

Contemporary Poetry Through Four Lenses

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Office: Poetry Center

Wednesdays, 10-noon, Dorothy Rubel Room, June 6, 13, 20, 27

Course Description: In a letter to Thomas Higginson, Emily Dickinson used these words to describe poetry: “If I read a book and it makes my whole body so cold no fire can warm me, I know *that* is poetry. If I feel physically as if the top of my head were taken off, I know *that* is poetry.” Marianne Moore described poetry in her poem by the same title as imaginary gardens with real toads in them. To get a sense of American poetry in our contemporary moment, we will explore four different ways of approaching contemporary poetry. In each class in this four-week course, we will focus our reading and discussion on poetry that is emblematic of contemporary lyricism; form and playfulness, explorations of language and how language goes about the work of meaning; and the spectrum of the personal and public. The course will sample a range of contemporary poets and feature a sequence of invitations to respond to course reading in various ways.

Required Texts: There are no required texts to purchase. Reading packets for each session will be uploaded to and available as .pdf documents on Box @UA. Registered students will receive a link to this site by May 1st.

All students are required to sign up for two free services; each will deliver a free poem to your email inbox each day. Here are the registration links:

Poem-a-day from the Academy of American Poets: <https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem-day>

Poem of the Day from the Poetry Foundation: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem-of-the-day-form>

Schedule:

June 6th: Origin of the Poetic Species: Whitman and Dickinson

June 13th: Form, Formlessness, and the Formal Imagination: Movement and Stillness

June 20th: Language and Meaning Making: Capturing the Ecstatic

June 27th: The Personal and the Political: Erasure and Agency