

**ENGL 698: *Lyric Hybrid: Poetry, Language, History, Visual Media, & Thought*** Tuesday: 11:00am-1:50 p.m. Fall 2024

Prof. Mark Irwin

**Office Hours:** Wednesday: 1-2 pm Tuesday: 2-3pm

In this course we will direct our attention toward poets who incorporate different forms within their work while focusing on language, history, eco-poetics, and the effects of visual art and media in their work. This class will include a creative component, one that employs archival research with both history and visual imagery for a project of length. We will also consider how electronic media impacts writing and location: the notion of *poetry and place* in a placeless world of global technology. How does the writing of poetry, and its forms, now reflect this? How does the field of action within a poem become more permissibly divergent? Discussions around the braided narrative and elegy will include works by Jorie Graham, Natalie Diaz, Arthur Sze, Paisley Rekdal, Roger Reeves, Forrest Gander, Bei Dao, Robin Coste Lewis, Annelyse Gelman, Brenda Hillman, Laura Kasischke, Angie Estes, Jake Skeets, and others. During this class we will also visit some visual artists' installations in hope that this will inspire your own work.

### **Course Objectives**

Expected learning objectives and outcomes include developing the tools to experience and apprehend works of art; considering the context and cultural conditions in which a work was produced or received; gaining an understanding of the mutual influence between literature, philosophy, and art, and their relevance to the world of ideas and life; exploring the value and use of art and literature in the development of the individual and his or her ethical basis; learning to read critically and with careful attention to the use of language, and communicate effectively in class discussion and writing assignments.

Additionally, this course also serves as a workshop for poems that incorporate personal and social history, eco-poetics, and the elegy in broader terms that include social and ecological loss. We will also work together on a live doc. (HISTORY1.doc ) in which everyone will add poems that engage history in a broader sense.

**BOOKS:**

*American Hybrid: Norton Anthology of New Poetry*. Swensen & St. John, eds. New York: Norton, 2009.  
 Natalie Diaz. *Postcolonial Love Song*. Minneapolis: Graywolf, 2021.  
 Jon Fosse. *Morning and Evening*. Dalkey Archives Press, 2015.  
 Forrest Gander. *Be With*. New Directions, 2018.  
 Annelyse Gelman. *Vexations*. University of Chicago, 2023.  
 Jorie Graham. *To 2040*. Copper Canyon, 2023.  
 Donald Revell. *Pennyweight Windows: Selected Poems*. Alice James Books, 2005.  
 Brandom Som. *Tripas*. University of Georgia Press, 2023.

**Pdf's: FRANCE 7, FRANCE 3, FRANCE 2 = F7, F3, F2 Please print HISTORY1.doc This is a live doc to which everyone will add poems that engage history.**

- WEEK 1 Time & Memory in Poetry & Painting**  
**Truth in Art as Discovery/** Heidegger: Concealing & Revealing  
 Marina Abramovich: **The Artist is present Presence/Distance (See links)**  
 Hari Kunzru: "Be Here Now" Start Fosse: *Morning & Evening*  
 Jean Follain: "Life" S6 Martinez-Celaya: *Schneebett*  
 Larry Levis » « There are Two Worlds" F7 Revell: "Survey"  
 Merwin: "Passage" Anne Carson: 2 poems (**Syllabus**)  
 Robert Creeley: "Echo" (**Syllabus**) Creeley: "Film/Bresson"  
 Ashbery: "At North Farm"= F2 Sarah Manguso; "Rider"  
  
**\*Exercise 1:** Poem that relates a personal scar & also a social historical scar. See Mark Bradford (150 Portrait Tone)  
 HISTORY1.doc: Read "Oreo" & "For the Union Dead"
- WEEK 2 Poetry & Originality: What is Originality?**  
 Forrest Gander: "Time & the Hour" Peter Gizzi: "Beginning with Weil" Syllabus 5 Estes: "I want to talk about you" F7 (p. 37)  
 Merwin: "How We Are Spared" **Aristotle: What might happen**  
 Discussion: Starting with the line: Form as Vision/Crossing  
 Aristotle: Poetry as a Worlds of Possibility: Borders & Boundaries  
 Levinas: "Illeity"  
**Mark Irwin Essay:** "The Emergency of Poetry" Pdf
- WEEK 3 Poetry & History:**  
 Natalie Diaz: *Postcolonial Love Song*.  
 Brandom Som. *Tripas*. Gander: "Time & the Hour" in *American Hybrid* Estes: "Yours Truly" Syllabus 9  
**Workshop:** presentation of elegy involving personal & historical loss (See Hillman, Estes, & Gizzi poems)

