ALLISON HEDGE COKE: Class Action / Reaction

This is a culturally rich workshop based in kinship and literary action. Through examination of our representative personal cultural/social communities, and quick surveys of several poetic/literary kinship and relevant aesthetic samples, we will embrace the opportunity to engage in crafting successful pieces, while strengthening our understanding of activist strategies available in kinships and technologies of our space, time, and place. Be prepared to walk in with a poem and come planning to write tons more.

Allison Adelle Hedge Coke’s work includes Streaming (CD/book, eco-social justice), Off-Season City Pipe (eco-ethos/labor), Dog Road Woman (identity), Blood Run (an encoded verse-play orchestration lobbying for a sacred site), groundbreaking Indigenous western hemispheric anthologies (including multiple Indigenous languages and poetics), Effigies II, Effigies, & Sing: Poetry from the Indigenous Americas, her memoir of growing up as a mixed-racial laborer, heavily involved with the land and waters, and as second daughter of a mother with chronic schizophrenia, Rock, Ghost, Willow, Deer, & Icicles (play, disability), & is currently in-production in a climate change film, Red Dust.

MARCELLA DURAND & RICH O’RUSSA: Print Publication Propaganda Poem

A poem could be, in a sense, considered as a Temporary Autonomous Zone, where a non-capitalistic freely creative linguistic space may be created and inhabited. Poems have the potential additional advantage of portability, particularly when combined with new and old propagandistic techniques, ranging from the human mic to wheat pasting poetry posters of our own design and execution, and alternate modes of publication, which can even include opening a window and speaking poems to random passersby. In this class, we will explore the process of creating these poetic TAZs and continue through how poems can be diversely designed, printed, and published to affect/effect the world.
Marcella Durand is the author of Deep Eco Pré (with Tina Darragh), AREA, Traffic & Weather, and Western Capital Rhapsodies. She is a member of the Belladonna Collaborative and has written, taught, and spoken about the potential intersections of ecology and poetry.

Richard O’Russa is the founder and owner of ITDO Creative, and has printed work by Alice Notley, Julie Patton, Anselm Berrigan, Diane di Prima, and many other poets under his imprints, Erato and Time Release presses. Together, Durand and O’Russa edited and published the (invisible) city, a collection of poetry and art inspired by Italo Calvino’s The Invisible Cities.

BHANU KAPIL & ANDREA SPAIN: An Ethics of Incarnate Form

To dream: a philosophy of multitudes—pre-formed yet embodied, imminent [swarming]. Toward: our own attempts to write [imagine] the vulnerable and incarnate: forms: writing might take. To take up: what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has called “the permanent operation of an altered normality.” Imaginary 1: Abject figures in U.S. phantasmatic life: refugees, zombies, protesters, Palestinians, migrants. Imaginary 2: What the rhizome risks: the assimilation and appropriation of subaltern lives and artistic processes. That’s right. We are going to think through these things together. And we are going to write. We are going to write ourselves out of one life into another. In the space of one intense, radical, and deeply felt week.

Bhanu Kapil is the author of five full-length books, most recently Ban en Banlieue (Nighboat Books, 2014). She teaches through the monster at the Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics. This year in New Delhi, she gave a performance that engaged earth memory, pilgrimage, nervous system rhythms, and a politics of the body, as part of the two-year memorial for Nirbhaya, “The Fearless One.”

Andrea Spain’s work investigates philosophies of time, materiality, and becoming in the postcolonial present. Focusing on contemporary global apartheids, she teaches literature and cultural theory at Mississippi State University. In 2014, she gave a talk on temporality and encounter at the African Literature Association Annual Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Bhanu and Andrea have been in symbiotic conversation about multitudes, cultural appropriation, resistance, and the form a book might take [never take] since 1995. They co-taught a class on Francis Bacon, Deleuze, and Triptych Forms and another, Writing the Event, in prior Summer Writing Programs.

