

Modern Poetry and the Experience of Time (LTMO 145-A)

MWF, 9 – 11:30am, HUM 2, 250

Instructor: Tim Willcutts

Instructor Contact: twillcutts@hotmail.com

Office Hours: MW, 12 – 1pm, or by appointment, in Humanities 1, rm. 115B (or at another convenient campus location – café, etc.)

****This syllabus is subject to change****

Course Description

This course considers the ways early 20th century poetry expressed the experience of time, reflecting a historical moment that witnessed radically shifting accounts of temporality – the establishment of Greenwich standard time, the invention of the wireless telegraph, telephone, cinema, automobile, airplane, and wristwatch, Einstein’s theory of relativity, the trauma of World War I, discourses of decolonization, the stream-of-consciousness novel, Cubism, Futurism, psychoanalysis, and experiential philosophies like phenomenology, to name a few cultural and technological developments.

We will read poetry and commentary from Europe, the United States, and Latin America, focusing especially on César Vallejo’s *Trilce*, Gertrude Stein’s verbal portraits, and Rainer Maria Rilke’s *Duino Elegies*. Beyond the many historical and philosophical questions the course raises, we will focus especially on the formal skill of close-reading poems, identifying what a poem communicates musically and figuratively – through line-breaks, metaphor, metonymy, and other formal features – in addition to and in combination with the literal meaning of its words. The papers assigned for this course will test your ability to close-read, and a final exam will assess your knowledge of the historical and theoretical issues pertinent to this course (as well as your ability to close-read).

Required Texts, both available at the Literary Guillotine (204 Locust Street, Santa Cruz)

- 1.) Course Reader
- 2.) *Duino Elegies*, Rainer Maria Rilke

Grading

Participation – 25%

Paper #1 – 25%

Paper #2 – 25%

Final Exam – 25%

Attendance – Because this is an accelerated summer class – an entire quarter in just 5 weeks – the attendance policy has to be especially strict. To be eligible for an A, you cannot miss more than one class, that is, one *excused* absence is acceptable, but no more. If you get sick or have a personal emergency and need to miss class, e-mail me before class begins. I am not allowed to ask for doctors’ notes, and I will not excuse more than one absence this quarter. If you experience a prolonged illness or crisis, I recommend dropping or withdrawing from this course. If this is a particularly challenging time for you, please consider taking the class at a better time.

Missing more than 2 classes means missing 20% of the course, which is not acceptable. If you miss more than 2 classes, I will ask you to drop the course or withdraw. The deadline to drop the course is August 3rd. The deadline to withdraw is August 15th (the withdrawal period is August 4th – August 15th). There is a separate procedure for Medical Withdrawal, in the case of severe illness.

Students With Disabilities

If you qualify for classroom accommodations because of a disability, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. Contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089, or by email at drc@ucsc.edu for more information.

Plagiarism Policy

All work submitted for this course must be your own. If you do not understand fully the standards of academic integrity enforced at UC Santa Cruz, inform yourself by consulting *The Navigator* at reg.ucsc.edu/navigator, Section 1, Academic Integrity. Breaches in academic integrity will result in failure of this course and may incur suspension or dismissal from the university.

Additional Resources: On-Campus Recovery Meetings

Are you or someone close suffering from compulsive use of food, alcohol, other drugs, gaming, gambling, love, sex and/or co-dependency? Is your life feeling unmanageable? Students like you have found relief from mental obsessions of all kinds. The solution is simple: We help one another and practice 12 steps of recovery. Join us. Coffee and treats provided! See website for times, locations, and other information:

<http://healthcenter.ucsc.edu/shop/aod-program/aa.html>

WEEK ONE

Monday, July 28th

– Introductions; historical and theoretical overview; practice close-reading

Reading for Wednesday: Course Reader, p. 1 – 63

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti: “The Foundation and Manifesto of Futurism,” “Flying Over the Heart of Italy,” “Correction of Proof Desires,” “Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature,” *Words in Freedom*: “Letters from a pretty woman to a passéist gentleman,” “Dunes,” “After the

Marne, Joffre toured the front by car,” “At night, lying in bed, She rereads the letter from her gunner at the front,” “A tumultuous assembly”

Mina Loy: “Feminist Manifesto,” “There is no Life or Death,” “Human Cylinders,” “Sketch of a Man on a Platform,” “The Effectual Marriage,” “Parturition,” “Gertrude Stein,” “Time-Bomb,” “Aphorisms on Futurism”

Wednesday, July 30th

– Discuss Marinetti and Loy, Futurism and Feminism

Reading for Friday: Course Reader, p. 64 – 98

César Vallejo: Selections from *Trilce* and “Poesía Nueva” (New Poetry)

Vicente Huidobro: Selections from *Altazor* and “El Creacionismo” (Creationism)

