ENG 727: Seminar in Literary Criticism
Defenses of Poetry

Spring 2013
Tuesday 6:30 - 9:00 pm
Kuy 308
Instructor: John Zuern, UHM Department of English
zuern@hawaii.edu
956-3019
Office: Kuykendall 219
Office Hours:
TR 1:30-3:00
and by appointment
(can also meet in Laulima Chat)

Objectives
In this seminar we will examine a range of influential appeals on behalf of the moral, social, and political value of literature against the backdrop of the present-day crisis in literary education at American universities. Combining classic works with materials published in the last decade, the course aims to give students a detailed knowledge of pro-poetry arguments from the past while building their awareness of the institutional and disciplinary environments in which “poetry” is currently struggling to survive in downsizing and corporatizing institutions of higher education. Our overall goal will be to identify theoretical and rhetorical strategies not only for defending poetry but also for (re)conceptualizing literary learning both within and beyond the precincts of the traditional university. In the context of this class, “poetry” will sometimes serve as a stand-in for poiesis in general, and sometimes it will designate a particular mode of creative writing distinct from fiction, creative non-fiction, and drama—that is, “poetry.”

Required Texts
All books are available at Revolution Books, 2626 S King St # 201 (944-3106).


Tanke, Joseph and Colin McQuillan, eds. The Bloomsbury Anthology of Aesthetics. (Continuum 2012). 1441138269

The course reader is available at Marketing and Publishing Services (MaPS), 1778 University Avenue, Castle Memorial Annex (956-4969).

Assignments
Your grade for this class will be based on your performance on the following assignments:

**Manifesto** (no more than 2 pages) 20%
The aim of this assignment is to compel you to articulate the key concepts and principles that guide your critical approach to literature and/or your creative practice as a poet. Your statement must take the form of two-page manifesto in which your fundamental concepts are clearly identified, defined, and defended. You may refer to other writers and theorists, but you aren’t required to do so. I will provide examples of manifestos in advance of the first roundtable discussion.
In-class Roundtable Contribution (no more than 5 minutes + discussion period) 15%
You will read/perform your manifesto aloud in class with the aim of inciting discussion, and then you will take part in a roundtable conversation with other seminar participants, who will also have read their manifestos on that evening. The goal of this conversation is to constructively challenge your classmate's ideas and refine your own thinking through dialogue with others.

Paper Abstract (no more than 500 words) 15%
This abstract should encapsulate the argument of your final paper and explain the methodology you are applying. Your abstract should be polished enough to send to the organizer of a conference or the editor of a collection. I will provide examples of abstracts in advance of the due date for this assignment.

You are required to submit a draft of this assignment.

Term Paper (no less than 20 and no more than 30 pages) 50%
This paper should be a formal critical discussion of any issue related to the class theme, directed at a scholarly audience, or a position paper aimed at a broader (or differently specific) audience. In either case, you need to incorporate references to both literary and philosophical/theoretical texts. I will also entertain poetic and mixed-genre projects if they are rigorously conceived and convincingly defended.

You have the option of submitting a draft of this paper to me. I will need to get a draft before April 9 in order to give you sufficient time to revise based on my feedback.

All written assignments need to be uploaded as MS Word files to your Drop Boxes in the Laulima system. Let me know if you have any trouble with the Laulima site. I will return comments to you using Word's Track Changes feature.

Grading
All assignments are due by class time on the day on which they appear in the schedule. You must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this class. I will not read drafts that are submitted more than two days past the deadline for drafts.

I will assign grades based on the +/- system. I will use the following values to compute your final grades:

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In compliance with university policy, I will give incompletes only in cases of documented medical or family emergencies.
**Attendance**
I expect that you will attend seminar meetings regularly and on time. More than three (4) unexcused absences from will result in a failing grade for the class. If circumstances arise that make it difficult for you to attend discussion sessions or to complete your assigned work, please inform me immediately. Don’t wait until the end of the semester, when it will be harder to make accommodations.

**Conduct**
Your relationships with your classmates and with me are governed by the Student Conduct Code, which also applies in all the online environments we will be using this semester.

If you feel that the conduct of another student in the class is interfering with your ability to work productively, please speak with me about the problem immediately. If my conduct is causing you problems, contact the Associate Chair in the Department of English.