MARK NOWAK: Insurgent Poetics

This workshop will examine the intersections of poetry and insurgency in poem-making and community-based creative writing workshop facilitation. Using texts as varied as Paulo Freire, Roque Dalton, anti-apartheid worker poets from South Africa, and contemporary global worker poets, students will learn to cultivate what labor historian Kim Moody dubbed “imaginative militancy” and look for ways to articulate this to poetic and social practices in the larger world.

Mark Nowak, a 2010 Guggenheim fellow, is the author of Coal Mountain Elementary (Coffee House Press, 2009) and Shut Up Shut Down (Coffee House Press, 2004), a New York Times “Editor’s Choice.” He has facilitated creative writing workshops with autoworkers, domestic workers, farm workers & others across the USA, EU, and South Africa. A native of Buffalo, Nowak currently directs the MFA program at Manhattanville College in Purchase, New York.
BERNADETTE MAYER & PHILIP GOOD:
Don't get mad, write a poem

May the guy who bought the field fall into a bramble bush.—Bernadette Mayer

This workshop is designed to introduce students to the Insult Poem. The class will examine the origins of insult poetry and discover work from various poets who have used this form throughout history. Participants will complete a number of original insult poems and discuss their poems in a workshop setting.

Bernadette Mayer is the recipient of the 2014 Poetry Society of America's Shelley Memorial Award. For many years Mayer lived and worked on Manhattan’s Lower East Side. She was the director of St. Mark’s Poetry Project from 1980 to 1984. She continues to write progressive poetry from her home in East Nassau, New York. Recent publications include The Helens of Troy, NY and Sonnets Expanded 25th Anniversary Edition.

Philip Good is a graduate of The School of Visual Arts in Manhattan. In the ’80s Good co-edited, with Bill DeNoyelles, Blue Smoke, the last of the mimeo poetry magazines. Good’s poetry can be found online with BigBridge, Exquisite Corpse, and The Volta. Good’s book Untitled Writings From A Member Of The Blank Generation released in 2011 by Trembling Pillow Press, New Orleans, was praised by Lisa Jarnot and Michael Gizzi.

STEVEN TAYLOR: Songworks

The class becomes a band for a week. We spend a session discussing various approaches to song writing, using the Anthology of American Folk Music as a model. Then each student brings in a lyric or a melody or an idea and we collaborate on developing and arranging the material. Bring an instrument (any instrument) if you have one. Otherwise, all you need is a willingness to sing and collaborate. At the end of the week we put on a concert.

Steven Taylor toured and performed with Allen Ginsberg 1976–96. His music for Ginsberg’s poems has been played by the Mondriaan Quartet and the Pro Arte Quartet. Since 1984 he has been a member of the seminal underground rock band the Fugs. He has collaborated on theater works with librettist Kenward Elmslie and has performed with numerous poets in the U.S. and Europe. His False Prophet: Field Notes from the Punk Underground was published by Wesleyan University Press in 2003. In 1988 he composed music for The Eye & Ear Theater’s revival of Ginsberg’s Tony-Award-winning play Kaddish and his setting of “Footnote to Howl” was featured at the Howl festival in 2005. His commissioned work on a text by Jack Kerouac premiered at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts at Birmingham University in 2008 at the opening of the On the Road manuscript exhibition.

MARGARET RANDALL: Writing from Global Consciousness and Personal Experience

In this course we will go into deep exploration of creativity and activism. We will make our weeklong communal experience more than the sum of what each of us brings to it. What, if any, is the writer’s responsibility to effecting profound social change? Can art change the world? In what ways can art and activism move together without either limiting or distorting the other? How can we translate our frustration at the state of the world and/or within our communities into compelling creative work? We will read great works by writers who have been involved in social change, and produce and critique work of our own.

