

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

Syllabus

American Poetry and Political Extremity: From the Harlem Renaissance to 9/11 - 44580

Last update 08-08-2023

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 1st degree (Bachelor)

Responsible Department: English

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Karin Berkman

Coordinator Email: karin.berkman@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Tuesday, 8.30-9.30

Teaching Staff:

Dr. karin berkman

Course/Module description:

This course considers the intersection between poetry and politics in American poetry in the twentieth century. It questions the ethical and artistic dilemmas that arise when the poet confronts political extremity. How can poetry fashion a response to political circumstances without becoming propaganda or polemic? Is the conflict between poetry and protest, between aesthetics and activism, a spurious one, as many dissident poets argue? How does political poetry address notions of witnessing, memory and commemoration? The course focuses on four arenas: poetry of the Harlem Renaissance, poetry of the civil rights movement, feminist poetry, and poetry written in the aftermath of 9/11.

Course/Module aims:

The aim of this course is to closely and critically read both major poems and critical texts that respond to political crisis in America during the twentieth century.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- *Recognize major American poets and theorists writing in contexts of political extremity*
- *Understand the historical contexts addressed by the works of poetry which we will consider*
- *Trace major developments in American political poetry in the twentieth century*
- *Understand the effect of issues of race and gender on American political poetry*

Attendance requirements(%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Lecture

Course/Module Content:

The Harlem Renaissance:

Poetry by Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Georgia Douglas Johnson, Helene Johnson, Angela Weld Grimke, amongst others

Critical Texts: Langston Hughes, "The Racial Mountain"

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folks*, extracts
Langston, Hughes, "200 Years of American Negro Poetry." *Transition*, no. 75/76, 1997
The Civil Rights Movement
Poetry by Gwendolyn Brooks, Audre Lorde, Raymond Patterson, Dudley Randall, Nikki Giovanni, amongst others
Carolyn, Forché, ed. *Against forgetting: Twentieth-century poetry of witness: Introduction*
American Feminist Poetry
Poetry by Adrienne Rich, Tracy K Smith, Ada Limon amongst others
Critical texts: Adrienne Rich, *Poetry and Commitment*, extracts
9/11
Poetry by Billy Collins, Toni Morrison, Galway Kinnel, Alicia Ostriker and W.S. Merwin, amongst others
Karen Alkalay-Gut, "The Poetry of September 11: The Testimonial Imperative." *Poetics Today* 26.2
Poems and critical texts to be studied will be uploaded to the Moodle site

Required Reading:

Poems and critical texts to be studied will be uploaded to the Moodle site

Additional Reading Material:

Additional reading will be assigned during the course

Grading Scheme:

Essay / Project / Final Assignment / Home Exam / Referat 50 %
Active Participation / Team Assignment 10 %
Submission assignments during the semester: Exercises / Essays / Audits / Reports / Forum / Simulation / others 30 %
Presentation / Poster Presentation / Lecture 10 %

Additional information: