Description: In the twentieth century, everything changed, as far as poetry is concerned. All the familiar assumptions about what poetry looked and sounded like, what topics it could address, what audience it was for and what its purposes were, came under extreme pressure. The combined pressure of modernity – the new, transformative experiences that people underwent in the twentieth century – and modernism – the new forms and styles devised by twentieth-century writers and artists – bent poetry out of shape, and it has never fully returned to its old shapes, down to the present. For regular readers of poetry or those of you who aspire to write it, whether you prefer modernist poetry or the kinds of poems that modernism threatened to sweep away, this course is indispensable; for those who struggle to make sense of poetry or to get any pleasure from it at all, this could be your gateway to fuller appreciation. Topics will include the conventions of poetry at the beginning of the twentieth century; the breakthrough to free-verse and the theory and practice of Imagism; the modernist preference for difficult poetry, including both rationally difficult poetry and the irrationally difficult kind (including Dada and Surrealism); and the openness of poetry to the world, including dossier poems such as Eliot’s *The Waste Land* and other kinds of “wide-open” poems from Apollinaire and Cendrars at the beginning of the twentieth century to Ginsberg, O’Hara and Ashbery near the end.

Readings: The main text will be the *Oxford Anthology of Modern American Poetry*, edited by Cary Nelson, supplemented by selected British poems and foreign-language poems in translation, available on Carmen. Carmen texts are marked with an asterisk (*). Several readings can be found on the Modern American Poetry (MAP) web-site:

[http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets.htm](http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets.htm)

This website is a valuable resource for preparing for class, researching papers, etc.; make use of it!

Participation: You will of course be expected to read and think about all the poems assigned for any given day. But in addition, for each class meeting you should also choose one particular poem (or one section of a longer poem) from the day’s readings to give special attention to. You should be prepared 1) to read that poem aloud, if called on to do so, and 2) to say briefly what particularly interested you about that poem.

Written assignments: Two short (3-5 page) papers, each worth 30% of the final grade; a final paper (7-10 pages), worth 40% of the final grade.

Three ways to earn extra credit:

1) **Submit one or more original poems of your own that imitate specific poems from the syllabus.** Poems should also be accompanied by a short paragraph (3 to 5 sentences) pointing out the ways in which they imitate the poems they are modeled on.

2) **Attend one or more poetry readings.** Document the event: if there is a flier or handout, submit it, listing on the back the poet(s) you heard and (as best you can) the titles of the poem(s) he/she/they read. In the absence of a flier or handout, note this information on some other piece of paper, and submit that.

3) **Poem-a-Day:** Keep and submit a poetry log in which you list at least one poem not on our syllabus that you read independently for every day of the semester – or at any rate for five out of every seven days (you will be allowed to miss some days and still earn extra credit). Make sure to specify: author, title, source (including whether print or online).
## Schedule of readings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Reading</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan  8</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Inherited Forms</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td><em>Hardy</em>: Neutral Tones; The Darkling Thrush; <em>Yeats</em>: The Lake Isle of Innisfree; The Wild Swans at Coole; <em>Robinson</em>: Richard Cory; Miniver Cheevy; <em>Frost</em>: The Road Not Taken; Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening; <em>McKay</em>: The Tropics in New York</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td><strong>Blank verse</strong></td>
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<td><em>Frost</em>: Mending Wall; Home Burial; Birches; The Witch of Coøs; “Out, out--” (MAP website)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td><strong>Sonnets</strong></td>
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<td><em>Yeats</em>: Leda and the Swan; <em>Frost</em>: The Oven Bird; Design; <em>McKay</em>: all except The Tropics in New York; <em>Millay</em>: I, Being Born a Woman …; Love is not blind; Oh, oh, you will be sorry …; <em>cummings</em>: “next to of course god america i”</td>
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<td><strong>New Forms (1): Free Verse</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td><em>Whitman</em>: “Song of Myself” 1-2, 5-17, 24, 31-33, 47, 51-52 (MAP website)</td>
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<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td><em>Masters</em>: all; <em>Johnson</em>: The Creation; <em>Amy Lowell</em>: September 1918; <em>Sandburg</em>: Chicago; Cool Tombs; Grass; <em>Pound</em>: A Pact; <em>Hughes</em>: Negro; The Negro Speaks of Rivers; <em>Jeffers</em>: all; <em>Lawrence</em>: Snake; Swan; Bavarian Gentians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td><em>Pound</em>, Cathay (except “The Seafarer”)</td>
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<td><a href="http://archive.org/stream/cathayezrapound00pounrich#page/n9/mode/2up">http://archive.org/stream/cathayezrapound00pounrich#page/n9/mode/2up</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 31</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td><em>Stevens</em>: The Death of a Soldier; <em>Williams</em>: To Elsie; <em>Fearing</em>: all; <em>Hughes</em>: Come to the Waldorf-Astoria (see also Graphic Interpretation, 1230-31); <em>Niedecker</em>: Paean to Place; <em>Creeley</em>: I Know a Man; <em>Baraka</em>: When We’ll Worship Jesus; <em>Bly</em>, Whitman’s Line as Public Form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb  5</td>
<td>Tues</td>
<td><em>Ginsberg</em>: Howl</td>
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<td><strong>First paper due.</strong></td>
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<td>Feb  7</td>
<td>Thur</td>
<td><em>Roethke</em>: North American Sequence</td>
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<td><strong>New Forms (2): The Image</strong></td>
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</table>
| | | *Sappho*: selected fragments; *Basho*: selected haiku; *Hulme*: selections; *Pound*: In a Station of the Metro; *Papyrus*: A Retrospect (MAP website); *Sandburg*: Fog; *Stevens*: Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird; Study of Two Pears; *Williams*: The Great Figure; Spring and All; The Red Wheelbarrow; Proletarian Portrait; *H.D.*: Oread; Mid-day; Sea Rose; Garden; *Toomer*: Portrait in Georgia; Her Lips Are Copper Wire; *MacLeish*: Ars Poetica; *Snyder*: Riprap
### Rational Difficulty

