

Introduction to Poetry: The Poet as Citizen, Poetry as Public Record  
LWRT 2030 A, 3253  
spring 2008, Fridays from 12 noon-3:20

Jill Magi, Instructor  
contact: magij@newschool.edu (expect a response in one work day)  
office hours: after class, by appointment

### Overview and Goals

Beginning with the idea that for many poets, engaging the political and ethical world is the very purpose of their art, this course examines poetry as it transmits and informs culture, history, and notions of the individual and the collective. To this end, students read and imitate poetry positioned along axes of personal/political, hermetic/demotic, collage/invention, textual/performative, local/global.

Our goals for the semester are to read, with a sense of openness and contemplation, a wide variety of poetry, including the so-called difficult and non-commercial, and poems from across the formal spectrum; to situate poetical works within historical frameworks and lineages; to learn and use poetic terms and employ this language as we read critically; to develop as a community of writers who provide supportive and critical feedback on each other's work; to compose a variety of poems with an emphasis on formal experimentation rather than on personal expression only; to leave the course well acquainted with literary movements and historical periods of the last century in particular.

### Required Books

Spahr, Juliana. *This Connection of Everyone with Lungs*. University of California Press: Berkeley, 2005.

Course packet available at \_\_\_\_\_

On-line resource: The Electronic Poetry Center at Buffalo at [www.buffalo.edu/epc](http://www.buffalo.edu/epc)

### Requirements and Grading

1. participation and attendance, including discussions, group work, in-class writing exercises, field trips, workshops (10%)
2. weekly assignments of readings, presentations (20%)
3. weekly writing assignments, typed (20%)
4. two close readings of poems, one poetic statement, both typed (20%)
5. attendance at two poetry readings (10%)
5. final collection of poems (20%)

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Poetic Terms and Movements

demotic	end rhyme	Black Arts Movement
hermetic	slant rhyme	multiculturalism
list poem	internal rhyme	feminism
free verse	repetition	Harlem Renaissance/New Negro Movement
metaphor	caesura	Imagism
simile	sonnet	Objectivism
personification	blues	Modernism
diction	prose poem	post-modernism
stanza	ekphrasis	Black Mountain College
line	the epic	New York School
line break	lyric	The Beats
enjambment	chant poem	Spoken Word
end-stopped	experimentalism	collage
couplet	avant-garde	documentary poetics
quatrain	chance operations	surrealism
alliteration	confessional poetry	Romanticism
rhyme	L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poetry	semiotics
narrative		



- Workshop 2
- February 22      due: collage poem (of epic sweep!)
- Composition by field, Objectivism, associative poetics  
due: read Olson
- Close reading of a poem exercise
- Workshop 3
- February 29      Dada and Surrealisms  
due: read Aimé Césaire  
due: bring in research materials for poem of a place
- Workshop 4
- The Personal/Politics Axis, Identity, Protest  
*Sylvia Plath, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich*
- March 7            Confessional poetry, Feminism  
due: poem of a place, incorporating research
- Poetics Statements  
due: read essays by Lorde and Rich
- due: Close reading of a poem #1 (2 page paper)
- Workshop 5
- March 14          Favorite poet/poem presentations
- Introduction to poetics statements
- Introduction to ekphrasis
- Workshop 6
- March 21          No class, spring break
- March 28          Required MoMA trip, ekphrasis

Language and Experimentation/Traditions, the Politics (or not) of Composition  
*Sonia Sanchez, Amiri Baraka, Nuyorican Poets, Ashbery, O'Hara, Stevens*

April 4

due: ekphrastic poem  
due: poetics statements (2 pages, typed)

Black Arts Movement: Identity and Protest  
due: read Sanchez, Baraka

Nuyorican Poetry, Spoken Word Movements  
due: read Beatty, Henderson, Holman, Piñero

The New York School with Wallace Stevens, forerunner  
due: read Ashbery, Frank O'Hara, Wallace Stevens

Workshop 7

Semiotics, Experimental Narratives, "The Open Text"  
*Gertrude Stein, Lyn Hejinian*

April 11

The New York School continued

Semiotics, representation  
due: read one section of Stein's *Tender Buttons* (available on-line),  
excerpts from Hejinian's *My Life* (also available on-line)  
due: O'Hara imitation OR rant/chant poem

Workshop 8

April 18

Text, authorship, and textual instability  
due: read Susan Howe  
due: Stein imitation, Hejinian imitation

Introduction to Juliana Spahr's  
*This Connection of Everyone With Lungs*

Workshop 9

April 25

Wrap-up discussion of Spahr  
due: close reading of a poem #2 (2 page paper)

Workshop 10

May 2

Favorite poem/poet presentations

Review final collection expectations, revisions

Workshop 11

May 9

Reading/Celebration  
Final collections are due