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ENG 5061-001: Poetry and The Nature of Language

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English 5061: Poetry and The Nature of Language

Texts

Don Allen, *The Postmoderns*.
Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*.
Derek Bickerton, *Language and Species*.
Robert Creeley, *Collected Poems*.
Wallace Fowle, *Rimbaud*.
Johnson, *The Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson*.
Peter O'Leary (ed.), *To Do as Adam Did: Selected Poems of Ronald Johnson*.
Wallace Stevens, *Collected Poems*.
Wai-Lim Yip, *Chinese Poetry*.

Packet of photocopied materials.

Evaluation

This is a graduate seminar, and I will evaluate you in an appropriate manner. I expect you to do the reading thoroughly, attend class, and participate.

Response papers (50% of grade)

Each Monday, I will expect you to have produced a single page of writing in response to our reading. You may single or double space and set your margins as you wish, but I will not accept more than a page. I will comment on these papers but will not put letter grades on them.

Each response is to be on a specific critical text or a single poem. On some weeks, I will ask you to adopt a particular approach. I may, for instance, ask you to focus your response on structural patterns in a poem, or I may ask you to "daydream" on a poem, as Bachelard does. Mostly, though, you will be free to take an approach of your own choosing. My goal is to have you involve yourself with a dozen poems this semester, and to discover the hold poetry can have upon the imagination and life.

Semester Project (50% of grade)

I would like you to have formulated the topic of your final project by midterm. The project may address any topic explored in the course, or may focus on a particular poet or group of poets. I welcome innovative and multi-disciplinary methodologies as well as more traditional literary-critical approaches to your subject. Students proficient in languages other than English may opt to translate a selection of poems into (or from) English.

**Poetry and the Nature of Language
Agenda**

August 26. Introduction.

I. Two Approaches

A./ Poetry and the Nature of Language.

Generative linguistics. Grammars of perception, experience, and poetic form.
Linguistic/structuralist approaches to poetry.

September 9. Bicketon, *Language and Species*. Jakobson. *

September 16. Wallace Stevens.

September 23. Welsh, *Roots of Lyric*. * Rothenberg. * Emily Dickinson.

B./ Poem as Dream

The "subject." The image and the unconscious. Psychological approaches.

September 30. Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*. Begin Rimbaud's *Illuminations*

October 7. Rimbaud, cont'd. Francis Ponge. * Leslie Scalapino*.

II. Image as Text/Text as Image

October 14. Yip, *Chinese Poetry*. Reports on Lao Tzu, Wang Wei on *Poetry and Painting*, Mei-Mei Sze, *The Mustard Seed Garden of Painting*. Pertinent chapters in Welsh.

October 21. Xu Bing [<http://xubing.com/>].

October 28. I.H. Finlay. Concrete /Visual Poetry [<http://www.ubu.com/>]. Leslie Scalapino (handout), Eduardo Kac [<http://www.ekac.org/>] Robert Smithson [<http://www.robertsmithson.com/>] and handouts.

III. Life and Poem. Poem and Life.

November 4. Basho, *Back Roads...*

Corman essays, *Art as Center and Poetry as a Mode of Realization*. *

Issa, [<http://webusers.xula.edu/dlanoue/issa/>]

Chiyo-ni*

November 11. Olson (in Allen and *), Robert Creeley, *Collected Poems*. Levertov (in Allen and *)

November 18. George Oppen, * Lorine Niedecker, * Larry Eigner, * Frank Samperi. *

November 25. Thanksgiving Recess.

December 2. Ronald Johnson, *To Do As Adam Did*.

December 9. Presentation of final projects.

* See packet of readings.