

WORKS AND DAYS: EMANCIPATORY TROPES IN POETRY: WORKING THROUGH THE POETICS AND POETRY OF ETHICS, LYRICS, WORK-SONGS AND FABLES.

Professor Prageeta Sharma
Poetry 511: Thursday
3:00pm-6:00pm, LA 210
Office Hours: Wed: 3:00-5:30, LA 211
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Poetry, for example, might be defined as language writing itself out of a difficult situations.”

Anatole Broyard *Toward A Literature of Illness*

In Hesiod after the light, after chaos and lover. Said the armless woman, said the one cut open, said the smallpoxed the strewn children their bodies woven into the page so I could find what they thought, even if babies only cry. Those are the bodies when I was no longer alive but uplifted butterfly of lace with an empty length to bifurcate my symmetry. No I don't believe the lies of the live. I am a spot of light in order to find out, hanging on because it wasn't revealed in death. I know what happened to me, she said; bleeding I lay there unblessed. Do I want a blessing now, or a god to rebuild me? We have gone beyond god or new lives, or death, or tribes. I am working on this lace light at present; I accept the drop of sacrificial blood to propitiate me. One piece of you at a time is all I need. I am letting you feed, I say, because I know this has always been. You've been telling me for years We needed you, if no one else did. We have this project to change our silence into the beautiful city of a voice.

From “Millions of Us” Alice Notley

In this workshop –

your poems will be generated through your interpretation and reading of Hesiod and other ancient writings (of your choosing), along with our exploration of modern and contemporary poetry and prose. We will be writing all kinds of poetry inspired by mythology, contemporary poetry, and literary and political theories we read and make for ourselves; in turn, our writing may be formal or experimental explorations of stories and poems engaged with unique and arresting tropes examining ethics and the various poetics forms you find along the way. Poems can be drawn directly from

myths or become radical renditions that look very different from their sources. Ideally, it's all about your own works and days, your poems.

We'll have fun and it's all to be very loosely interpreted, and it should ultimately relate to (or release) your poetic practice—maybe one based on constraints you create solely for this class. We will also incorporate our visiting writers and the Montana Book Festival into our curriculum.

Books assigned

(books are available at Shakespeare & Co. 103 S 3rd St W, Missoula, MT. Garth has pre-ordered them for you):

- Hesiod *Works and Days*
- Sherwin Bitsui *Flood Song*
- Carmen Gimenez-Smith *Milk and Filth*
- Ruth Ellen Kocher *Third Voice*
- Ben Lerner *The Hatred of Poetry*
- Bernadette Mayer *Works and Days*
- Greg Pardlo *Digest*
- Dean Rader *Works and Days*
- Tess Taylor *Works and Days*

Suggested Readings and Links (& possible class presentations):

- Maggie Nelson *The Argonauts*
- Jack Gilbert *Collected Poems*
- Narayana *The Hitopadeśa*
- Bill Luoma *Works & Days*
- Sandra Lim *The Wilderness*

- <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalgia.com/TheTopics/Symbols.html>

- <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/articles/detail/69600>

Grading policy:

35% in class participation, 20% weekly poetry/midterm assignment/responses (on time!) 20% panels and presentations and 25% final portfolio. I expect full participation and will allow for only one absence*.

Students with Disabilities:

Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course.

Please speak with me after class or in my office hours. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator, so I can do my best to support you.

***Policy on absences and lateness:**

The standard policy is that no more than two absences in a fourteen week term may result in a grade of “no-credit.” Please arrive on time for class and stay until dismissal. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If there is an emergency please speak to me about it as soon as you can.

Scholastic Dishonesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty—in as much as they keep the individual student as well as the collective community from learning—will result in an automatic F and may entail a variety of other sanctions up to and including expulsion from the University. FOR A DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM SEE <http://www.lib.umt.edu/services/plagiarism/index.htm>. IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO CONSULT THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA’S WEB SITE.

Calendar

September 1, 2016

FOR FIRST DAY OF CLASS:

Bring in a photocopy of an article or chapter of a book you are currently reading.

<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/suddenly-understandable-aphorism-lyric-experiment/>

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/harriet/2013/10/posthumanism-and-poetry/>

Overview

Discuss syllabus

Homework: Memorization of Hesiod stanza or passage; discussion of Ben Lerner’s *Hatred of Poetry* and Robert Saxton’s Hesiod translation (photocopy).

September 8, 2016

Find a passage of Hesiod’s *Work and Days* to recite to class.

Poetic statement assignment: What flipped your poetic style from one form to another?

Where does your poem start? Where do they finish?

Hesiod Passage/Hesiod Imitation Workshop/Translation to contemporary poetry

Read Greg Pardlo’s *Digest*

September 15, 2016

Workshop Class in Hesiod Translation

Discuss Pardlo

Pardlo Assignment

Myles Handout (poems)

September 22, 2016

Greg Pardlo Workshop (poets will be working with Greg Pardlo during workshop)
Attend Montana Book Festival (9/10-12); write a reading report of Pardlo/Myles and one additional reading.

Read Gimenez-Smith and Kocher

We will have a discussion via Cyberbear of their work. You will write a poem exploring their trope/ethic/form to bring to workshop. You can bring up to two poems (one of each) to workshop.

September 29, 2016

Discuss Carmen Gimenez-Smith *Milk and Filth*

Ruth Ellen Kocher *Third Voice*

Workshop

October 6, 2016

Workshop

October 13, 2016

Workshop

Zackariah Rybak

Skylar Salvatore

Anna Zumbahlen

October 20, 2016

Workshop

October 27, 2016

Workshop

November 3, 2016

Workshop

Midterm Portfolio Due

November 10, 2016

Tess Taylor and Bernadette Mayer *Works & Days*

November 17, 2016

Workshop

Dean Rader *Works & Days*

November 20, 2016

Brunch potluck

Sherwin Bitsui *Flood Songs*

Visit with Bitsui (make sure everyone will be in Missoula, reschedule for another time if this is doesn't work with schedules)

November 24, 2016

Thanksgiving Break

December 1, 2016

Presentation of your poet/work/reading workshop: Nelson, Luoma, Narayana et al.

December 8, 2016

Presentation of your poet/work/reading workshop: Nelson, Luoma, Narayana et al.

December 15, 2016

Portfolios and reading