

English 4442  
Feminist Poets of the Twentieth Century and Modernism  
Tues/Thurs 2:40-4:05  
Dr. Paula Hayes

Modernisms of the twentieth century were birthed out of huge seismic cultural shifts from the effects of the World Wars, industrialization, cultural capitalism, changing views on religion, and the collapse of grand narratives. Amidst all of these sweeping forces of change were the voices of female poets who experimented with form by looking toward new aesthetics in art in the avant-garde, expressionism, and surrealism, returned to the classical myths of the Greeks, and created confessional spaces out of which they were able to posit a strong sense of self-agency.

- What is the relationship of feminism to confessional poetics?
- What does it mean for female poets to construct an identity that queries the performative roles of gender and sexuality?
- What can reading feminist poets of the twentieth century teach us about understanding gender in today's society?

In this course, we will read a wide range of female poets starting with Sappho as a precursor to modernist poetics; onward to the first wave of modernists with H.D. (Hilda Doolittle), Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore; and concluding with the second wave of modernists with Elizabeth Bishop, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton. We will also examine the contribution of the modernists Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, and Robert Lowell.