**Academic Integrity**
You must adhere to the university’s standards of academic integrity as stated in the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Student Conduct Code:

Because UHM is an academic community with high professional standards, its teaching, research, and service purposes are seriously disrupted and subverted by academic dishonesty. Such dishonesty includes cheating and plagiarism as defined below. Ignorance of these definitions will not provide an excuse for acts of academic dishonesty.

1. Cheating includes but is not limited to giving or receiving unauthorized assistance during an examination; obtaining unauthorized information about an examination before it is given; submitting another’s work as one’s own; using prohibited sources of information during an examination; fabricating or falsifying data in experiments and other research; altering the record of any grade; altering answers after an examination has been submitted; falsifying any official University record; or misrepresenting of facts in order to obtain exemptions from course requirements.

2. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting, in fulfillment of an academic requirement, any work that has been copied in whole or in part from another individual’s work without attributing that borrowed portion to the individual; neglecting to identify as a quotation another’s idea and particular phrasing that was not assimilated into the student’s language and style or paraphrasing a passage so that the reader is misled as to the source; submitting the same written or oral or artistic material in more than one course without obtaining authorization from the instructors involved; or “drylabbing,” which includes obtaining and using experimental data and laboratory write-ups from other sections of a course or from previous terms. (UHM Student Conduct Code).

**Contacting Me**
Email is the best way to reach me. My address is zuern@hawaii.edu. I don’t usually respond to email after 6:00 pm on weekdays or on weekends.

During my office hours (MW 1:30 - 3:00), you can reach me by phone at 956-3019. Outside those times I may not answer, but you can leave me a voicemail message.
Schedule
Subject to change. You should complete the reading for the day on which it is assigned. I recommend reading the texts in the order in which I list them.

BAA = The Bloomsbury Anthology of Aesthetics (unless otherwise indicated, read the entire text included in the anthology)

NAMCP = The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry

Week 1
Tuesday, January 8
Introduction to the course

Week 2
Tuesday, January 15
selections from Handbook of Literature for the Elementary Schools of North Dakota (packet)
Plato, selections from Republic (BAA)
Aristotle, selections from Poetics (BAA, but read the whole Poetics if you haven’t already; you can find a link to an online edition in the Resources section of the class Laulima site)
Nehamas, “An Essay on Beauty and Judgment” (BAA)
Parini, selections from Why Poetry Matters (packet)
Ammons, “Small Song” (NAMCP 295)
Atwood, “[You Fit Into Me]” (NAMCP 767)
Rukeyser, “Poem” (NAMCP 82)
Thomas, “In My Craft or Sullen Art” (NAMCP 110)
Bernstein, from “The Lives of the Toll Takers” and “Have Pen, Will Travel” (NAMCP 911 and 914)
Dove, “Parsley” (NAMCP 979)

Week 3
Tuesday, January 22
Horace, “Art of Poetry” (packet)
Longinus, selections from On the Sublime (BAA)
LaCapra, “The University in Ruins?” (packet)

Week 4
Tuesday, January 29
Sidney, An Apologie for Poesie (packet)
Nussbaum, selections from Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities (packet)
Lewalski, “How Poetry Moves Readers: Sidney, Spenser, and Milton.” University of Toronto Quarterly 80.3 (Summer 2011): 756-768. (Project Muse; read the first 4-5 pages)
Ginsberg, “Howl” (NAMCP 337)
Gibson, “I Do (Gay [Queer] Marriage Poem)” (link in Laulima Resources)
Helela, “Ha” (link in Laulima Resources)
Helela and Tafolo, “Welcome to Hawai’i” (link in Laulima Resources)
Osorio, Wong, Giles, and Kotrys, “Kaona” (link in Laulima Resources)
Week 5
Tuesday, February 5
Gottsched, selections from An Attempt at a Critical Poetics for the Germans (BAA)
Burke, selections from A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (BAA)
Lessing, Laocoon (BAA)
Merrill, “b o d y” (NAMCP 320)
O’Hara, “Why I Am Not a Painter” (NAMCP 369)
Kendall, “Faith” (link in Laulima Resources)
Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, “Dakota” (link in Laulima Resources)
Buchanan, “The Mandrake Vehicles” (link in Laulima Resources)
Nelson, “Game, Game, Game, and Again Game” (link in Laulima Resources)

