

Fall 8-15-1998

ENG 5010-001: Postmodern American Poetry

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MICHAEL LEDDY / POSTMODERN AMERICAN POETRY / FALL 1998

Office: Coleman 330 (west hallway)

Office Hours: M W F 2:00-3:15, W after class, other times by appointment

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The academy of the future is opening its doors.

John Ashbery

Postmodern is a word that wears many hats. In the name of this course, it serves as a broad characterization of a variety of exciting possibilities in American poetry, possibilities that develop from the more radical innovations of modernism and that challenge familiar understandings of form, "voice," narrative, and representation. We'll begin with work from some of the "other" modernists (Guillaume Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams) and go on to read work from the Objectivists, Black Mountain, the San Francisco Renaissance, the Beats, the New York School, and recent developments in and out of language-poetry. (I put very little stock in these labels--they're here merely for convenience.) The course offers a chance to see the gradual work of canon-formation in progress (the academy of the future is indeed opening its doors) and to recognize that the possibilities of poetry (how to write) and criticism (how to read) are always under construction. Above all, the course offers a chance to become acquainted with some of the most extraordinary poetry of the past half-century.

TEXTS

Paul Hoover, ed., Postmodern American Poetry: A Norton Anthology

Douglas Messerli, ed., From the Other Side of the Century: A New American Poetry 1960-1990

Gertrude Stein, Tender Buttons

Eliot Weinberger, ed., American Poetry Since 1950: Innovators and Outsiders

William Carlos Williams, Imaginations

REQUIREMENTS

Dedicated participation in the work of the course (reading, thinking, talking, and leading part of a discussion), a number of short writing assignments, a longer written project, a final examination.

POLICIES

Attendance

Attendance is essential: you should attend class at least as often as I do. You will be lost otherwise.

You are responsible for all assignments, whether or not you are in class when they are announced. If you must miss a class, you should get in touch with me right away to find out what you will miss.

Late Work

Late writing is acceptable only if you have my approval in advance.

Disabilities

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, contact the coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Office Hours

Feel free to come in to talk--about a question that you didn't get to ask in class, an idea that you want to talk about, etc. If the scheduled times aren't workable, don't hesitate to arrange another time.

Grading

Your grade will be based on your short writing assignments (30%), final examination (30%), longer project (30%), and participation (10%).

Written work receives letter grades. Participation in the course receives one of five grades: 100 (consistent well-informed participation), 85 (frequent well-informed participation), 75 (less frequent participation or less well-informed participation), 50 (only occasional participation), 0 (little or no participation). You may check on participation at any time. If you have qualms about participating in class discussion, please talk to me as soon as possible.

To calculate semester grades, I use the following numerical equivalents for letter grades:

A 95 A- 92 B+ 87 B 85 B- 82 C+ 77 C 75 C- 72 D+ 67 D 65 D- 62 F 55

For semester grades, 90 or above is an A; 80 or above, a B; 70 or above, a C; 60 or above, a D; below 60, an F.

English Department Statement on Plagiarism

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English

Language)--has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course.

Academic Integrity

Any breach of academic integrity is a serious matter and will get you a serious penalty, up to and including an F for the course. You will also get a file in the Judicial Affairs office and be required to participate in an ethics workshop organized by Judicial Affairs. You should be familiar with Eastern's statement on academic integrity (posted in classrooms) and should ask if you have any questions about quoting from and/or documenting sources.

PROVISIONAL OUTLINE, BY WEEKS

1: Introduction to the course

2-3: "Other" Modernists: Guillaume Apollinaire, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams

4-5: Objectivists: Lorine Niedecker, Charles Reznikoff, George Oppen, Louis Zukofsky

6: Black Mountain: Charles Olson, Robert Creeley, Denise Levertov

7: San Francisco: Robert Duncan, Jack Spicer

8: Beats and Beyond: Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Amiri Baraka

9-10: The New York School: John Ashbery, Barbara Guest, Frank O'Hara, Kenneth Koch, James Schuyler

11: New York, Second Generation: Ted Berrigan, Ron Padgett, Joseph Ceravolo, Bernadette Mayer

12-13: In and Out of Language-Poetry: Larry Eigner, Robert Grenier, Ron Silliman, Clark Coolidge, Charles Bernstein, Lyn Hejinian, Leslie Scalapino, Susan Howe, Bob Perelman, Rae Armantrout

14-15: Your Work