

Spring 2-1-2018

CRWR 515.01: Traditional Prosody

Prageeta Sharma

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CRWR 515: Traditional Prosody

Thursday 3:30-6:20pm

Room:

SS 340

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Office:

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Office Hours:

Wed. 3:10-5pm or by appointment

“All metaphors are lies which pass for truths.”

--Scholars Who Teach Edward B. Partridge

“*Indeterminacy*, we should note, is not the same thing as vagueness.” The Poetics of Indeterminacy: Rimbaud to Cage Marjorie Perloff

Course Description: Traditional Prosody: Approaches to the Poem & Contemporary Poetics

Tradition is a curious word in the arts. While it is indeed “the handing down of statements, beliefs, legends, customs, information, etc., from generation to generation, especially by word of mouth or by practice,” in poetry it can be both liberating and a burden. I, myself, both wince at it and claim it when I can. But it is dangerous when poetry and the poetry-elite hock tradition to defend a narrow realm of poetry-making; because of this inevitable tension new traditions grow around the established, thankfully.

Consequently, I like thinking about prosody's purpose in 20th and 21st century poetry; this course will examine: How we as graduate poets explore our sense of purpose and poetics in relation to the big T of Tradition and the big P in prosody. Rather than putting a course together solely with foundations in poetics of form and prosody, I thought I'd build a course that carries us into both form and poetry criticism; therefore, this course is going to examine some of the rich traditions that make up the history of prosody and that have informed our idea of formalism, experimentalism, and non-traditionalist poetry today. Additionally, we will broaden the context of what tradition means today by reading essential works in poetics that have marked significant changes, productivity, and movements in poetry over many centuries but particularly the last three.

To that end we will explore meter, scansion, the Sonnet, the Sestina, the Ghazal, and many traditional forms of poetry thereby arriving at working definitions of narrative, lyric, free verse and language-centered poetry of the twentieth and twenty-first century, which now contribute to our ideas of formalism and tradition.

Books:

An Exaltation of Forms: Contemporary Poets Celebrate the Diversity of Their Art Edited by Annie Finch & Kathrine Varnes

Resources:

-<http://www4.ncsu.edu/unity/users/m/morillo/public/prosody1.htm>

-Handout (compiled by Prageeta Sharma and sent out via PDF)

-The New American Poetry, edited by Donald Allen PDF

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_poetry_groups_and_movements

Grading Policy

35% in class participation, 20% weekly assignments/responses (on time!) 20% midsemester portfolio and 25% final manuscript. I expect full participation and will allow for only one absence.*

***Policy on absences and lateness:**

The standard policy is that no more than two absences in a fourteen week term may result in a grade of "no-credit." Please arrive on time for class and stay until dismissal. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If there is an emergency please speak to me about it as soon as you can.

Preferred Name & Preferred Gender Pronouns

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

1/25/ 2018: Overview & “Poem Greatness”

Overview of syllabus & literary traditions

Bring a “great poem” to class. Discussion of period, context, and movements

Homework: Memorizing and recitation of “great poem”

2/1/2018: Movements & Foundational Form

Discussion of Lyric poem (varieties of lyric poem), Narrative Poem, and the Heroic Ode

Discussion of Poetry Movements

Exercise: pick two movements from which you generate form and content.

2/08/2018: 20th Century Poetics

Discussion of binaries, experiments, and formalism

Exploring essays from Perloff, Lazer, and other handouts (distributed 2/1)

Homework: Read An Exaltation of Forms: First section on meter.

2/16/2018: Meter & Scansion

Visitor Poet Ken White.

Recite poem and discuss meter, syllabic stress, and form.

Meter, scansion, and feet

Homework: Read Section 2 of An Exaltation of Forms (Stanzas)

2/22/2018: Sonnet & Ghazal

Write a love or anti-love sonnet: Petrarchan or Elizabethan or a Ghazal. Discussion of technique of Sonnet and Sonnet form and Ghazal; Presentations on the Sonnet from form origination to contemporary and/or the Ghazal.

Read Section 3 of An Exaltation of Forms (Received Forms) We’ll discuss.

3/1/2018: Villanelle

Jean Passerat, Dylan Thomas, Sylvia Plath, Elizabeth Bishop, Theodore Roethke, and others will be discussed. Handout on the Villanelle

Recitation and development of Villanelle

3/8/2018: LABOR, THEORY, AND FREE-VERSE

Ideas of labor in craft and free-verse: Discussion of shifts and changes in the 20th century landscape of poetics and poetry. Examples: Rae Armantraut, Mei-Mei Berssenbrugge, Seamus Heaney, Jorie Graham, Richard Howard, Susan Howe, George Oppen, Jena Osman, Adrienne Rich, and others.

Read and present on An Exaltation of Forms on Section 4 from (Principles for Formal Experimentation)

3/15/2018: Poetry Camps and Anthologies

The prosody and anthologies of the “Donalds” (and not 45!): Donald Hall vs. Donald Allen

We will discuss how these anthologies represented the divergent trends in poetry and poetics.

Handout will be circulated before class. Analysis of 10 poems from each anthology. Plus a discussion of introductions and Allen’s inclusion of poetics statements.

3/22/2018: Manifesto & Poetic Statement

Poem examining the politics of free verse: Write a manifesto and a poem that is drawn out of the instructional manifesto. (We will have read Symbolist Manifestos, Negritude, Amiri Baraka, Frank O’Hara, Laura Riding Jackson, Audre Lorde, Lorine Niedecker, Occupy, and others)

3/29/2018: Spring Break

Read over break: Audre Lorde handout (written by poet Divya Victor)

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v6ns8inyxRjLOp2wxRu1BRiRx481Lr53NhWOPljzljE/edit>

4/05/2018: Politics & Translation

Preparation for visiting writer Don Mee Choi

Writing the political poem. Translating the poem. Presentations on either or both.

4/12/2018: Visitor/Workshops

Guest Poet: Don Mee Choi

Recitation and imitation of a Choi poem.

4/19/2018: Guest: David Moore (on Poetry & Richard O’Moore)

4/26/2018: Reflection: Experimentalism and Its Discontents

Where are we with the Avant-Garde today? What is the currency of traditional Prosody?

5/3/2018: Presentation

Present on your favorite poetic form: Pantoum, Ghazal, Sestina, sound, cut-up, etc. Define its role in poetry today.

5/10/2018: Reflection

Last class: Reading, gathering, and reflection

