**THE NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS**

**FACULTY OF ENGLISH STUDIES**

**American Poetry**

4th semester 2022-23

Dr. Christina Dokou

Section «Κασ-Ο» Section «Α-Καρ»

Mondays, 15:00-17:00, Room 823 Wednesdays, 9:00-11:00, Room 434

E-class: <https://eclass.uoa.gr/courses/ENL518/>

Office Hours: Mondays 14:00-15:00, and Wednesdays 11:30-12:30, Office 703

This course is designed as **a general overview of poetry written in the United States of America, s**tarting with the 17th century onward. The course aims to point at the historical and cultural permutations of form and content in poetry in the U.S., its major representatives, and the way this poetry expresses in itself the cultural markers of the American nation.

Although the instructor will provide introductory and analytical lectures for each item and period, **your strong participation is** **indispensable** to this course. You should come to class each week having read the assigned poems and relevant biographical information so that you are prepared to discuss them.

You may also wish to try for a **2-point extra-credit paper**, consisting of a 6-8-page research assignment on one of the themes suggested below. Papers should use Times New Roman 12-pt. font, and 1.5 spacing. You must have at least five (5) items of bibliography: only credible sources (articles from JSTOR and Project MUSE, available through the University VPN service; googlebooks; library books; published articles in journals or reprinted in online collections; encyclopedia and Wikipedia listings; reviews from credible poetry and newspaper sites) should be consulted. You MUST also provide, with the final draft, copies of the first pages of all the entries in your “Works Cited” list in a unified PDF. Please follow the bibliography and citation format of the *MLA Style Manual* (instructions may be found online at “The Owl at Purdue” website at <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/mla_formatting_and_style_guide.html> ). All stages of the paper-writing process MUST be completed before you hand in the final draft. Papers are due on the day of the final exam.

Should any problems arise, you are encouraged to contact the instructor immediately.

**Course Text**: The poems are on the “Weekly Poems” file on e-class. Auxiliary material is available on my website at <http://users.uoa.gr/~cdokou>. The PowerPoints with the outlines of each class will be uploaded on e-class after each session.

**Course Outline**

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| **Date (Mon/Wed)** | **Readings Due** |
| March 6/ 1 | Introduction--The origins of “American” poetry--major phases. |
| March 13/ 15 | Bradstreet, “To My Dear and Loving Husband,” “In Memory of...Elizabeth Bradstreet”; Wheatley, “On Being Brought from Africa to America” |
| March 20/22 | Poe, “The Raven,” “Helen” |
| March 27/29 | Whitman, From *Song of Myself,* parts 1-13 |
| April 3/ 5 | Dickinson, poems 49, 185, 249, 280, 324, 712 |
| April 24/ 26 | Frost, “After Apple Picking”; Sandburg, “Chicago”; EXTRA CREDIT THESIS DUE |
| April 28 make up class/ May 3 | Stevens, “Sunday Morning”; Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow,” “This Is Just to Say” |
| May 8/ 10 | Lecture by Erasmus+ guest professor Ana Sofia Bessa Carvalho, U. of Minho |
| May 15/ 17 | Pound, “A Pact,” “In a Station of the Metro”; Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”; Bishop, “The Fish” |
| May 22/ 24 | Hughes, “The Negro Speaks of Rivers”; Gwendolyn Brooks, “We Real Cool”; EXTRA CREDIT BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE |
| May 29/ 31 | Plath, “Daddy”; Ginsberg, “Howl” |
| June 2 make up class /7 | Rich, “Diving into the Wreck”; Smith, “the bullet was a girl” |
| Exam Day | COMPLETE PAPER DUE |

**Possible Extra Credit Themes**:

* Desperate Housewives: Anne Sexton’s “Her Kind” and Adrienne Rich’s “Aunt Jennifer’s Tigers”
* Americanizing European Tradition: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Robert Duncan.
* Transcendentalism Now: The Relation with American Nature in Gary Snyder and Mary Oliver.
* 50 Shades of Black: The Different Voices of Claude McKay, Audre Lorde, Honoree Fanonne Jeffers
* Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman’s Views on Children and Childhood.
* The Relation between Picture and Poetry: Cathy Song’s “Beauty and Sadness” and William Carlos Williams’s “Portrait of a Lady”
* Ecocritical Poetics: Gary Snyder and Mary Oliver
* American Satire: Anne Sexton’s “Her Kind” and Amiri Baraka’s “Dope”
* Dead Presidents: Walt Whitman’s “O Captain! My Captain!” and Wendell Berry’s “November 26, 1963”
* The Face of America: Ginsberg’s “America” versus Angelou’s “On the Pulse of Morning”

# Secondary Readings

To help you in your understanding of American Fiction matters, you may refer to:

1. My course website, at <http://users.uoa.gr/~cdokou>, where you will find brief periodization charts for American history, electronic copies of any handouts given in class, and sundry material
2. The American Studies Resource Portal at <http://my.enl.auth.gr/arsp>.
3. The United States Embassy Information Resource Center, Vassilissis Sophias 91, tel: 2106422214/708, email: [ircathens@usembassy.gr](mailto:ircathens@usembassy.gr)
4. The “Hom(ag)e in Translation” for American Poetry, a work in progress hosted by our Department of English at NKUA at <http://americanpoetry.enl.uoa.gr>
5. the following books at the Library (to name just a few):

Bennett, Paula. *My Life a Loaded Gun: Dickinson, Plath, Rich, and Female Creativity*. 1990.

Bercovitch, Sacvan, ed. *Cambridge History of American Literature*. 2006.

Bloom, Harold. *A Map of Misreading*. 1980.

Bly, Robert. *American Poetry: Wildness and Domesticity*. 1991.

Brooks, Cleanth, John Thibaut Purser, and Robert Penn Warren, eds. *An Approach to Literature: A Collection of Prose and Verse with Analyses and Discussions*. 1944.

Emery, Mary Lou. *Modernism, the Visual, and Caribbean Literature*. Cambridge UP, 2007.

Farr, Judith. *The Passion of Emily Dickinson*. 1992.

Feidelson, Charles, Jr. *Symbolism and American Literature*. 1953.

Frye, Northrop. *Fables of Identity: Studies in Poetic Mythology*. 1986.

Fuller, Edmund, and B. Jo Kinnick. *Adventures in American Literature*. 1963.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism*. 1989.

Gelpi, Albert. *The Tenth Muse: The Psyche of the American Poet*. 1991.

Georgoudaki, Ekaterini. *Race, Gender and Class Perspectives in the Works of Maya Angelou, Gwendolyn Brooks, Rita Dove, Nikki Giovanni, and Audre Lorde*. 1991.

Gross, Seymour L. *Images of the Negro in American Literature*. 1966.

Kennedy, X. J., and Dana Gioia, eds. *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*. 1999.

Killingsworth, M. Jimmie. *The Cambridge Introduction to Walt Whitman*. 2007.

Magill, Frank N. *Critical Survey of Poetry*. 1982.

Parini, Jay, et al. *The Columbia History of American Poetry*. 1993.

Schwartz, Sanford. *The Matrix of Modernism: Pound, Eliot, and Early Twentieth-Century Thought.* 1985.

Pearce, Roy Harvey. *The Continuity of American Poetry*. 1961.

Silliman, Ron, ed. *In the American Tree: Language, Realism, Poetry*. 1986.

Spender, Stephen, and Donald Hall, eds. *The Concise Encyclopedia of English and American Poets and Poetry*. 1970.

Spiller, Robert E, et al. *Literary History of the United States*. 1963.

Vendler, Helen. *Voices and Visions: The Poet in America*. 1987.

Von Hallberg, Robert. *American Poetry and Culture, 1945-1980*. 1985.

Wilson, Raymond Jackson. *Figures of Speech: American Writers and the Literary Marketplace, From Benjamin Franklin to Emily Dickinson*. 1989.

Yorke, Liz. *Impertinent Voices: Subversive Strategies in Contemporary Women’s Poetry*.

Ziff, Larzer. *Literary Democracy: The Declaration of Cultural Independence in America*. 1982.