

<p>English 7350 (graduate seminar) 20th-Century American Poetry: The Art Object from Modernism to Postmodernism</p> <p>Fall 2008 Mon 2-5, Dallas Hall 138</p>	<p>Professor Lisa Siraganian 248 Dallas Hall, (214) 768-2982 lsiragan@smu.edu</p> <p>Office Hours: WF, 1-2:30 and by appointment</p>
---	---

To a large extent, the problems of poets are the problems of painters and poets must often turn to the literature of painting for a discussion of their own problems. -- Wallace Stevens, "Adagia"

The only thing, funnily enough, that I never get tired of doing is looking at pictures. -- Gertrude Stein, *Lectures in America*

Overview: This course begins with the idea that a range of twentieth-century American poets took seriously the "problems of painters," as Stevens puts it. One of the major aesthetic and philosophical "problems of painters" was the debate regarding the ontology of the work of art. That is, what counts as a poem or a work of art? Is a work of art a thing in the world or a creation of the spectator's (or the artist's) mind? Does a poem do more or less than capture a view of the world or a piece of the reality? How do these aesthetic or formal questions relate to social or political concerns? By examining influential American poets from the first half of the twentieth century (Eliot, Stein, Williams, Stevens), through the second half of the century (Hughes, Bishop, Olson), and onto the present (Ashbery, Cruz), we will study poets' answers to these questions and formulate our own responses too. In addition to reading literary criticism and theoretical writing on aesthetics, we will pay close attention to the relationship between poetics and literary theory in the period. We will also examine these poets in relation to the artists (such as Pablo Picasso, Marcel Duchamp, Max Ernst, Robert Rauschenberg, etc.) who sometimes influenced them.

Requirements: In addition to two brief in-class presentations and an in-class response to a classmate's presentation, each student will select EITHER (a) the "chapter" seminar model: a 5-page prospectus for a seminar paper due after fall break and a 20-25-page seminar paper due Dec 12; OR, (b) the "conference" seminar model: four 5-page papers handed in approximately every other week throughout the semester and one 8-10-page "conference" paper due Dec 12 (this final paper might be a substantial revision, incorporating additional research, of one of your shorter papers). Let me know soon which option you are choosing.

Required Books/Readings: Please purchase the following editions or later, new or used. They are all available at the SMU bookstore and on Amazon (see the listmania URL below). There are also a number of essays (PDFs) and images on Blackboard. You will need to download these files each week (check the syllabus for the "Bb" designation).
http://www.amazon.com/gp/richpub/listmania/fullview/R2C419DNH74ASC/ref=cm_lm_pthnk_view?ie=UTF8&lm%5Fbb=

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*, Norton Critical Edition, ed. Michael North (Norton, 2001), ISBN 0-393-97499-5
Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects* (Cambridge UP: 1980 or later is ok), ISBN: 0521297060
Gertrude Stein, *Selected Writings of Gertrude Stein* (Vintage:1990), ISBN: 0679724648
William Carlos Williams, *The Collected Poems of William Carlos Williams, Vol. 1: 1909-1939* (New Directions, 1991), ISBN: 0811211878
Wallace Stevens, *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (Vintage, 1990), ISBN: 0679726691
Elizabeth Bishop, *The Complete Poems, 1927-1979* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1984), ISBN: 0374518173
Langston Hughes, *Collected Poems* (Vintage, 1995), ISBN: 0679764089
Charles Olson, *Selected Poems* (University of California Press, 1997), ISBN: 0520212320
John Ashbery, *Selected Poems* (Penguin, 1986), ISBN: 0140585532
Victor Hernandez Cruz, *Maraca: New and Selected Poems, 1965-2000* (Perseus, 2001), ISBN: 1566891221

Schedule of Meetings:

Aug 25 – Introduction and T. S. Eliot (1888-1965)

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, Norton edition, (3-26) and “Sources” (29-66)

[optional: Ezra Pound’s annotations and editing of *The Waste Land* drafts on Bb]

Sept 2 (Tuesday) -- Eliot and New Criticism

Eliot, *The Waste Land*, Norton edition: “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (114-120), “Ulysses, Order, and Myth” (128-130), “Eliot on *The Waste Land*” (112-3)

Cleanth Brooks, “The Heresy of Paraphrase” (1350-66) on Bb

William K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, “The Intentional Fallacy” and “The Affective Fallacy” (1371-1402) on Bb

Charles Altieri, “Eliot’s Impact on twentieth-century Anglo-American poetry” (189-209) on Bb

