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 Fowlie, Rimbaud.
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 16. Wallace Stevens.

B./ Poem as Dream
The "subject." The image and the unconscious. Psychological approaches.

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


II. Image as Text/Text as Image


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/]
Chiyō-ni*

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


November 25. Thanksgiving Recess.

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

December 9. Presentation of final projects.
* See packet of readings.