

AL 488

Bogaziçi Üniversitesi

Summer Session, 2020

Instructor: Kenan Sharpe

Course Title:

Literature and the American 1960s

Course Description:

This course looks at a rich and turbulent period in American history, the 1960s, to investigate how historical pressures affect literature's possibilities. We explore literary texts (poetry, fiction, and journalistic writing) that reflect the energies of the social movements of the long 1960s (late 1950s to early 1970s). Our focus is on the literature of the Civil Rights Movement, the bohemian and hippie counterculture, the women's movement, and the poetry emerging from various forms of minority nationalism, especially the Black Arts Movement. We explore a number of literary forms and styles that were pivotal during the 1960s: the manifesto, speculative fiction, the non-fiction novel, and social movement poetry. Studying various examples of 1960s literatures allows us to see what kind of cultural work was performed by these modes and to understand why such texts circulated and proliferated amidst the political turmoil of the period.

Readings (subject to modification by the instructor):

Week 1: Context: The Global 1960s and the U.S.

Fredric Jameson, "Periodizing the '60s"

Cynthia A. Young, *Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left* (introduction)

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*

Week 2: Civil Rights Movement and Decolonization

James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time* (continued)

Magdalena J. Zaborowska, *James Baldwin's Turkish Decade: Erotics of Exile* (selections)

Richard Wright, *The Color Curtain: A Report on the Bandung Conference* (selections)

Week 3: The Counterculture and New Journalism

Allen Ginsberg, "Howl"

Diane di Prima, *Revolutionary Letters* (selections)

Tom Wolfe, *The Electric Kool-Aid Acid Test* (selections)

Norman Mailer, *The Armies of the Night* (selections)

Joan Didion, *Slouching Towards Bethlehem: Essays* (selections)

Week 4: Manifestos

Marjorie Perloff, "Violence and Precision: The Manifesto as Art Form"

Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) Position Paper, "Women in the Movement" (1964)

Stokely Carmichael & Charles Hamilton, "Black Power" (1966)

Students for a Democratic Society, "Port Huron Statement" (1969)

Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, "The Black Panther Platform" (1966)

Valerie Solanas, *SCUM Manifesto* (1967) (selections)

Frances M. Beal, "Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female" (1969)

Armendo B. Rendon, "El Plan de Aztlán" (1969)

Week 5: Poetry and the Vietnam War

Denise Levertov, *To Stay Alive*

Robert Duncan, *Ground Work: Before the War/In the Dark* (selections)

Philip Mahony, *From Both Sides Now: The Poetry of the Vietnam War and Its Aftermath* (selections)

Week 6: Feminism and Speculative Fiction

Marge Piercy, *Woman on the Edge of Time*

Marianne DeKoven, *Utopia Limited: The Sixties and the Emergence of Postmodernism* (introduction)

Week 7: Movement Poetry

Larry Neal, "The Black Arts Movement"

Sonia Sanchez, *We a baddDDD people*

Amiri Baraka (LeRoi Jones), *Black Magic* (selections)

Robin Morgan, *Sisterhood Is Powerful: An Anthology of Writings from the Women's Liberation Movement* (selections)

Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales, "I am Joaquin /Yo Soy Joaquin"

Assignments:

Quiz: At the end of Week 2, there will be a multiple-choice and short-answer quiz on the historical context of the global 1960s and the American 1960s.

Creative assignment: After focusing on the manifesto as a key genre of the 1960s and discussing how it is structured, in Week 5 students will write short manifestos for an imaginary cultural movement of their choice. Students can either work alone or collaborate in groups for this assignment.

Final paper: The final paper will ask students to select 2-3 texts among those we studied this semester to illustrate the ways historical developments and social movements help us to understand and analyze cultural developments. The paper will require both close reading and the ability to link text to context.