Margaret Randall (New York 1936) is fortunate to have accompanied great social change with her activism. From 1961 to 1984 she lived in Mexico, where she founded and edited an important bilingual literary magazine and was active in the 1968 Student Movement; in Cuba during its revolution’s second decade; and in Nicaragua following the Sandinista takeover. Upon her return to the United States, the government ordered her deported, based on opinions expressed in some of her books. She won her case in 1989. Among her recent books are The Rhizome as a Field of Broken Bones, About Little Charlie Lindberg (both poetry), and Che on My Mind (essay).
KYLE SCHLESINGER: A Poetics of the Book

What is a book and how does it mean? Sure, a book is an embodiment of knowledge, but what does the book itself as an object and subject teach us about the history of people, ideas, technology, commerce, art, and the environment? We will be learning the foundational elements of letterpress printing, and you will be encouraged to make your own words, images, concepts, and materials—like Stéphane Mallarmé says, ‘Everything in the world exists in order to end up as a book.’

Kyle Schlesinger is the author of Parts Of Speech (Chax Press, 2014), The Do How (with James Yeary, Great Fainting Spells, 2014), and other works. He is proprietor of Cuneiform Press and Associate Professor of Publishing at UHV.

JONATHAN SKINNER: Communication in the Seismic Channel: Placing Ecopoetics

Taking a cue from infrasonic communicators—whales, elephants, tectonic plates—let’s explore gaps, between disciplines, global north and south, political ideologies, cultures, and languages, for the deep channel of language change poets might effect. This work extends beyond play with words. Where do we place poetry? What assumptions do we challenge? How do we activate the ecotone between language art and the myriad species of endeavor critical to environmental communication? Let’s write earth magnitude into micropolitics.

Jonathan Skinner founded the journal ecopoetics, featuring creative-critical intersections between writing and ecology. Skinner has published essays on Charles Olson, Ronald Johnson, Lorine Niedecker, Mei-mei Berman, Bernadette Mayer, translations of French poetry and garden theory, essays on bird song from the perspective of ethnopoetics, and on horizontal concepts such as the Third Landscape. His poetry publications include Birds of Tifti (BlazeVOX, 2011), Warblers (Albion, 2010), and Political Cactus Poems (Pal Press, 2005).

JULIANA SPAHR: Networks of Activism

A discussion-based class and an historical survey that attempts to understand the “network of activism within the writing community,” its possibilities and its limitations. Readings may include Shelley’s Mask of Anarchy, McKay’s If We Must Die, some Césaire, Rukeyser’s “Book of the Dead,” some essays by and/or about Brecht, Lenin, Mao, U.S. movement poetics, Badiou. I’m interested in trying to locate what allows literature to at moments feel so crucial to various sorts of resistance and at other moments (as in today) not.

Juliana Spahr edits the book series Chain Links with Jena Osman and the collectively funded Subpress with nineteen other people and Commune Editions with Joshua Clover and Jasper Bernes. With David Buuck she wrote Army of Lovers. She has edited with Stephanie Young, A Megaphone: Some Enactments, Some Numbers, and Some Essays about the Continued Usefulness of Crotchless-pants-and-a-machine-gun Feminism (Chain Links, 2011), with Joan Retallack, Poetry & Pedagogy: the Challenge of the Contemporary (Palgrave, 2006), and with Claudia Rankine, American Women Poets in the 21st Century (Wesleyan University Press, 2002).

SPECIAL GUEST

ELIOT WEINBERGER is the primary translator of Octavio Paz into English. His anthology American Poetry Since 1950: Innovators and Outsiders (1993) was a bestseller in Mexico, and his edition of Jorge Luis Borges’s Selected Non-Fictions (1999) received the National Book Critics Circle prize for criticism. His publications include the collection of essays Karmic Traces: 1993–1999 and a translation of Bei Dao’s Unlock (with Iona Man-Cheong), both published by New Directions in 2000. He is the editor of The New Directions Anthology of Classical Chinese Poetry (2003).

Lecture: Thursday, July 2: 1:00–2:30 p.m.
Reading: Thursday, July 2: 7:30 p.m.