

GRADUATE SEMINAR IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY POETRY COURSE SYLLABUS

Samuel Maio, Ph.D.
Professor of English and Comparative Literature
English 211-1, W 7:00-9:45 p.m., BBC 002

Email: Samuel.Maio@sjsu.edu
Hours: MW 3-4 & Appt., FOB 223
Phone: (408) 924-4483

Texts: *The Norton Anthology of Modern and Contemporary Poetry*, 3rd ed., I
Samuel Maio, *Creating Another Self*, 2nd ed.

Grading: There are two (2) graded assignments, as follows:

- One (1) short paper, 4-6 pages, explicating a poem listed on the Course Schedule (next page), **excluding** the following poems, which I will cover in class: Hardy, "Hap," "The Convergence of the Twain," and "The Oxen"; Yeats, "Leda and the Swan," and "The Second Coming"; Frost, "After Apple-Picking," "Birches," and "Design"; Pound, "The River-Merchant's Wife: A Letter," and "In a Station of the Metro"; Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and "The Fire Sermon" section of *The Waste Land*; Auden, "Who's Who," and "*Musée des Beaux Arts*"; Lowell, "Memories of West Street and Lepke," and "Skunk Hour". The poem you choose to explicate must be by a poet **not** treated in your longer project. You will present your explication to the seminar (about 10-15 minutes). Please note: *present*, not *read*. I will provide you with example explication papers.

- One (1) longer paper, 11-13 pages, on any poet covered in *Creating Another Self* or any poet from the syllabus, excluding the poet whose poem you explicated for the above assignment, of course, or any two poets from the syllabus (again, excluding the one treated in your explication), or any two from *Creating Another Self*, or any combination of two poets from the syllabus and *Creating Another Self* that fits a comparative study. Your paper may focus on any topic - chosen in consultation with me - and typically will treat 4 to 6 carefully selected poems that are representative of each poet under discussion. You certainly may discuss poems not listed on the syllabus or not included in the anthology. You may incorporate appropriate secondary sources, but only to augment - not supplant - your own analysis. Given the literary period covered in the seminar, strive to emphasize aesthetics in your discussion. Simply defined, "aesthetics" - as we will use the term in relation to poetry - relates to the craft or technique(s) of poetic composition, which does not preclude discussion of themes, a study of aesthetics being the focus of the *art* of the genre, its creative sources, its forms, and its *effects*. In lieu of a paper, you may write a selection of poems - accompanied by an aesthetic statement - modeled on one of the seven poets on the syllabus. (A handout to follow.)

The explication paper and presentation comprise 25% of your course grade; the longer project comprises the remaining 75%. The explication paper and your presentation of it are due the class meeting that the poem on which you write is scheduled for discussion. The longer project is due on or before our final meeting, **December 4th**. These dates are absolute; please respect them. **Only hard copies of your assignments are acceptable; email attachments are not acceptable.** Please do not ask for special treatment of any kind. Especially do not ask to write on a poet other than as prescribed in the above paragraph. I have selected carefully our poets for their historic, aesthetic, and thematic significance. As is true of all academic endeavors of value, this course does not allow your choosing the means by which you are evaluated.

COURSE SCHEDULE (Fall 2013 Semester)

Please read the biographical headnote and *all* of the selections contained in *The Norton Anthology* (and handout material) for Hardy, Yeats, Frost, Pound, Eliot, Auden, and Lowell. In our seminar discussions, we will focus on the following poems:

- Aug 21 Introduction to Modern Poetry. Chapter One, *Creating Another Self*.
- Aug 28/Sept 4 Hardy: “Hap,” “The Subalterns,” “The Darkling Thrush,” “The Respectable Burgher,” “The Ruined Maid,” “Channel Firing,” “The Convergence of the Twain,” “A Poet”
Sept 4: “The Oxen,” “For Life I Had Never Cared Greatly,” “Ah, Are You Digging on My Grave?,” “In Time of ‘The Breaking of Nations’,” and “I Looked Up from My Writing”
- Sept 11, 18 Yeats: “The Lake Isle of Innisfree,” “The Sorrow of Love,” “When You Are Old,” “Adam’s Curse,” “The Magi,” “The Wild Swans at Coole,” “The Second Coming”
Sept 18: “Leda and the Swan,” “Sailing to Byzantium,” “Among School Children,” “Byzantium,” “The Circus Animals’ Desertion,” and “Under Ben Bulbin”
- Sept 25/Oct 2 Frost: “Mending Wall,” “After Apple-Picking,” “The Wood-Pile,” “The Road Not Taken,” “Birches,” “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”
Oct 2: “Acquainted With the Night,” “Out, Out - ” “Two Tramps in Mud Time,” “Desert Places,” “Design,” and “Provide, Provide”
- Oct 9, 16 Pound: Chapter Three, *Creating Another Self*. “Poetics” (*Norton*): “Blast” section, pp. 895-920; “A Retrospect,” pp. 929-938. Pound’s Poems: “Portrait d’une Femme”
Oct 16: “The River-Merchant’s Wife: A Letter,” “In a Station of the Metro,” and “Hugh Selwyn Mauberley: Life and Contacts”
- Oct 23, 30 Eliot: “Poetics” (*Norton*): “Tradition and the Individual Talent,” pp. 941-947. Eliot’s Poems: “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock,” “Sweeney Among the Nightingales,” “Gerontion”
Oct 30: “Journey of the Magi,” and *The Waste Land*
- Nov 6, 13 Auden: “Who’s Who,” “As I Walked Out One Evening,” “Lullaby,” “*Musée des Beaux Arts*,” “In Memory of W. B. Yeats”
Nov 13: “The Unknown Citizen,” “In Praise of Limestone,” and “The Shield of Achilles”
- Nov 20 Lowell: Chapter Two, *Creating Another Self*. Lowell’s Poems: “The Quaker Graveyard in Nantucket,” and “Memories of West Street and Lepke”
- Nov 27 Thanksgiving Holiday (no class).
- Dec 4 Lowell: “‘To Speak of Woe That Is in Marriage’,” “Skunk Hour,” “For the Union Dead,” and “Epilogue”
Final Paper Due on or Before December 4th.
- Dec 11 **Final Examination (Meeting), 7:45 - 10:00pm, Wednesday, Dec. 11th.**