

## Sophister Module Description Template 2023-24

Full Name: ***US Poetry since 1945***

Short Name: ***US Poetry***

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Stephen Matterson smttrson@tcd.ie

**ECTS Weighting:** 10

**Semester Taught:** Hilary

**Year/JS/SS** SS

### **Module Content:**

Poets to be studied will likely include William Carlos Williams, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, John Berryman, Allen Ginsberg, Elizabeth Bishop, Gwendolyn Brooks, Adrienne Rich, Bob Dylan, John Ashbery and Claudia Rankine. We will also look at key essays by the poets and other relevant critical material. This is a seminar-based course; classes will typically involve an introduction to the poet followed by sessions of close readings in which students are expected to participate actively.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

On successful completion of this module a student should be able to

1. Identify and describe the characteristics of the poets studied and analyse their connections with other major authors and literary movements.
2. Employ a highly developed range of interpretive strategies using appropriate critical vocabulary and theory.
3. Examine US culture and history as contexts for the work of the poets on the course.
4. Differentiate between the significant theorists and theories of poetry studies.
5. Generate research questions through the applied techniques of literature review, bibliographic enquiry, database and archive search.
6. Evaluate poetry in sophisticated written and oral presentation.

### **Learning Aims:**

Since the end of World War 2, poetry in the US underwent a series of radical transformations, themselves linked to the shifting social and historical landscape of the nation. With the ending of Modernism as represented by the work of Stevens, Moore, Pound and Eliot, a new generation of poets redefined poetry, and in particular its relation to US culture. In this option we'll trace some of these groups and movements: the 'middle generation'; the Beats; postmodernism; the Black Mountain School. We'll also reflect on key topics—including: poetry and race; the ethics of representation; "confessionalism"; Language Poetry; the relation between private and public. We will also reflect on the concept of the poetry 'book' or 'sequence and how this changes the approach to the supposedly individual poem.

**Assessment Details** 1 Research exercise (1,500 words 20%), + 1 essay (4,500 words 80%)

**Preliminary Reading List** We'll mainly use selections from the poets--specific reading will be made available before each class. For preliminary reading, students should consult an authoritative anthology—such as *The Oxford Book of American Poetry* and read the selections of the poets with whom we'll engage.