



UNIVERSITY OF  
CALGARY

FACULTY OF ARTS  
DEPARTMENT OF FRENCH, ITALIAN AND SPANISH  
**Modern & Contemporary Poetics**

W2015 FREN 565.4

Tuesday 12:30 – 3:15 Craigie Hall C 301a

Professor : Dr. Jean-Jacques Poucel [jjpoucel@ucalgary.ca](mailto:jjpoucel@ucalgary.ca)  
Office: CH C317 Office hours: Wednesday 1-2pm & by appointment

### Description

A general introduction to modern French poetry, this course questions aesthetic politics, lyrical voice, narrative techniques, and concrete forms, beginning with a few key texts from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, followed by poems published in 1914, and then, passing by 1968 and 1986, our readings will lead to an exploration of poetry and poetics in the present.

### Objective

The purpose of the course is to define and analyze the shifting relationships between modernity, the avant-garde and contemporary experimental poetics. Drawing on examples from literature, as well as from painting, cinema and philosophy, students will study how 20<sup>th</sup> Century avant-garde art simultaneously resists and participates in the general program of Modernism. The course begins with a broad introduction to Modernism and theories of the avant-garde, primarily staged through a reading of Baudelaire (Benjamin's) and select critical texts (Peter Bürger' *Theory of the Avant-Garde*). We will then engage with a series of avant-garde works, manifestoes, and "events," specifically chosen by virtue of their genius as provocative, performative, and innovative pieces (examples from Apollinaire, Buñuel, Breton, Duchamp, Artaud, Debord, Perec, Tzara; i.e. Dada, Cubism, Surrealism, Futurism, Nouveau Roman, Nouvelle Vague, Oulipo). Although the central focus of the seminar is literary (poetry, narrative prose, injunctive writing), the nature of the work will occasion the study other media, intermediality, and blended genres.

In our approach to these works we will strive to understand and schematize the generative role that avant-garde experimentation plays within the (post)modern. The critical focus of the course will be defining useful terms for appraising radical experimentation in the arts, and its effects on the discourses that support them. We will thus consider each work along two lines of inquiry: first, in an historical perspective, in order to situate the character of a work's reaction to concurrent aesthetic, political or discursive ideas. Second, we will examine the extent to which thematic and stylistic elements of experimental/avant-garde works are assimilated—or not—into mainstream culture, and how that (non)assimilation influences (the vanguard of) criticism. Along the way, we will examine and catalogue recurrent tropes and themes that participate in the destruction, interruption, and regeneration of modernist artistic initiatives. Particular topics include: art as politics; the mechanization of the human mind; forms of primitivism; discourse on/of violence; the roles of formalism and chance operations in experimental work; memory and memorialization; aesthetic versus market forces.

One of the central questions under consideration is how modern experimental writing draws on tension between figural meaning and various states of literalness, concretion and intermediality. In addition to considering a sequence of so called 'difficult' poems, we will read, examine, and discuss a small selection of artist books, assessing the relation between text and image (decorative, integrated, juxtaposed); other modes of writing will also come into consideration, for example, the coupling of photography and writing and the place of performance 'poetry' in the contemporary context, including the lyric in the electronic age (webpoetry, cinépoèmes, etc)—i.e. 'postpoésie'. Individual reading selections from art criticism,

philosophy of language, and critical theory will supplement close reading of the texts, and other objects.

### Coursework

Taught in French (with some critical reading in English), this seminar is open to graduate and undergraduate students. This CIS is for undergraduate students only.

This course is a seminar and thereby requires sustained, forthright, and generous **participation** by all those involved. All students are expected to play an active role in classroom discussion. This requires preparing readings before the course meets, developing independent thoughts and it includes sharing with the entire class at least one brief **reaction paper** (300 wds) prior to a specific course meeting and, for the graduate students, acting as respondent to your classmates' papers.

You are also required to give one short **oral presentation** in class (~5 minutes), write one **mid-term paper** (~4 pages, due March 17) and one **final research paper** (~5 pages, due April 12).

All essays must be written in French; for additional guidance with writing, please consult with me and/or the departmental writing tutor. Independent (library) research is encouraged throughout, but especially with regard to the final project.

### Course notes:

**Reaction Papers:** These short positions papers are an occasion for you to 1. describe the specific aesthetic investment of a work and then to 2. critically assess the work's success, the work's relevance to its historical movement, and its lasting relevance today. In most cases, the professor will not ask particular questions for these papers; it is the student's job to figure out how to 'address' a work, to articulate the nature of the problems a certain work poses, i.e. *to react*.

**Oral Presentations:** *presentations are to be scheduled after February 2, to take place in March.*

I will give you a topic to consider in relation to one work we are studying in class. Make sure your answer explains your understanding of the topic and take meticulous pains to demonstrate how you have tackled the question in relation to the work itself. Some basic independent research is expected.

**Midterm papers:** For both graduate and undergraduate students, this paper is intended to be a close-reading (*une analyse de texte, une explication de texte*) in which you consider the precise semiological economy of one particular work in relationship to its limited context (its intertexts, its place of publication, its creative milieu). Some careful and basic independent research is expected. Graduate students are expected to write more perceptive papers and integrate secondary sources in their readings.

**Final Papers:** All final papers should be double-spaced, printed in 12pt font with title and author's name on the first page (no title page), with primary and secondary sources detailed as "Œuvres citées," according to MLA bibliographical style (date and page number in text).