Friday, August 1st – (Topics Distributed for Paper #1)

-- Discuss Vallejo and Huidobro, the Latin American avant-garde, Mariátegui and post-Independence Peru

Reading for Monday: Course Reader, p. 99 -- 166

Gertrude Stein: “Orta or One Dancing,” “Matisse,” “Picasso”

César Vallejo: Selections from *Trilce*

Clayton Eshleman: “Afterword: Vallejo’s Succulent Snack of Unity”

WEEK TWO

Monday, August 4th

-- Discuss various ways of reading *Trilce*, consider Clayton Eshleman’s approach, discuss Gertrude Stein’s verbal portraiture and “the continuous present”

Reading for Wednesday: Course Reader, p. 167 – 206

Gertrude Stein: “Portraits and Repetition,” “If I Told Him, A Completed Portrait of Picasso,” “Susie Asado,” “Preciosilla,” “Ada,” “Nadelman,” “Play,” “Bon Marche Weather,” “Stanzas in Meditation”

Wednesday, August 6th

-- Discuss “Portraits and Repetition,” Stein’s conceptions of time, language, and human personality; William James’ notion of the “stream of consciousness” and “knowledge-of-acquaintance,” his influence on Stein; discuss Stein’s portraits and other experiments

Reading for Friday: Course Reader, p. 207 – 218

Gertrude Stein: excerpts from *Tender Buttons*

Friday, August 8th – PAPER ONE DUE

-- Discuss *Tender Buttons*, Stein's representational project (alternatives to "description")

Reading for Monday: Course Reader, p. 219 – 230; and beginning of *Duino Elegies*

César Vallejo: selections from *Trilce*

Edward Snow: Introduction to *Duino Elegies*

Rainer Maria Rilke: 1st Duino Elegy

WEEK THREE

Monday, August 11th – (Topics Distributed for Paper #2)

-- Continue our close-readings of *Trilce*; consider Michelle Clayton's reading of metonymy and Jean Franco's reading of evolutionary science in *Trilce*; consider José Carlos Mariátegui's view of Vallejo as poet of decolonization; begin our discussion of Rainer Maria Rilke and the *Duino Elegies*; close-read 1st Duino Elegy; consider Edward Snow's introduction

Reading for Wednesday: Course Reader, p. 231 – 238; and *Duino Elegies* 2 and 3

Martin Heidegger: from *Being and Time* (on "being towards death")

Rainer Maria Rilke: 2nd and 3rd Duino Elegies

Wednesday, August 13th

-- Close-read 2nd and 3rd Duino Elegies; discuss Martin Heidegger's phenomenological ontology; the temporality of death and one's orientation towards death; consider Rilke's interest in death and other experiences of time (childhood, romantic love, animal perception, etc.); discuss Heidegger's interest in Rilke

Reading for Friday: Course Reader, p. 239 – 253; and *Duino Elegies* 4 and 5

Vallejo: selections from *Trilce*

Rilke: 4th and 5th Duino Elegies

Friday, August 15th

-- Close-read Vallejo and Rilke; compare their formal poetics, themes, and accounts of temporality

Reading for Monday: Course Reader, p. 273 – 323; and *Duino Elegies* 6 and 7

Heidegger: “What are Poets For?”

Rilke: 6th and 7th Duino Elegies

WEEK FOUR

Monday, August 18th

-- Discuss Heidegger’s reading of Rilke; the concept of “the Open”; close-read 6th and 7th Duino Elegies

Reading for Wednesday: 8th Duino Elegy (and review Heidegger’s essay in light of it)

Rilke: 8th Duino Elegy

**** Bring Drafts of Papers to Wednesday’s Class for Workshopping****

Wednesday, August 20th

-- Close-read 8th Duino Elegy; consider Rilke’s concept of “the Open” and Heidegger’s view of it; workshop paper drafts.

Reading for Friday: Course Reader, p. 254 – 272

Vallejo: selections from *Trilce*

Friday, August 22 – PAPER TWO DUE

-- Close-read *Trilce*; review other material in preparation for final exam

Reading for Monday: Course Reader, p. 325 – 336; and *Duino Elegies* 9 and 10

Vallejo: final selections from *Trilce*; and poem from *Poemas Humanos* entitled “Trilce”

Rilke: 9th and 10th Duino Elegies

WEEK FIVE

Monday, August 25th – (Final Exam Review Sheet Distributed)

-- Close-read 9th and 10th Duino Elegies; close-read Vallejo selections; final discussion of Rilke and Vallejo

For Wednesday: Study for final exam, review all literature from the course, bring questions and close-readings to Wednesday's class; other small assignments to be announced.

Wednesday, August 27th

Review all course material for exam; close-read poems; final discussion

Friday, August 29th

FINAL EXAM