[optional: Gerald Graff, “What Was New Criticism?” on Bb, and Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, *Understanding Poetry* (1-22) on Bb]

Sept 8 – A few other theories of the art object

Paul de Man, “Form and Intent in the American New Criticism” (20-35) link on Bb

Richard Wollheim, *Art and Its Objects* (1-153)

Sept 15 -- Gertrude Stein (1874-1946)

Mark Roskill, “Cubism” (476-480) on Bb

Clement Greenberg, “Collage” (70-83) on Bb

“Collage” examples – powerpoint on Bb

Stein, *Selected Writings*: “Cezanne, Matisse, Picasso” (327-335), *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1-64, 81-108, 228-237)

Stein, “Portraits and Repetition” (165-206) on Bb

Sept 22 -- Stein, cont.

Stein, *Selected Writings*: “Tender Buttons” (459-509)

Stein, “Pictures” (59-90) and “Poetry and Grammar” (209-246) on Bb

Marjorie Perloff, “Poetry as Word-System: The Art of Gertrude Stein” (67-108) link on Bb

Jennifer Ashton, “‘Rose is a Rose’: Gertrude Stein and the Critique of Indeterminacy” (581-604) on Bb

Sept 29 -- William Carlos Williams (1883-1963)

Williams, *Collected Poems, Vol. 1: Spring and All* (175-236) and related notes in the appendix

Williams, “Introduction to *The Wedge*” and “A Sort of Song” (53-5) on Bb

“Williams and the artists” – powerpoint on Bb

Marcel Duchamp, from *Selected Writings* (32-3, 140-3) on Bb

Ezra Pound, “A Few Don’ts by an Imagiste” (356-9) on Bb

Dickran Tashjian, “William Carlos Williams” (90-115) on Bb

Oct 6 -- Wallace Stevens (1879-1955)

Stevens, *Collected Poetry*: “The Emperor of Ice-Cream” (64), “Disillusionment of Ten O’clock” (66), “Sunday Morning (66-71), “Anecdote of the Jar” (76), “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” (92-5), “Sea Surface Full of Clouds” (98-102), “The Idea of Order at Key West” (128-9), “The Man with the Blue Guitar” (165-183), the “Canonica” sequence (191-205), “Of Modern Poetry” (239-240), “Large Red Man Reading” (423-4).

Stevens, “The Old Woman and the Statue” and “Mr Burnshaw and the Statue” from *Owl’s Clover* (152-8) on Bb

Albert Gelpi, “Stevens and Williams: The Epistemology of Modernism” (3-23) on Bb

Michael Szalay, “Wallace Stevens and the Invention of Social Security” (49-74) on Bb

Oct 13 – Fall Break

Oct 20 -- Elizabeth Bishop (1911-1979)

Bishop, *Complete Poems*: “The Map” (3), “The Imaginary Iceberg” (4), “Large Bad Picture” (11-12), “The Weed” (20), “The Monument” (23-5), “Quai d’Orléans” (28), “Sleeping Standing Up” (30), “Cirque d’Hiver” (31), “Roosters” (35-39), “The Fish” (42-4), “Over 2,000 Illustrations and a Complete Concordance” (57-9), “At the Fishhouses” (64-6), “Brazil, January 1, 1502” (91-2), “Questions of Travel” (93-4), “First Death in Nova Scotia” (125-6), “Filling Station” (127-8), “Visits to St. Elizabeth” (133-5), “In the Waiting Room” (159-61), “Crusoe in England” (162-6), “12 O’clock News” (174-5), “Poem” (176-7), “One Art” (178)

Bishop, “In Prison” (582-90) on Bb

Andre Bréton, “First Manifesto of Surrealism” (432-9) on Bb

James Longenbach, “Elizabeth Bishop and the Story of Postmodernism” (469-84) on Bb

Guy Rotella, “Elizabeth Bishop, ‘The Monument’” (17-40), on Bb

[Optional: paintings by Bishop, on Bb]

Oct 27 -- Langston Hughes (1902-1967)

Hughes, *Collected Poems*: “The Negro Speaks of Rivers” (23), “Danse Africaine” (28), “Jazzonia” (34), “Dream Variations” (40), “Negro Dancers” (44), “I, Too” (46), “The Weary Blues” (50), “Homesick Blues” (72), “Brass Spittoons” (86), “Cat and the Saxophone” (89), “Lenox Avenue: Midnight” (92), “Afro-American Fragment” (129), “Goodbye, Christ” (166-7), “Cubes” (175-6), “Merry-Go-Round” (240), “Madam and Her Madam” (285), “Madam’s Past History” (301), “Madam’s Calling Cards” (301-2), “Madam and the Census Man” (355-6), *Montage of a Dream Deferred* (387-429)

George Schuyler, “Negro Art Hokum” and Hughes’s response to Schuyler, “The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain” (13-6, 31-6) on Bb

David Chinitz, “Rejuvenation through Joy: Langston Hughes, Primitivism, and Jazz” (60-78) on Bb

John Lowney, “Langston Hughes and the ‘Nonsense’ of Bebop” (357-85) on Bb

Nov 3 -- Charles Olson (1910-1970)

Olson, *Selected Poems*: “La Chute” (4), “The Kingfishers” (5-12), “In Cold Hell, in Thicket” (15-21), “Merce of Egypt” (51-3), “As the Dead Prey Upon Us” (72-80), “The Lamp” (96), “As snow lies on the hill...” (97), “Maximus, to himself” (101-3), “The Twist” (104-109), “John Burke” (128-131), “Maximus to Gloucester, Letter 27 [withheld]” (147-9), “Maximus Letter # whatever” (150-1), “A Later Note on Letter #15” (155), “West Gloucester” (176-7), “Maximus of Gloucester” (192), “I have been an ability – a machine...” (193-9).

Olson, “Projective Verse”, “Canto One Hundred and One” on Bb

Martin Duberman, “A New Black Mountain” from *Black Mountain: Explorations in Community* (368-79) on Bb

Art: work by Robert Rauschenberg on Bb

Excerpts from George Butterick, *Guide to the Maximus poems* (82-3, 124-32, 199-203, 262-4, 524, 620-6) on Bb

Nov 10 -- John Ashbery (1927--)

Ashbery, *Selected Poems*: “The Instruction Manual” (5-8), “The Picture of Little J. A. in a Prospect of Flowers” (12-3), “Illustration” (17-8), “The Painter” (20-1), “Rivers and Mountains” (49-51), “Into the Dusk-Charged Air” (54-8), “The Recent Past” (61), “Soonest Mended” (87-9), “Farm Implements and Rutabagas in a Landscape” (105-6), “Worsening Situation” (165), “Forties Flick” (166), “Mixed Feelings” (182-3), “Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror” (188-204), “Paradoxes and Oxymorons” (283), “The Lonedale Operator” (314-5).

Ashbery, “Poetical Space”, “The Heritage of Dada and Surrealism” and “The Invisible Avant-Garde”, “Parmigianino” on Bb.

Richard Stamelman, “Critical Reflections: Poetry and Art Criticism in Ashbery’s ‘Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror’” (607-630) on Bb

Stephen Paul Miller, “‘Self-Portrait in a Convex Mirror,’ the Watergate Affair, and Johns’s Crosshatch Paintings: Surveillance and Reality-Testing in the Mid-Seventies” (84-115) on Bb

Nov 17 -- Víctor Hernández Cruz (1949--)

Cruz, *Maraca*: “Today is a Day of Great Joy” (26), “African Things” (65), “The Man Who Came to the Last Floor” (68-73), “New York Potpourri” (75-7), “[You have pretty legs]” (84-5), “[It is the year 1125]” (86), “Matterative” (100-2), “by lingual wholes” (111), “Art-This” (113-4), “Mountain Building” (121-2), “Red Means” (137), “Snaps of Immigration” (138-9), “New/Aguas Buenas/ Jersey” (140-3), “Problems with Hurricanes” (148), “An Essay on William Carlos Williams” (149), “Areyto” (150-3), “El Poema de lo Reverso” (155), “Dimensions of a Linguist” (160), “Red Beans” (161), “Suite” (162-4), “White Table” (173-5), “It’s Miller Time” (200-3), “Mesa Blanca” (204-213), “Time Zones” (239-41).

Cruz, “Mountains in the North: Hispanic Writing in the U.S.A”, “Celebrating Puerto Rican Style,” and “The Bolero of the Red Translation” on Bb

Carmelo Esterrich, “Home and the Ruins of Language: Víctor Hernández Cruz and Miguel Algarín's Nuyorican Poetry” (43-56) on Bb

Walter Benn Michaels, “Partez au vert/ Go on the green” (41-51) on Bb

Nov 24 – Individual meetings reporting on paper and presentation progress in lieu of seminar. Each student will arrange to meet with me sometime between Nov. 17 and Nov. 24.

Dec 1 -- Presentations and conclusions

Friday, December 12 – final papers due by noon