

ENGL 632 Studies in Poetry

New and Postmodern Poetry / CRN 88133

Sandy Baldwin | charles.baldwin@mail.wvu.edu

R 1600-1850 | G10 CLN-D | Office Hours R 1500-1600 G20 CLN-D

Course [Facebook Group](#) (apply to join)

See: [WVU Student Conduct Code](#)

This course is an introduction and survey of American poetry since 1960, focused on experimental, avant-garde, innovative, radical, new, and postmodern poetry. The course will emphasize understanding histories, poetics, and primary works and authors. A basic concern is the role of anthologies in representing and creating communities, aesthetic taste, and canons. The first part of the course will focus on the famous Donald Allen anthology *The New American Poetry*. We will then look at several other more recent anthologies as responses/contrasts, along with some single-authored volumes as well. A second basic concern is reading: how do we read such works? Do we need another word (do we read anymore)? Some other questions that drive the course:

- What is or was postmodern poetry, and is it still the case (i.e. are we still postmodern and were we ever)?
- More generally, how do we understand the problematics and polemics over “form” and “language” at the core of so much of this poetry?
- What is the role of the ideology of the *new* or *radical* in relation to its others (e.g. the old ... the mainstream ... the normal ...)?
- What can we “do” with this poetry? How do we respond to it? How do we teach it?

Texts

- *The New American Poetry*, ed. Donald Allen
- *In the American Tree*, ed. Ron Silliman
- *The Last Vispo Anthology*, ed. Craig Hill and Nico Vassilakis
- *I'll Drown My Book: Conceptual Writing by Women*, ed. Caroline Bergvall, Laynie Brown, Teresa Carmody, Vanessa Place
- Kenneth Goldsmith, *Seven American Deaths and Disasters*
- Stephanie Barber, *Night Moves*
- Vanessa Place, *Boycott*

Five words in a line.

- Gertrude Stein,

from *Five Words in a Line* (1930)

Schedule

August 22

Read [Kenneth Goldsmith Wants You to Print out the Internet](#) and [Printing the Internet](#)

Aug 29

New American Poetry, first three parts and corresponding poetics

September 5

The New American Poetry, through end

Sept 12

In the American Tree, West and corresponding poetics

Sept 19

In the American Tree, East and corresponding poetics

Sept 26

No class | Short Paper Due via email: 600 words minimum, a “reading” (you decide what this means) of one works from *In the American Tree*

October 3

The Last Vispo anthology

Oct 10

I'll Drown My Book, through Part II

Oct 17

I'll Drown My Book, through end

Oct 24

[The Flarf Files](#) and [Jacket 30 Flarf Feature](#)

Oct 31

Seven American Deaths and Disasters

November 7

Night Moves

Nov 14

Boycott

Nov 21

Keyword “Poetry” from [The Electronic Literature Collection Vol 1](#)

Requirements

- Attendance and Participation
- Two papers (Sep 26 and Dec 12)
- Informal response due in every class. 250 words minimum.
Informal: any form, no form, inform, formless; all it must do is respond ... and what is response? Critique, running commentary, lists of questions, parody, anger, context, wandering ...). Hand in after class - either in print or email.
- Lead class (get it started) once in the semester. No informal response on the day you lead class.

Nov 26

No class. Thanksgiving.

December 5

Last class | Keyword "Poetry" [*The Electronic Literature Collection Vol 2*](#)

December 12

Paper due via email: 2500 words minimum, on something from Oct 3 onward