

MA IN CREATIVE WRITING: Poetry

Autumn 2007

Tutors: Professor Jon Cook

LITCM015 Poetics, Writing, Language

(15 places max)

This MA unit is compulsory for students taking the poetry strand of the MA in Creative Writing. It is also offered as an optional unit for students taking other MA programmes.

The aim of this unit is to familiarise you with questions in poetics and poetic techniques, and to give you a grounding in the history and theory of poetics. It will introduce you to questions in the philosophy of language, as these touch on poetics, for instance in the work of Roman Jakobson and the Russian Formalists, or in Walter Benjamin's writings on language. Poetry considered from the point of view of rhetoric (Plato, Longinus) will lead through to Romantic theories of utterance (von Kleist, Wordsworth.) Statements on poetics are analysed in context – for instance, from Roland Barthes, Charles Olson, Frank O'Hara, Laura Riding, Stéphane Mallarmé, Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, and T.S. Eliot.

Students will be encouraged to think about both the practical and theoretical implications of their own writing.

Essential reading for the whole course;

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| Jon Cook, ed. | <i>Poetry in Theory</i> , Blackwell |
| Lucy Burke et al, eds. | <i>Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader</i> ,
Routledge |
| Penelope Murray, ed. | <i>Classical Literary Criticism</i> [includes Aristotle, Horace, Longinus]
Penguin |
| David Norbrook and R. H Woudhuysen, eds. | <i>The Penguin Book of Renaissance
Verse 1509-1659</i> (Penguin Classics) |

Supporting texts;

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| Martin Heidegger | <i>Poetry, Language, Thought, and On the Way to Language</i> |
| Paul Fussell | <i>Poetic Metre & Poetic Form</i> |
| J.A. Cuddon | <i>Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms</i> |
| George Steiner | <i>After Babel</i> |
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The week-by-week outline below need not be prescriptive, but can be varied as the course unfolds.

Weeks 1, 2 and 3

Some concepts of reading and rhetoric in antiquity and the Renaissance

The collection of texts called *Classical Literary Criticism* [Penguin Classics, trans Penelope Murray and T.S. Dorch] has a useful introduction and chronology. It contains translations from Plato, Aristotle, Horace and Longinus.

Plato, *Republic*, Book Ten, any edition or online

Longinus' *On the Sublime* is on the web at classic.persuasion.org

Quintillian, *The Education of an Orator*, also online

Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, also online

Horace, *The Art of Poetry* is on the web at classic.persuasion.org

Plato, *The Phaedrus* also online

Sir Philip Sidney, *Defence of Poetry*, also online

The Penguin Book of Renaissance Verse 1509-1659

Weeks 4 to 5

Romantics

William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, any edition

Heinrich von Kleist, 'On the Gradual Production of Thought in Speech' [from selection of von Kleist's writing, ed. David Constantine]

Novalis, Monologue [xerox to be supplied]

Walter Benjamin's essay 'On Language as Such and the Languages of Man', in *Reflections: Essays- Aphorisms- Autobiographical Writings*, ed. P. Demetz, Harcourt Press

OR in *Walter Benjamin, Selected Writings* vol 1 1913-1926 eds. M. Bullock and M. W Jennings

Week 6

The poetics of Bakhtin and Jakobson

Extracts from their work, such as Bakhtin's 'Unitary language' in *Poetry in Theory* ed. J. Cook and/or from The Routledge *Language and Cultural Theory Reader* ch. 28 ed. L. Burke et al.

Also Vygotsky's 'Thought and Word' in ed. Burke

Khlebnikov's 'Grasshopper' poem [xerox will be supplied] – and Jakobson on.

G.I. Vinokur, 'The Futurists – Constructors of Language' in ch.38 ed. Burke, p362

[Also online] L. Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*

Week 7

Ethics and Ambiguities

Jan Mukarovsky, 'Standard language and Poetic Language' in *The Routledge Language and Cultural Theory Reader* ch. 23, ed. Burke p225

Julia Kristeva, 'The Ethics of Linguistics' in ed. Cook, *Poetry in Theory*, ch 58 p438.
Also extract from Kristeva, in ed. Burke, ch 37

William Empson in ed. Cook p 169 ch 23

Week 8

'Poetry after Auschwitz'

Heidegger's essays, including extracts in *Poetry in Theory* ed. Cook, ch 33

Adorno's 'Lyric Poetry and Society', ch 45 ed. Cook

See Robert Kaufman's chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, ed. T. Huhn, Cambridge University Press, 2004, 'Adorno's Social Lyric, and Literary Criticism Today'

Week 9

Manifestos, stances, declarations

Charles Olson, extract in ch. 37 in ed. Cook

Wallace Stevens, in ed. Cook, or his 'Adagia' in *Wallace Stevens; Selected Poems*

Ezra Pound, 'Pavannes and Divisions', ch 10 in ed. Cook

T.S. Eliot on 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' ch 13 in ed. Cook

Week 10

About metaphor

We'll look at a selection of writings, which may include some of these:

Jean-Jacques Lecercle, from *The Violence of Language*

Susan Sontag, from *Illness as Metapho*

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Paul Ricoeur, extract in ed. Cook

Sigmund Freud, from *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*; or 'Slips of the Tongue' in ed Burke and ch 3 ed. Cook

Roland Barthes in ed. Cook and in ed. Burke

Jacques Lacan, the 'Discours de Rome', extract in ed. Burke