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**School of Philosophy**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**AMERICAN WOMEN POETS OF THE 20TH AND 21ST CENTURY**

**Winter Semester**

2022-2023

**Instructor**

Dr. Vasileios N. Delioglanis

**Time and Venue**

Friday 17:00-20:00 (Room 314 – Philosophy Building)

**Office Hours**

Room 903

Friday: 13:00-14:00 & 19:45-20:45

(by appointment via email)

**Email**

deliogla@enl.uoa.gr

**Description and general scope of the course:**

The course explores the work of American women poets of the 20th and 21st century, investigating topics such as society and textuality, gender and cultural production, racial and ethnic identity, as well as the interaction between femininity and other dimensions of individual and collective identity. The course focuses on the woman as the subject and creator of cultural influences as well as on poetic writing as a palimpsest of texts that shape our perception of gender and identity. The selected poems are examined on the basis of modern and postmodern theories in an effort to explore the status and function of poetry in (contemporary) society.

**Course objectives:**

Upon completion of the course students should have either learned or reinforced the following objectives:

* Familiarize themselves with the close reading and analysis of various poetic styles as these are formulated by various practicing poets coming from diverse social, cultural and racial groups.
* Examine the development of female poetic writing in conjunction with various social/political/artistic developments and events.
* Familiarize themselves with the reading and interpreting of essays that the poets themselves have written.
* Get informed about the socio/cultural/artistic trends and the political context that influenced the formation of the writing style of each one of the poets under consideration.

**Required Texts:** Material provided by the instructor via e-class

**Assessment**

**OPTION 1:**

1. **Final Exam – Score: 100%**

**OPTION 2:**

1. **Final Exam – Score: 60%**
2. **Research Paper – Score: 40% (specifications are available on e-class at «Εργασίες» section)**

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is essentially the unacknowledged use of another person’s work. It can take the following forms:

1. ***The copying (or “quotation”) without acknowledgement, of the work of others (including the work of fellow students), published or unpublished, either verbatim or in close paraphrase, including material downloaded from computer files and the Internet.***
2. ***Submitting as their own work a piece of work lent to them by a fellow student.***
3. ***Learning passages by heart, whether from books or other distributed materials and transcribing them in examination answers without acknowledgement.***

You must not therefore copy the work of others and pass it off as your own.If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you will lose marks or you will be asked to resubmit your work.

**SYLLABUS**

**Week 1 – Introduction: The Beginnings**

Female poetry practice in America since the 17th century: From Anne Bradstreet to Phillis Wheatley to Emily Dickinson

**MODULE 1: 1910-1950**

**Week 2 – Gendered Modernism**

Gertrude Stein – “A Substance in a Cushion” from *Tender Buttons* (1914)

Edna St. Vincent Millay – “[I, being born a woman]” (1923)

Marianne Moore – “Nevertheless” (1944)

Secondary Reading:

Christopher Beach – “Gendered Modernism” from *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century American Poetry*, pp. 72-92.

**Week 3 – Imagism**

H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) – “Sheltered Garden” (1916)

Amy Lowell – “Patterns” (1915) AND/OR “Venus Transiens” (1919)

Secondary Reading:

Alan Shucard et al. – “The Emergence of the Modern: Amy Lowell, H.D., Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, and the Imagists,” from *Modern American Poetry*, pp. 65-94.

**Week 4 – Black Voices**

[Georgia Douglas Johnson](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/georgia-douglas-johnson) – “The Heart of a Woman” (1918)

Gwendolyn Brooks – “the mother” (1945)

**MODULE 2: 1950-2000**

**Week 5 – Confessional Poetry**

Anne Sexton – “The Truth the Dead Know” (1962)

Sylvia Plath – “Lady Lazarus” (1962)

Secondary Reading:

Hoover, Paul, ed. – Introduction. *Postmodern American Poetry*, pp. xxix-lvii.

Sylvia Plath – “Context” (essay)

**Week 6 – Civil Rights / Women’s Rights**

Adrienne Rich – “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers” (1951) AND “Power” (1978)

Audre Lorde – “Coal” (1968)

Secondary Reading:

Alice Walker – “In Search of Our Mother’s Gardens” (1972)

Audre Lorde – From “Poetry Is Not a Luxury” (1977)

**Week 7 – Environmental Concerns**

Elizabeth Bishop – “The Moose” (1976)

Mary Oliver – “The Black Snake” (1979)

**Week 8 – Multiethnic Voices**

Louise Erdrich – “Dear John Wayne” (1984)

Sandra Cisneros – “His Story” (1987)

Cathy Song – “The Vegetable Air” (1988)

**MODULE 3: 2000 – present day**

**Week 9 – Electronic Poetry**

Stephanie Strickland & Cynthia Lawson Jaramillo – “V: Vniverse” (2002)

Secondary Reading:

Timothy Yu – Introduction. *The Cambridge Companion to Twenty-First-Century American Poetry*, pp. 1-16.