- **14 Thurs**  
  *Dickinson: all; *Raine: A Martian Sends a Postcard Home

- **19 Tues**  
  *Loy: Songs to Joannes; *cummings: all except “next to of course god america i”;  
  *Plath: Ariel

- **21 Thurs**  
  *Lewis Carroll, Jabberwocky (plus Humpty-Dumpty’s commentary); *Hopkins: God’s Grandeur; “As kingfishers catch fire”; Pied Beauty; “No worst, there is none”; Carrion Comfort; Spelt from Sibyl’s Leaves;

- **26 Tues**  
  *Yeats: The Second Coming; Sailing to Byzantium; Among School Children; Byzantium; *Heaney: three “bog poems.”

- **28 Thurs**  
  *Stevens: Anecdote of the Jar; The Snow Man; The Emperor of Ice-Cream; The Plain Sense of Things; Of Mere Being; Bantams in Pine-Woods (MAP website);  
  *Hart Crane: At Melville’s Tomb (MAP website); Proem: to Brooklyn Bridge;  
  *letter to Harriet Monroe

### Irrational Difficulty

- **7 Thurs**  
  *Dada  
  *Tzara: To Make a Dadaist Poem; *Ball: Sound-Poems; *Stein: from Tender Buttons; *Sitwell: from Façades; *Crosby: all; *Ashbery: They Dream Only of America; Paradoxes and Oxymorons; *Leaving the Atocha Station (with Paul Carroll, If Only He Had Left from the Finland Station);  
  *Mullen: all

**Second paper due.**

**[March 11-15 Spring Break]**

- **19 Tues**  
  *Surrealism  
  *Breton, Ernst; *Lorca, Ode to Walt Whitman; Little Viennese Waltz; *Dylan Thomas: five poems; *Bob Dylan: two songs

  **“All-the-above” poems**

- **21 Thurs**  

- **26 Tues**  
  *Cendrars: The Prose of the Trans-siberian …

- **28 Thurs**  
  *Eliot: The Waste Land

**Apr 2**  
**Tues**  
*Rukeyser: The Book of the Dead
April 24-30 Final Exam Week

Apr 25 Thurs Final paper due.

Attendance policy. There are no automatic excused absences in this course. If you know you will need to miss a class-meeting for some good reason, you must contact me in advance, either in person or by e-mail, to clear it with me. If you miss a class-meeting for some reason beyond your control, such as illness, you must bring me an official excuse or other documentary evidence. Unexcused absence may result in a lowering of your grade, at my discretion.

Academic misconduct. It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed; illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487). For additional information, see the Code of Student Conduct.

Plagiarism is the representation of another’s writing or ideas as one’s own. It includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person’s work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person’s ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. You could plagiarize and get away with it – maybe. But if you’re caught, you’ll be punished severely. Why risk it?

Social justice statement. The Ohio State University is committed to social justice. So am I. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. I also aspire not to discriminate, and I hope you do, too. I aim to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

Disability statement. Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office for Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office for Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901. For additional information, see OSU Office for disability Services Web Site. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs.