are these elements important to consider? What effect do the technical elements have on our understanding of the poem?

Cultural Elements –

Is this poem or group of poems attempting to comment on its society? How does the prevailing culture of the poem impact our understanding of the poem? What is the poem’s intent in terms of depicting or criticizing society and/or culture?

Historical Elements –

What does the historical context of the poem tell us about it? How does our awareness of historical context impact our reading and understanding of the poem? How does it impede our understanding? Is the poem relevant today – outside of its original context? How?

Biographical Elements –

What does the poet’s biography reveal about the poem and vice versa?

Critical Elements –

Can this poem be read through the lens of gender, class or race? Is the poem making a self-conscious effort to comment on one of these (or other) critical stances? How does our understanding of the critical context of the poem impact our reading of the poem?

## **ENG 414/514: Modern Poetry Biography/Annotated Bibliography**

If you are enrolled in ENG 414, you will be assigned a particular poet to research. On the evening we are scheduled to discuss your poet, you should be prepared to offer a thorough introduction to the poet. Your introduction should include major life events, literary and other influences, major works and anything else you discover that might help us gain a better understanding of the poet and his or her work. Please create a handout listing pertinent information to distribute to the class. By the end of the semester, you should have collected an impressive array of poet biographies. Feel free to make use of the technology we have available in our classroom for your presentation to show photos, handwritten letters, or anything you deem relevant. You may also make use of the technology to play recordings of poems read in the poet's own voice, etc. Be creative. The biography will account for 20% of the final grade.

Biographical Details to Consider (\* = required):

- \*Chronology (this should include dates for all major events/publications, etc)
- Photos
- Letters
- Major Works
- Major Life Events
- Audio or Video Recordings
- Reviews of Major Works by Critics in Newspapers & Magazines

If you are enrolled in ENG 514, you will be responsible for creating an annotated bibliography of the extant scholarship on a particular poet. On the evening we are scheduled to discuss your poet, you should be prepared to offer a thorough introduction to the scholarship currently available on the poet. Your annotation should include a correctly formatted MLA citation for each entry and a brief (1 paragraph) description of the major arguments being put forth in each entry. Note that you should also include a comprehensive list of book-length works of scholarship that deal primarily or predominantly with your poet; however, you need not annotate these works. The annotations should be of journal articles only and should be comprehensive. Please email a copy of your annotated bibliography to me so that I may distribute it to the class. By the end of the semester, you should have collected an impressive array of annotated bibliographies that will be very useful when writing the final paper. The annotated bibliography will account for 20% of the final grade.

Requirements for the Annotated Bibliography:

- Complete Listing of Book-Length Works Available (in MLA format)
- One Paragraph Annotations of All Journal Articles Available (Minimum 15 / Maximum 30)
  - \*For the journal articles, you should choose representative samples of the major arguments available. For example, if there are ten articles discussing feminism in Hilda Doolittle's (H.D.) work, then you might choose one or two that best present the general argument; however, if there are opposing arguments on H.D.'s feminism, you should choose representatives from each camp to illustrate the ongoing debate.
  - In Class Presentation of the Major Themes & Arguments Discovered

## ENG 414/514: Modern Poetry The Broadside

What are broadsides? Broadly defined, broadsides are any single, unbound, printed sheet of poetry. They can include any range of technique and materials to include silk screen or letterpress prints to photocopies, posters, postcards, political fliers and museum quality works of art. From the early seventeenth century to the present, many major poets have had some work published in this form, and most often the broadside is used to make some political, social or cultural statement. For our class, you are to select a poem from the Modernist tradition and create a broadside of it which reflects the poem's cultural impact. You may use any medium you choose – as long as you have a reason for doing so. The broadside will account for 20% of the final grade.

Some Examples:



## **ENG 414/514: Modern Poetry Critical Essay**

The final essay of the semester is a long critical analysis of any poem(s) you choose. This essay should be of high quality and intellectual rigor and should challenge or contribute substantially to the ongoing conversation taking place in the extant scholarship on the poem(s). The biographies and annotated bibliographies will be of great use to you in writing this essay. The final essay should be 10-15 pages in length for students enrolled in 414 and 15-20 pages in length for students enrolled in 514. The critical essay will account for 30% of the final grade.

### Some Things to Consider:

**Introduction** – Remember to introduce both your poet and the poem(s) being discussed. Review the current critical debate and include a clearly defined and debatable thesis statement that either challenges the critical debate or contributes substantially to it.

**Body** – Clearly organize your argument by taking one point at a time, incorporating a discussion of the current critical stance with your own take on the issue/point being made, and using quotes from the text to support the argument you're attempting to make. Remember that quoting poetry has specific rules for notation – use them.

**Conclusion** – Summarize your argument in a memorable way – making sure to touch on the major points that lead to your conclusion/argument.

**Transitions** – Don't forget to clearly transition between paragraphs and between thoughts within your paragraphs. Don't assume your reader will be able to read your mind and understand where you're trying to go – line it all out clearly and concisely.

**Documentation** – Remember to always give credit to outside sources – this includes both outside scholarship that you will be referencing and quoting and the text of the poem(s). This essay should be written in MLA format and should include a complete works cited page for each source used.

**Biographies/Annotated Bibliographies:** These collections will be wonderful sources for you as you plan this essay. All of the preliminary searching and basic research has been done already – take it a step further by pulling the sources and reading them in their entirety. Do not rely on the one paragraph annotations – these are meant only as summaries of the major argument and will not give you enough substantial information to use the article effectively.