Scott Rettberg – “Kinetic and Interactive Poetry,” from *Electronic Literature*, 2018.

**Week 10 – Black & Multiethnic Voices in the New Century**

Harryette Mullen – “Any Lit” (2002)

Joy Harjo – “When the World As We Knew It Ended—” (2003)

Natasha Trethewey – “Native Guard” (2006)

Secondary Reading:

Harryette Mullen – “Imagining the Unimagined Reader” (essay)

**Week 11 – New Feminisms**

Catherine Wagner – “This is a Fucking Poem” (2009)

Patricia Lockwood – “Rape Joke” (2013)

Secondary Reading:

Ann Vickery – “Changing Topographies, New Feminisms, and Women Poets” from *The Cambridge Companion to Twenty-First-Century American Poetry*, pp. 71-89.

**Week 12 – Queer Identities**

[Deborah A. Miranda](https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/deborah-a-miranda) – “Love Poem to a Butch Woman” (2005)

Trace Peterson – “[Exclusively on Venus”](https://brooklynrail.org/2015/10/poetry/trace-peterson) (2016)

**Week 13 – Review / Concluding Remarks**

Secondary Reading:

Dorothy Wang – “The Future of Poetry Studies,” from *The Cambridge Companion to Twenty-First-Century American Poetry*, pp. 220-233.

**Suggested Bibliography for Further Reading**

Alan Shucard et al. *Modern American Poetry*. 1989.

Altieri, Charles. *The Art of Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Modernism and After*. 2006.

Beach, Christopher. *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century American Poetry*. 2012.

Brown, Cheryl L., and Karen Olson. *Feminist Criticism: Essays on Theory, Poetry and Prose*. 1978.

Gelpi, Barbara Charlesworth, and Albert Gelpi, eds. A*drienne Rich’s Poetry and Prose: Poems, Prose, Reviews and Criticism*. 1993.

Gill, Jo, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Sylvia Plath*. 2006.

Hoover, Paul, ed. – *Postmodern American Poetry*. 2013.

Kinnahan, Linda A. *Lyric Interventions: Feminism, Experimental Poetry, and Contemporary Discourse*. 2005.

Kirsch, Adam. *The Modern Element: Essays on Contemporary Poetry*. 2008.

Koch, Kenneth, and Kate Farrell. *Sleeping on the Wing: An Anthology of Modern Poetry with Essays on Reading and Writing*. 1982.

Keniston, Ann and Jeffrey Gray, eds. *The New American Poetry of Engagement: A 21st Century Anthology*. 2012.

Levenson, Michael H., ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. 1999.

Nielsen, Aldon Lynn, and Lauri Ramey, eds. *What I Say: Innovative Poetry by Black Writers in America*. 2015.

O’Sullivan, [Maggie](https://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Ddp_byline_sr_book_1?ie=UTF8&field-author=Maggie+O%27Sullivan&text=Maggie+O%27Sullivan&sort=relevancerank&search-alias=books), ed. *Out of Everywhere 2: Linguistically Innovative Poetry by Women in North America and the United Kingdom*. 2015.

Rankine, Claudia, and Juliana Spahr, eds. *American Women Poets in the 21st Century: Where Lyric Meets Language*. 2002.

Rankine, Claudia, and Lisa Sewell, eds. *Eleven More American Women Poets in the 21st Century: Poetics Across North America*. 2012.

Rexroth, Kenneth. *American Poetry in the Twentieth Century*. 1971.

Robert Diyanni, ed. *Modern American Poets: Their Voices and Visions*. 1987.

Ruddick, Lisa Cloe. *Reading Gertrude Stein: Body, Text, Gnosis*. 1990.

Sakelliou-Schultz, Liana. *Feminist Criticism of American Women Poets: An Annotated Bibliography 1975-1993*. 1994.

Yu, Timothy, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Twenty-First-Century American Poetry*. 2021.