Week 6
Tuesday, February 12
Kant, selections from Critique of Judgment (BAA)
Dickey, “The Sheep Child” (NAMCP 238)

Week 7
Tuesday, February 19
Schiller, selections from On the Aesthetic Education of Man (BAA)
de Staël, selections from On Germany (link in Laulima Resources; read pages 179-183; 193-197)
Shelley, A Defence of Poetry (link in Laulima Resources)

Week 8
Tuesday, February 26
Nietzsche, selections from The Birth of Tragedy and The Will to Power as Art (BAA)
Burke, “Literature as Equipment for Living” (packet)
Rich, “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision” (NAMCP 1086)
Koch, “One Train May Hide Another” (NAMCP 267)

Week 9
Tuesday, March 5
Marcuse, selections from The Aesthetic Dimension (BAA)
Ngugi, “Literature and Society” (packet)
Dalton, “Poetry and Militancy in Latin America” (packet)
Rich, “I Happen to Think Poetry Makes a Huge Difference” (link in Laulima Resources)
Walcott, “A Far Cry From Africa” (NAMCP 496)
Boland, “The Pomegranate” (NAMCP 851)
Komunyakka, “Starlight Scope Myopia” (NAMCP 859)
Silko, “Prayer to the Pacific” and “Toe’osh: A Laguna Pueblo Coyote Story” (NAMCP 884 and 885)
Forché, “The Memory of Elena” and “The Colonel” (NAMCP 916 and 918)

Week 10
Tuesday, March 12
Showalter, “Teaching Literature in Dark Times” (packet)
Newfield, “The Blame-Academic Crowd: Culture War after 9/11” (packet)
Spivak, “Terror: A Speech after 9/11” (packet)

Week 11
Tuesday, March 19
Discussion of individual projects
DUE: draft of abstract for final paper
Week 12
Tuesday, March 26
Spring Break

Week 13
Tuesday, April 2
Bennett, “Pass Fi White” (NAMCP 169)
Bennett, “Jamaica Language” (NAMCP 1110)
Brathwaite, “Wings of a Dove” and “Calypso” (NAMCP 544-549)
Brathwaite, from History of the Voice (handout)
Ramanujan, “Self-Portrait,” “Elements of Composition,” and Alien” (NAMCP 440-442)
Ramanujan, selection from “Where Mirrors are Windows: Toward an Anthology of Reflections”
(WAMCP 1115)
Walcott, “The Sea is History” (NAMCP 500-502)
Walcott, “The Antilles: Fragments of Epic Memory” (NAMCP 1120)

Week 14
Tuesday, April 9
Eagleton, How to Read a Poem, chapters 2-5
Wright, “Saint Judas” and “A Centenary Ode: Inscribed to Little Crow, Leader of the Sioux Rebellion in
Minnesota, 1862” (NAMCP 416 and 421)
Gunn, “The Missing” (NAMCP 487)
Doty, “Homo Will Not Inherit” and “The Embrace” (NAMCP 995 and 998)
Chin, “Chinese Quatrains (The Woman in Tomb 44)” (NAMCP 1017)
Cervantes, “The Body as Braille” and “Poema para los Californios Muertos” (NAMCP 1011 and 1012)

DUE: final version of abstract for final paper
draft of final paper (optional)

Week 15
Tuesday, April 16
Bernstein, “Semblance” (NAMCP 1112)
Rancière, “The Aesthetic Revolution and Its Outcomes” (BAA) (review your notes on Kant and Schiller)
Boykoff and Sand, Landscapes of Dissent: Guerilla Poetry & Public Space

Week 16
Tuesday, April 23
Gioia, “Can Poetry Matter?” (packet)
Roche, selection from Why Literature Matters in the 21st Century, Chapter 1 (1-13; e-Book in Hamilton)
Perloff, “In Defense of Poetry” (link in Laulima Resources)
Vendler, “Are These the Poems to Remember?” (link in Laulima Resources)
Dove, “Defending an Anthology” (link in Laulima Resources)
Simpson, “American Poetry” (NAMCP 246)

Week 17
Friday, April 30
Wrap-up

DUE: final paper