

BTP2BR_T_18

Tendencies in 20th-century British Poetry

Autumn semester, 2021

Course syllabus

Credit number: 5

Format: seminars

Teacher: István Rácz

Time: Tue 8.00-9.40, **room:** Main Bldg, Room 119 (Országh Room)

Office hours: Tue 10.00-11.00, Fri 10.00-11.00 (Room 108)

Under the current regulations, the course is planned to be a face-to-face, classroom-based course, HOWEVER, if due to the pandemic we have to switch to remote teaching, PLEASE be prepared to use the University of Debrecen E-Learning system at elearning.unideb.hu.

In case of such a switch, the course evaluation methods (e.g., for class participation) and grading rules may be subject to change. You will be notified of these changes if needed.

It is our shared responsibility to observe effective hygiene rules and follow the relevant government, university and faculty regulations regarding the pandemic. If you become ill or experience any symptoms, please stay home to protect others from infection.

Prospectus: This seminar course aims at discussing the poetry and poetics of some major 20th-century British poets. It is intended to develop students' skills of analyzing poetry at an MA level.

Note: Students are required to read the assigned texts (poetry and criticism) in advance. After the assignments you will find questions. You are required to write a one-paragraph answer to these questions before the class. Apart from these, you are not required to keep a reader's journal, but preparing with questions and comments will be appreciated and improve your chances to get a high grade.

Texts: 20th-century British Poetry (course packet to be borrowed from the library)

Voices in Post-1945 British Poetry (course packet distributed in class)

handouts distributed in class

Further recommended reading (all available from the library.):

Books in the Twentieth Century Views series on Yeats, Eliot and W.H. Auden

James Booth, ed. *New Larkins for Old*

Keith Sagar, ed. *The Achievement of Ted Hughes*

Rácz István—Bókay Antal, ed. *Modern sorsok és késő modern poétikák*

Friedrich-Molnár-D.Rácz. *English, Irish, American and Canadian Poetry in English after 1945* (especially for further poems by Gunn and Porter)

Sean O'Brien. *The Deregulated Muse*

Neil Corcoran. *English Poetry since 1940*

Gary Day and Brian Docherty. *British Poetry from the 1950s to the 1990s*

Hans-Werner Ludwig and Lothar Fietz, ed. *Poetry in the British Isles*

Take-home essay: Students will be required to write a take-home essay of 2,700-3,200 words. It must follow the MLA format. No plagiarizing is allowed. The topic should be two or three freely chosen poems by any of the poets discussed during the course. **You must use at least two printed (non-internet) sources to support your arguments.** The deadline is **10th January**. Note: *There is no late submission. You cannot get any grade or credit for this course if you miss this deadline.*

Grading will be based on the take-home essay (35%), on the mid-term test (35%) and performance in class (30%). Note: *you are advised that your proficiency in English will be seriously considered in grading.*

SCHEDULE

WEEK	DATE	TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS
---		<i>Registration week, no teaching. Students are required to collect a copy of the first course packet from the library and do the reading for next week.</i>
1	7/9	<p>W.B. YEATS. "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death", "The Second Coming", "Sailing to Byzantium"</p> <p>CRITICISM: John Unterecker. "Introduction" (In: <i>Yeats. Twentieth Century Views</i> pp. 1-6) G.S. Fraser. "'The Second Coming and 'Two Songs from a Play'" (Notes on Literature pp. 6-11) Jon Stallworthy. "Conclusions" (In: <i>Between the Lines</i> pp. 243-253)</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Why will the Irish airman in Yeats's poem die?</p>
2	14/9	<p>EDWARD THOMAS. "The Owl", "Rain", "Old Man", "The Other"</p> <p>CRITICISM: Jon Silkin. "Edward Thomas" (In: <i>Out of Battle</i>)</p> <p><u>Question:</u> What is your interpretation of the two people in "The Other"?</p>
3	21/9	<p>T.S. ELIOT. "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock", <i>The Waste Land</i></p> <p>CRITICISM: F.R. Leavis. "The Waste Land"</p> <p><u>Question:</u> Who is Prufrock, and whom does he address in the first line?</p>

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| 4 | 28/9 | <p>W.H. AUDEN. “As I Walked Out One Evening”, “Lullaby”, “Miss Gee”, “Musée des Beaux Arts”, “Gare du Midi”, “In Memory of W.B. Yeats”, “In Praise of Limestone”, “The Shield of Achilles”</p> <p><i>Texts for this class: course packet and distributed previously</i></p> <p><u>Question:</u> Why does Miss Gee die?</p> |
| 5 | 5/10 | <p>PHILIP LARKIN. “At Grass”, “Days”, “I Remember, I Remember”, “Toads”, “Church Going”,</p> <p><i>Texts for this class: distributed previously</i></p> <p><u>Question:</u> Is “Church Going” a religious poem, or is it about the impossibility (or rejection) of religion?</p> |
| 6 | 12/10 | <p>PHILIP LARKIN. “Mr. Bleaney”, “Self’s the Man”, “MXMXIV”, “Ambulances”, “Dockery and Son”, “Aubade”, “Love Again”</p> <p><i>Texts for this class: distributed previously</i></p> <p><u>Question:</u> Who are the characters in “Mr Bleaney” and “Dockery and Son”?</p> |
| 7 | 19/10 | <p>TED HUGHES. “Crow Hill”, “Hawk Roosting”, “Skylarks”, “That moment”, “Bride and groom lie hidden for three days”, “Daffodils”</p> <p><i>Texts for this class: distributed previously</i></p> <p><u>Question:</u> What happens in “That moment”? What is the “story” of this poem?</p> |
| 8 | 26/10 | <p>Women in poetry: Fleur Adcock, Carol Rumens, and Helen Dunmore</p> <p>Adcock. “Witnesses”, “For Heidi with Blue Hair”, “Halfway Street, Sidcup”, “My Father”</p> <p>Rumens. “Outside Oswiecim”, “The Hebrew Class”, “A New Song”</p> |

Dunmore. "Poem on the Obliteration of 100,000 Iraqi Soldiers"

Questions: Is there a specific female voice in poetry?
Should we speak about women's poetry at all, or just poetry?

Texts for this class: distributed previously

9 2/11 *Consultation week, no teaching*

10 9/11 IN-CLASS ESSAY

11 16/11 **Edwin Morgan**
"London", "Chinese Cat", "Siesta of a Hungarian Snake",
"Hortobágy", "Elegy", Summer Haiku", "Spacepoem 1",
"Spacepoem 3", The Computer's First Birthday Card",
"Visual Soundpoem"
Weöres Sándor. "Téma és variációk"

Robin Fulton. "Edwin Morgan" (In: *Contemporary Scottish Poetry*. Loanhead: Macdonald Publishers, 1974)

Question: Do you think this kind of concrete poetry is just a hoax or is it real poetry?

12 23/11 **Peter Porter**
"John Marston Advises Anger", "The Historians Call Up Pain", "Annotations of Auschwitz", "Your Attention Please", "Soliloquy at Potsdam", "Septimius Severus at the Vienna Gate", "Steps on the Way", "Short Story", "A Consumer's Report", "Applause for Death", "The Old Enemy", "Mort aux chats", "An Exequy"

Anthony Thwaite. "The 'Group' and after" (In: *Poetry Today*)

Sean O'Brien. "Peter Porter: A Planet in the Mind" (In: *The Deregulated Muse*. Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books, 1998)

Question: Which of the poems do you like the best? Give reasons!

13 30/11 **Thom Gunn**
"On the Move", "Old Meg", "In Time of Plague", "The Reassurance", "Courtesies of the Interregnum"

John Keats. "Meg Merrilies"

Bruce Woodcock. "'But oh not loose': form and sexuality in Thom Gunn's poetry" (*Critical Quarterly* 35, 1993)

Question: How does Gunn rewrite Keats's poem in his "Old Meg"?

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7/12

Thom Gunn

"Lament", "The Man with Night Sweats", "The Missing", "A Blank"

Question: Are these poems elegies? Narrative poems? Something else?