Approximately 5 or 6 pages long, this final paper should give evidence of your coherent synthesis of questions discussed in class along with a careful consideration of one or two specific works. You are expected to do some critical research on the topic, the work, the authors/artists involved, and to integrate that research in your paper in a relevant and meaningful fashion. If you have a specific idea in mind, please come speak with me about it before March 15<sup>th</sup>.

### Grade distribution:

10% : participation	regular course meetings
15% : reaction papers	300 wds
15% : oral presentation	5 minutes
20% : mid-term paper	~4 pages
40% : final paper	~5-6 pages

### Required Books (available at the U of C bookstore)

Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*. Random House \$19.95  
Peter Bürger, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde* \$23.40  
Charles Baudelaire, *Le Spleen de Paris* - \$4.95  
Guillaume Apollinaire, *Calligrammes* \$4.95  
Aimé Césaire, *Cahier du retour au pays natal* (1939) \$27.95.  
Nathalie Sarraute, *Tropismes* \$12.95  
Guy Debord, *La société du spectacle* \$12.95  
Jacques Roubaud, *Quelque chose noir* \$10.95  
Jean-Michel Espitallier, *Pièces détachées : Une anthologie de la poésie française aujourd'hui* \$13.95  
Jean-Michel Espitallier, *Caisse à outils : un panorama de la poésie française* \$13.95

**ttl: \$ 146.50**

### NOTATION ET ÉQUIVALENCES (en %) :

A+ =97-100	A =85-96	A- =80-84	B+ =78-79	B =74-77	B- =70-73
C+ =68-69	C =64-67	C- =60-64	D+ =56-59	D =50-55	F=0-49

Le système de notation officiel (A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1) sera appliqué pour le calcul final des notes.

### ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1. **Plagiarism** is a serious offence, the penalty for which is an F on the assignment and possibly also an F in the course, academic probation, or requirement to withdraw. Plagiarism exists when:

- the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test);
- parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author;
- the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or
- a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted."

Plagiarism occurs not only when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement but also when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. A bibliography is insufficient to establish which portions of the student's work are taken from external sources; footnotes or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose.

2. **Cheating** at tests or examinations includes but is not limited to dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct such as speaking to other candidates or communicating with them under any circumstances whatsoever; bringing into the examination room any textbook, notebook, memorandum, other written material or mechanical or electronic device not authorized by the examiner; writing an examination or part of it, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do so, or leaving answer papers exposed to view, or persistent attempts to read other students' examination papers.

3. **Other academic misconduct** includes, but is not limited to, tampering or attempts to tamper with examination scripts, class work, grades and/or class records; failure to abide by directions by an instructor regarding the individuality of work handed in; the acquisition, attempted acquisition, possession, and/or distribution of examination materials or information not authorized by the instructor; the impersonation of another student in an examination or other class assignment; the falsification or fabrication of clinical or laboratory reports; the non-authorized tape recording of lectures.

4. Any student who voluntarily and consciously aids another student in the commission of one of these offences is also guilty of academic misconduct.

### DISABILITIES AND ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION

It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. Students with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre should contact their office at 220-8237. Students who have not registered with the Disability Resource Centre are not eligible for formal academic accommodation. Students also required to discuss

their needs with the instructor no later than fourteen (14) days after the start of this course.

### **EMERGENCY EVACUATION ASSEMBLY POINTS**

Craigie Hall: Professional Faculties food court (alternate: Education Block food court)  
Education Block and Tower: Scurfield Hall atrium (alternate: Professional Faculties food court)  
Kinesiology: north courtyard, MacEwan Student Centre (alternate: University Theatres lobby)

For the complete list of assembly points please consult  
<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>

### **FACULTY OF ARTS PROGRAM ADVISING AND STUDENT INFORMATION RESOURCES**

- Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at [artsads@ucalgary.ca](mailto:artsads@ucalgary.ca). You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.
- For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.
- For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

[arts1@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts1@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts2@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts2@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts3@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts3@su.ucalgary.ca), [arts4@su.ucalgary.ca](mailto:arts4@su.ucalgary.ca)

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PRIVACY (FOIP) ACT**

Graded assignments will be retained by the Department for three months and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Final examinations will be kept for one calendar year and subsequently sent for confidential shredding. Said material is exclusively available to the student and to the department staff requiring to examine it.

Please see <http://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/privacy> for complete information on the disclosure of personal records.

### **INTERNET AND ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION DEVICES**

Devices such as laptops, palmtops and smartbooks are allowed provided that they are used exclusively for instructional purposes and do not cause disruption to the instructor and to fellow students. **Cellular telephones, blackberries and other mobile communication tools are not permitted and must be switched off.**

### **SAFEWALK**

To request a Safewalk escort anywhere on campus, 24 hours a day and seven days a week, please call 403-220-5333 or use one of the Help Phones.

Web: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk>

### **STUDENT UNION INFORMATION**

Representatives and contact details: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/home/contact.html>

Student Ombudsman: <http://www.su.ucalgary.ca/services/student-services/student-rights.html>

### **WRITING ACROSS THE CURRICULUM**

Writing skills should cross all disciplines. Students are expected to do a substantial amount of writing in their courses and, where appropriate, instructors can and should use writing and the grading thereof as a factor in the evaluation of student work. The services provided by the Writing Centre in the Effective Writing Office (<http://www.efwr.ucalgary.ca/>) can be utilized by all undergraduate and graduate students who feel they require further assistance.