

**ENGL 4200: Early Modern Special Topic*****Poetics & Historiography***

M &amp; W 10:00 – 11:50

CRN 4607, Fall Quarter, 2014

Margery Reed Hall 019

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Office Hours: by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** In “An Apology for Poetry” (1595)—often cited as a text that epitomizes English Renaissance poetics—Sir Philip Sidney elevates poetry above philosophy and history, arguing that “the poet only bringeth his own stuff, and doth not learn a conceit out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceit.” Which theories of poetry and history (from England and the Continent) have the greatest influence upon Sidney? Which challenge Sidney’s model? And how do other English dramatists, poets, and writers (women and men) work within and against this dynamic context of power relations among competing fields & forms of discourse & knowledge from Plato (c. 427-347 BCE) to Katherine Philips (1631-64), Aristotle (c. 384-22 BCE) to Margaret Cavendish (1623-73)? This course investigates a foundational topic from the early modern era: the relationship between poetics and historiography. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, students will study the works (both canonical and non-canonical) of Continental and English philosophers, poets and historians from the 13<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The course will also involve examinations of recent scholarship, theory and criticism. Research projects will be determined according to individual proposals and may include a variety of theoretical, creative, and literary/cultural/scholarly approaches. While our primary literary studies focus will concern the 16th and 17th centuries, the scope for our studies in poetics, historiography, philosophy, and literary theory will cover a robust and diversified field from Classical times through the early modern and into the modern & postmodern eras. Within that capacious context, we will pay special attention to important schools of thought, cultural developments, and artistic practices that have deep roots in earlier times, such as: the poetics of the sublime; neo-Classical aesthetics; materialist philosophy; and various theories of poetic indeterminacy, contingency, and eidetic making. We will also recover an almost forgotten conversation about poetic fictions and simulacra. Students are requested to be prepared to discuss the following texts at the first meeting: Plato’s *Republic*, Book X; and Aristotle’s *Poetics*.

**More Information:** As with any trans-historical class offered at the graduate-level, the department’s default policy is that the student’s research project may determine the matching distribution requirement and/or program concentration. Research projects for this course will be determined according to individual proposals and may include a variety of theoretical, creative, and literary / cultural / scholarly approaches.

**Books (required):**Adams, Hazard, ed. *Critical Theory Since Plato*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Fort Worth: Heinle, 2004.

ISBN: 0155055046. \$120.78 [Note: used copies are available via the web]

Bowerbank, Sylvia, and Sara Mendelson, eds. *Paper Bodies: A Margaret Cavendish Reader*.

Toronto: Broadview Press, 2000. ISBN: 155111173X. \$22.79

Milton, John. *Paradise Lost*. Ed. Alastair Fowler. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Addison-Wesley Longman, 1998.

ISBN: 0582215188. \$29.22

Rivers, Isabel. *Classical and Christian Ideas in English Renaissance Poetry*. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. New York:

Routledge, 1994. ISBN: 0415106478. \$16.85

**Books (recommended):**Brayman Hackle, Heidi, and Ian Moulton, eds. *Teaching Early Modern Literature From the Archives*.

New York: MLA, 2014. 9781603291569. \$22.50

Howard, W. Scott, ed. *An Collins and the Historical Imagination*. Farnham, UK & Burlington, VT:

Ashgate, 2014. ISBN: 9781472418470. \$119.95

**Note on attendance:** For each unexcused absence, your grade in the course will be diminished by -0.5

**READING / WRITING / RESEARCH / MAKING:**

- Four individual Works that engage with your choice of texts from our readings during a given week in the quarter. Open topic, media, form and style. Works will be presented and submitted in class on the Wednesdays of your choice. [40%]
- One Project involving research. Open topic, media, form and style. The project should engage in some way with your selection of documents from our readings during the quarter, and should also address topics, works, contexts, and materials beyond that immediate scope. Project proposals required. [40%]
- Commonplace Book—that is, a notebook (open media, form and style) in which you engage consistently with our work in the course, responding to in-class prompts as well as following your own path through our readings and your writing / research / making. [20%]

**Notes on grading:**

1. *The Check System.* I'll be grading your Works with a check system that will follow these guidelines. A check plus on all your Works will translate into a grade of 4.0 / A for that percentage of your overall grade in the course. Each check will reduce your grade for that component of your overall grade in the course by -0.5. Each check minus, by -1.0; each missing Work, by -2.0. If you ever receive less than a check plus, you will have the option to revise and resubmit the Work for a higher grade. Those revisions (attached to the first draft) will be due by the beginning of the next class meeting.
2. *The Point & Letter System.* I'll be grading your Project and Commonplace Book with a point & letter system corresponding to this scale: A (4.0-3.9); A- (3.8-3.5); B+ (3.4-3.2); B (3.1-2.9); B- (2.8-2.5); C+ (2.4-2.2); C (2.1-1.9); C- (1.8-1.5); D+ (1.4-1.2); D (1.1-0.9); D- (0.8-0.5); F (0.4-0).

**Calendar**  
(subject to changes)

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>Eidetic &amp; Constitutive Poetics</b>
M 9/8	Plato's <i>Republic</i> , Book X / Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i>
W 9/10	Plato's <i>Republic</i> , Book X / Aristotle's <i>Poetics</i> / Rivers 3 / <i>PL</i> invocations
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>Eidetic Poetics: <i>Paradise Lost</i>, 1-4</b>
M 9/15	Longinus / Plotinus / Rivers 1 & 11
W 9/17	Augustine / Boethius / Aquinas / Rivers 2 & 12
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>Eidetic Poetics: <i>Paradise Lost</i>, 5-8</b>
M 9/22	Dante / Boccaccio / Rivers 6 & 9
W 9/24	Bruno & Co. / Tasso / Rivers 7 & 8
<b>Week 4</b>	<b>Constitutive Poetics: <i>Paradise Lost</i>, 9-12</b>
M 9/29	Horace / Scaliger / Rivers 10 & 13
W 10/1	Castelvetro / Sidney / Puttenham & Co. / Rivers 4 & 5
<b>Week 5</b>	<b>Constitutive Poetics: <i>Paradise Lost</i>, 1-12</b>
M 10/6	Mazzoni / Bacon / Jonson
W 10/8	Hobbes / Corneille
<b>Week 6</b>	<b>Eidetic Poetics: <i>Paper Bodies</i>, Part III</b>
M 10/13	Proposals due
W 10/15	H. Reynolds / Boileau / Vico

<b>Week 7</b>	<b>Eidetic Poetics: <i>Paper Bodies</i>, Part I</b>
M 10/20	Dennis / Burke
W 10/22	Hegel / Husserl
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>Constitutive Poetics: <i>Paper Bodies</i>, Part II</b>
M 10/27	Dryden / Locke
W 10/29	Pope / Hume
<b>Week 9</b>	<b>Constitutive Poetics: <i>Paper Bodies</i>, Parts I, II, III</b>
M 11/3	Johnson / J. Reynolds
W 11/5	Kant / Marx
<b>Week 10</b>	<b>Historical Figuration</b>
M 11/10	TBA
W 11/12	TBA
F 11/14	Last day of Fall Quarter classes
<b>Week 11</b>	<b>Reading / Writing / Research / Making</b>
M 11/17	
W 11/19	Projects and Commonplace Books due
Th 11/20	Fall Quarter exams conclude