EN5315  Topics in Contemporary Literature

PART I:  Contemporary Poetry and Poetics by Women Writers

(term 2 weeks 17-21)

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This unit aims to be an advanced introduction to the writing of selected contemporary women poets (post 2000). These texts will be placed in the context of contemporary debates in innovative poetics and also considered in relation to modernist strategies of avant-garde practice by previous women writers.

Students will examine and critically appraise the work of a number of contemporary women writers whose writing appears to evince a relationship to an earlier modernist period. The extent and importance of these relationships will be examined from a variety of mutually informing perspectives: through a consideration of the direct influence of previous writers or theorists on this work, through a consideration and comparison of the strategies of practice when placed in parallel with those of the modern period, through a consideration and comparison of the differing treatment of related themes, concerns and ideas, through an exploration of the different critical and literary receptions afforded to women writers at different points from 1880-2012. Students will investigate and evaluate the extent to which contemporary women writers have utilised, adapted and transformed modernist strategies of practice and to what ends.

By the end of the five-week unit, the student should:

- have a specific knowledge about a range of key texts and contexts relating to writing by contemporary women writers.
- have a knowledge and critical understanding of how that work relates to practical and theoretical debates in a variety of modernist, late modernist and postmodernist practices.
**Course Structure:**

Students will be invited to prepare short presentations and occasional seminar papers on selections from the indicated reading below each topic and relevant material from the selected bibliographies. Students will focus their presentations on the comparison between the poetic strategies of modernist and contemporary poets.

1. **Well Then There Now / How To Write The Contemporary? (Dialogues of influence):**

2. **Urban. Landscape. Home:**

3. **Lyric and Self in Fragment:**

4. **Found Materials:**

5. **Bodies and Writing in Performance:**
Bibliography

Contemporary:
Judith Goldman, l.b.; or, catenaries Krupskaya (2011).
Harryette Mullen, Recyclopedia Gray Wolf (2009).
Denise Riley, Selected Poems Reality Street (2000).
Juliana Spahr, This Connection of Everyone with Lungs New California Press (2005)
Carol Watts, Zeta Landscape Shearsman (2011)
Marjorie Welish, In the Futurity Lounge Coffee House Press (2011)

Modernist:


Laura Riding, *The Poems of Laura Riding* (1986 [1938]).


**Anthologies:**


**Indicative Secondary Reading:**


Part 2: Flight Paths: Fictions of Globalization and Mobility

(Term 2, weeks 23-27)

Course Tutor: Dr Agnes Woolley
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This course provides an advanced introduction to the literary-cultural significance of globalization as it relates to the movement of people, commodities and capital in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Students will evaluate key theorisations of these global phenomena and examine how they are reflected thematically and formally in contemporary literature. Addressing the intersections between contemporary globalization and mobility, the course explores the impact of media technologies and ‘connectivity’, multinational corporatism, and the formation of migrant, national and local identities. While some writers document the increased movement of people and things in the late twentieth-century, others consider what it means to stay ‘in place’ in the context of the ‘intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole’ (Robertson, 1992, 8). A central concern of the course is the extent to which contemporary globalizing forces erase cultural difference – forging a homogeneous ‘world society’ – or entrench polarising inequalities that have their roots in histories of colonisation.

Set Texts:

Networks and Nodes: Transmission by Hari Kunzru (2004)
Exilic Identities: Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri (1999)
Postcolonial Asylum: By the Sea by Abdulrazak Gurnah (2001)
Outsourcing Exploitation: Animal’s People by Indra Sinha (2007)

Learning Outcomes:

After taking the course, students will be able to:

• Engage critically with late twentieth and early twenty-first century literary representations of globalization and migration.
• Demonstrate an understanding of cultural diversity, diaspora, and the impact of migration on cultural politics and identity formation.
• Critically engage with evolving theorisations of contemporary globalization and cosmopolitanism in relation to the literary texts on the module.
• Analyse how writers represent questions of national identity, hybridity, cultural memory, and ethnicity in the context of contemporary globalizing trends.
Teaching & Learning Methods:

There will be a two-hour seminar for 5 weeks.

Summative Assessment (100%) and Feedback

One essay of 2,500 – 3000 words. Students will be given feedback in one-to-one tutorials on the essays. Students will devise their own topics but will need to discuss it with the course convenor before they begin.

Short Bibliography: