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ENLT 323.01: Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens

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Thursday: 2:10-3:35;
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Autumn

English 323: Twentieth-Century American Poetry: Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens

Texts:

Frost, Robert. *Frost: Collected Poems, Prose, & Plays* (Library of America)
Eliot, T. S. *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (Penguin)
Eliot, T. S. *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode (Harcourt Brace & Company)
Eliot, T. S. *Four Quartets* (Harcourt Brace & Company)
Moore, Marianne. *Complete Poems of Marianne Moore* (Penguin)
Stevens, Wallace. *Collected Poetry & Prose* (Library of America) or *The Palm at the End of the Mind: Selected Poems and a Play*. Ed. Holly Stevens (Vintage)

Students may be required to purchase, or acquire, additional texts or course packets.

Plan:

The purpose of this course is to introduce the student to four of the most prominent twentieth-century American poets: Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Marianne Moore, and Wallace Stevens. By limiting ourselves to the study of just four poets, the hope is that we will be able to dwell on their accomplishments in a more spacious manner than the typical survey course generally allows. The four are each also identified with that moment—the first half of the twentieth century—when American poetry appeared to make its mark most strongly felt upon the larger literary consciousness. In part, this was due to the strong connection between poets such as Eliot, Moore and Stevens with Modernism. And in larger part, it was due simply to the extraordinariness of their individual talents. As we read and examine their work (poetry, criticism and, perhaps, drama), we will make an effort not only to understand the precise nature of such individual talents, but we will also attempt to understand them vis-à-vis one another, and vis-à-vis the historical (literary and otherwise) context. The hope is that we will begin to read these poets more freshly, escaping, for the moment, the critical clichés that have grown around them.

The midterm examination will follow our discussions of Frost and Eliot, and will take place during one of our regular class meetings. The final examination, covering

material from the midpoint onward, will be Tuesday, December 19th, during the hours of 3:20-5:20.

Requirements:

Participation in class discussions is expected and attendance is mandatory. You can anticipate numerous quizzes upon the readings, including readings that may be named at a later date. Missed quizzes cannot be made up. Also, you will be asked to participate in a small group that will lead the larger class in one of the assigned readings. Your grade, meanwhile, will be based upon a term paper (25%), a mid-term examination (25%), a final examination (25%), and attendance and participation (group work and quiz grades included) (25%). Regarding attendance, you are permitted three absences without penalty; each subsequent absence will result in a subtraction of five points from the twenty-five points allocated to the participation and attendance portion of your grade (e.g., 25% to 20% for the fourth absence, 20% to 15% for the fifth absence and so forth). Late arrivals are more than frowned upon, and if you need, for some good reason, to leave class early, you are required to notify me ahead of time; otherwise, an early departure will count as an absence from class.