BETWEEN ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION: APPROACHES TO ENGLISH POETRY – 5 Creds.

José María Pérez Fernández (jmperez@ugr.es), Andrew Hadfield, Neil Rhodes, Greg Walker

This course explores the relation between poetic form and the interpretations that arise from its verbal and metrical configuration. We will focus on the early modern English canon, and on the relation between the history of political ideas, theology and poetics, with some sporadic incursions into the visual arts. The first sessions in the seminar will address the Classical and Augustinian background of Petrarchism, and its historical importance as a milestone in the history of Western poetry. Certain aspects of Augustine’s work exemplify the interweaving of rhetoric, poetics and theology into a conglomerate that would contribute to mould many of the ideas that sustained the poetry of Petrarch and the poetics of humanism. Augustine’s poetic theology, in turn, resulted from his combination of the Jewish tradition with Classical Roman and Greek philosophy, notably Stoicism and Neoplatonism, all of it against the background of the rhetorical tradition that the West inherited from the Classical World.

We will then move on to a consideration of European humanism as the general context for our subsequent approach to the first English Petrarchists, i.e. Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and Sir Thomas Wyatt. We will analyse their poetry, and some of their translations / adaptations from Latin and Italian poetry from the perspective provided by our former approach to Petrarchism and its background. But we will also read their poems under the light shed by the specific historical moment in which they lived, and we will examine how the poetry and poetics of Surrey and Wyatt respond to the ideological debates and the actual political situation during the reign of Henry VIII—a moment that featured intense political and religious controversies stemming from the Protestant Reformation.

Next, our reading of Sir Philip Sidney’s poetry and also of his treatise Defense of Poetry will give us the opportunity to explore the presence in Sidney’s eclectic work of the tradition that we have studied in previous sessions. We shall see how this eclecticism also shows up in certain sonnets from his Astrophil and Stella. We will end our section on English Petrarchism by reading and analysing some of Shakespeare’s sonnets. This part of our seminar will conclude with a lecture on the parallelisms between the tropes of the body politic, the body of the text, and the significance of the body in theology and poetics (“Corporeal Tropes in English Poetry and the Visual Arts.”).

The second part of the seminar will be conducted by our three visiting scholars. Professor Andrew Hadfield will conduct a seminar on the topic of Shakespeare and political theory which explores the relation between Shakespeare’s work and early modern republicanism as exemplified in Macbeth and Hamlet. In the first part of his seminar, Professor Neil Rhodes will explore the concept of “common” in Early Modern England, which relates with the issues on language and the political thought of humanism. The political and social aspect of language and knowledge will be approached in the second part of his seminar (“Knowledge and Social Benefit in Early Modern England”). Our seminars will conclude with Professor Greg Walker’s analysis of Shakespeare’s Henry V, which will focus on how this play articulates the figure of an ideal monarch, and how its text evinces the presence of discursive and ideological traces from all the previous traditions addressed in the seminar.
The contents of this seminar are related and continuous with those in Margarita Carretero and Gerardo Rodríguez’s seminar (“The Role of Political Discourse in the Origins and Evolution of the English Novel”), in which they explore the relation between the origins of the English novel and political discourse; also with Professor José Luis Martínez-Dueñas’s seminar (“Research Methods in Historical Sociolinguistics of the English Language”), since the texts he uses in his sociolinguistic approach to the development of English and its rhetorical strategies are taken from documents of political theory spanning the period that goes from the late Middle Ages and Early Modernity to the 20th century. Our approach to Petrarchism and its construction of a certain female poetic ideal provides a connection with other courses in the MA program that deal with issues of gender and literature.

There will be no written final essay in this seminar. Students will be evaluated through their class presentations, and their active participation in the seminars. Students will also be required to write a short essay after each session on the topics dealt with in it.

Calendar and syllabus

**Tuesday, January 14th 2014, 18:00 – 19:00**
Introduction to the seminar, methodology and the reading assignments
Grading policy:
- Class presentations and participation: 50%
- Written essays: 50%

**Tuesday, January 28th 2014 – 18:00 – 20:00**

*Language-theology-politics-poetics*

**Tuesday, February 11th 2014 – 18:00 – 20:00**

*The poetics of Petrarchism*
  - An anthology from Sidney’s *Astrophil and Stella*.
    - “Loving in truth, and faine in verse my love to show” (*A&S* 1)
    - “Vertue alas, now let me take some rest” (*A&S* 4)
    - “It is most true, that eyes are form’d to serve” (*A&S* 5)
    - “Having this day my horse, my hand, my launce”(*A&S* 41)
    - “Desire, though thou my old companion art”(*A&S* 72)
  - A selection of Shakespeare’s sonnets:

  - Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey
    - “Wyatt resteth here”
    - “So cruel a prison how could betide, alas”
    - “Th’Assyrians’ king”

  - Sir Thomas Wyatt
    - “Whoso list to hunt”
    - “Farewell, Love”
    - “Who list his wealth and ease retain”
    - “Mine own John Poins”

**Tuesday February 25th 2014 – 18:00 - 20:00**

*Translation – politics – poetics – metrical form*


**Tuesday, March 11th 2013 – 16:00 – 18:00**

**Conclusion: The Eclecticism of Sidney’s Poetics: his *Defence of Poesie***

**Tuesday March 18th 2014, 16:00 – 18:00**


**Tuesday April 8th 2014, 16:00 – 18:00**
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Speaker(s)</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday April 22nd</td>
<td>16:00 – 18:00</td>
<td>Andrew Hadfield – Part I</td>
<td>Shakespeare and Political Theory</td>
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<td>Reading assignments:</td>
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<td>- William Shakespeare. <em>Macbeth</em></td>
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<td>- William Shakespeare. <em>Hamlet</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday April 23rd</td>
<td>16:00 – 18:00</td>
<td>Andrew Hadfield – Part II</td>
<td>Shakespeare and Political Theory</td>
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<td>Neil Rhodes – Part I</td>
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<td>“Common’ in Early Modern England”</td>
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<td>Thursday April 24th</td>
<td>16:00 – 18:00</td>
<td>Neil Rhodes – Part II</td>
<td>“Knowledge and Social Benefit in Early Modern England”</td>
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<td>Monday April 28th</td>
<td>18:00 – 19:30</td>
<td>Greg Walker – Part 1</td>
<td>'Shakespeare's <em>Henry V</em> and the representation of kingship</td>
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<td>Reading assignments: William Shakespeare, <em>Henry V</em></td>
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<td>Tuesday April 29th</td>
<td>18:00 – 19:30</td>
<td>Greg Walker – Part 2</td>
<td>'Shakespeare's <em>Henry V</em> and the representation of kingship</td>
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