

MEDAILLE COLLEGE
AGASSIZ CIRCLE
BUFFALO, NEW YORK

COURSE OUTLINE

Program: Humanities
Course Number: ENG 435
Course Title: Major Authors: T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound
Credits: 3
Prerequisites: ENG 110 and one literature class at the 200 level

A. Catalog Description of Course:

In this course, students will survey the poetry and critical prose of two of America's most prolific and esoteric 20th - century poets, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. The maturation and refinement of their aesthetic goals will be studied, with attention focused on the historical and cultural contexts of their writing – World Wars I and II and the Modernist movement, in particular. From Pound's imprisonment for allegedly committing treason to Eliot's groundbreaking literary theories, students will not only garner a wealth of poetic and historical knowledge crucial to understanding all subsequent American writing, they will study two fascinating and remarkable lives.

B. Goals:

- to enrich students' cultural lives and their awareness of the scope and impact of T.S. Eliot's and Ezra Pound's work.
- to specifically encourage close reading of, and discussion about, Eliot's poetry and critical prose and Pound's poetry; to build students' close reading skills generally.
- to explore the sociopolitical contexts that spurred Eliot and Pound in creating their works, and the interrelationships between their lives and their works.
- to discuss the progression of the American 20th century poetic tradition from the turn of the century through the time of Pound's death, and to explore Eliot's and Pound's roles in this aesthetic progression.

C. Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- understand the place of Eliot and Pound in poetic history, and why understanding their works is crucial in understanding all American poetry

that follows.

- comprehend the hallmarks of Modernist poetry, recognize how Eliot and Pound shaped the Modernist tradition, and identify examples of Modernist principles in their works.
- see the works of Eliot and Pound in light of their sociopolitical and personal contexts.
- discuss in functional poetic terms the devices and techniques employed by Eliot and Pound.
- functionally understand basic critical theory, in general, and Eliot's contributions to it, specifically.
- speak and write confidently in critical and theoretical literary terms.

D. Outline of Course Content:

I Backgrounds: Eliot and Pound

- A. Expatriate tendencies
 1. Eliot: British or American?
 2. Pound and the woes of World War II
- B. The alliance of Eliot and Pound

II The Modernist Era

- A. Modernist aesthetics – literary and visual arts
- A. Modernism as a response to global conditions
- A. Eliot's and Pound's roles as Modernists
 1. Eliot: critic and poet
 - a. important critical contributions including Auditory Imagination, Impersonal Theory, Objective Correlative
 - b. New Criticism
 2. Pound: poet and literary benefactor
 - a. Imagism and its Asian roots
 - b. promotion of nonmetrical verse (i.e. *free verse*)

III Reading and study of Eliot's major works

- A. from *Prufrock* (1917)
- B. from *Poems* (1920)
- C. *The Wasteland* (1922)
- D. *Four Quartets* (1936-1943)
 1. some themes: shift from formalism to freer metrics, spiritual development

IV Reading and study of Pound's major works

- B. from *Cathay* (1915)
- C. selected *Cantos* (1925-1940)

- D. from *The Pisan Cantos* (1948)
1. some themes: fragmentation, Imagism, Eastern influences

E. (Tentative) Required Texts:

Eliot, T.S. *Collected Poems, 1909-1962*. NY: Harcourt, 1963.

—, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Pound, Ezra, *Selected Cantos of Ezra Pound*. NY: Norton, 1988.

—, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, T.S. Eliot (Editor). NY: Norton, 1968.

F. Suggested Modes, Media and Techniques of Instruction:

Lecture, close reading, class discussion, group presentations

G. Instructor References (Partial):

Baumann, Walter. *Roses from the Steel Dust: Collected Essays on Ezra Pound*. NY: NPF, 2000.

Bradbury, Malcolm and James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism*. NY: Penguin, 1976.

Donoghue, Denis. *Words Alone: The Poet T.S. Eliot*. CT: Yale Univ. Press, 2000.

Eliot, T.S. *Selected Essays: 1917-1932*. NY: Harcourt, 1950.

— *To Criticize the Critic and Other Writings*. U. Nebraska Press, 1992.

Fraser, G.S. *Writers and Critics: Ezra Pound*. NY: Barnes & Noble, 1965.

Gardner, Helen. *The Art of T.S. Eliot*. NY: Dutton, 1959.

Patterson, Gertrude. *T.S. Eliot: Poems in the Making*. UK: U. Manchester Press, 1971.

Pound, Ezra. *Selected Prose, 1909-1965*. Ed. William Cookson. NY: Norton, 1975.

— *ABC of Reading*. Norton, 1960.

— *Translations*. Norton, 1963.

Rosenthal, M.L. *The Modern Poets: A Critical Introduction*. NY: Oxford Univ. Press, 1965.

Williamson, George. *A Reader's Guide to T.S. Eliot*. NY: Syracuse, 1998.