- WEEK 4      **The Elegy & Public Myth**  
 Fosse: *Morning and Evening* (Finish)  
 Anslem Kiefer: *Lot's Frau*  
 Graham: "Poem" F7  
 Graham: *Begin To 2040*  
 Ada Limon: "The End of Poetry" F7  
 Levis: F7  
 Annelise Gelman. *Vexations*.
- WEEK 5      **Separation of Voice, Radical Perception,  
 Immediacy, & Memorability in Poetry**  
 Anne Carson Poems: Syllabus    Ellis: "Oreo"  
  
*American Hybrid*: Gander, Hillman, Notley, Angel, Ashbery,  
 Lauterbach, Fulton, Dubie, C.D. Wright, Charles Wright  
**Revell: "My Mojave"**  
 Lenz Geerke: paintings    Creeley: "Echo" "Film/Bresson" Sayers  
**Readings: "North Farm" Merwin: "Passage," "Place," F2**  
 St. John: "Iris" Hillman: "Till It Finishes What It Does" **F3**
- WEEK 6      **Painters/Poets: Innovative forms of narrative,  
 Time, & Memory**  
 Cultural Memory in Painting    Anslem Kiefer: *Lot's Frau*  
 Van Gogh's "Shoes" Munch's "The Scream" Kiefer's "Lot's Frau"  
**Time, Memory, & Material in Graham's: "The Post Human"**  
 =F4  
 Lowell: "For the Union Dead," Thomas Sayers Ellis: "Or,"  
**Cai Guo-Qiang**: Gunpowder paintings  
**Philip Glass**: *Violin Concerto*  
**Exercise # 2: Pair art work w/ personal loss exercise:**
- WEEK 7      **Poetry Place in a Placeless World of Global Communication**  
 Narrative & Time/Mobile vs. Static Images/*Continuous vs. Static*  
*Metaphor*: Graham: "Swarm" F2 Gizzi: "Beginning with a Phrase  
 from Simone Weil" = **Syllabus** Estes' "Note" "I want to talk about  
 you" **Rimbaud's "Le Bateau Ivre" "After the Flood"** Gerhard  
 Richter: Paintings  
  
 \*\*\**Creative Project Outline Due incorporating Time/Memory*  
 \*\*\*5-component (Philosophical quote, geographical event,  
 religious idea, historical statue, cartoon character).

- WEEK 8      **Eco-poetics & Public Elegy**  
 RILKE, Duino Elegies 8<sup>th</sup> Elegy  
 Brenda Hillman, Natalie Diaz  
**Poem due that includes eco-poetics, personal,  
 and public elegy.**
- WEEK 9      **Forms of Seeing & New Forms in Poetry & Visual Art:**  
**Forms of Seeing:** John Berger: **Bacon & Walt Disney**  
 Kiefer: “Lot’s Frau” Graham F3    Mark Bradford: *WildWest*  
 Wilner: “Girl with Bees in Hair” F3    Revell “My Mohave”  
 Sze: Ox-Head Dot F3    Notlely: F3 “Beginning w/ a Stain”  
**Graham: “Pollock & Canvas”**
- WEEK 10:    **Donald Revell & Brandon Som Reading: TH, Nov. 7 \*\*\***
- WEEK 11      **Discursiveness in Poetry/Narration,  
 Point of View**  
 WRIGHT: Southern Cross, Gelman: *Vexations*. Diane  
 Seuss: *franksonnets*, Komunyakaa, Rilke: 8<sup>th</sup> Elegy
- WEEK 12      **Vision in Poetry**  
**Rimbaud’s “Le Bateau Ivre” “After the Flood”**  
 RILKE, Duino Elegies 8<sup>th</sup> Elegy    REVELL: Survey ,  
 My Mojave Dickinson: “I felt a funeral in my brain”
- WEEK 13      **Revision in Poetry:** Merwin drafts  
 MERWIN: Cover Note    **WORKSHOP:** *Dialect of Tribe*  
**Your archival long poem due**
- WEEK 14      **MANUSCRIPT REVIEWS/ Conferences**
- WEEK 15      **MANUSCRIPT REVIEWS/ Conferences**

## Beginning with a phrase from Simone Weil

There is no better time than the present when we have lost everything. It doesn't mean rain falling  
 at a certain declension, at a variable speed is without purpose or design.

The present everything is lost in time, according to laws of physics things shift  
 when we lose sight of a present,  
 when there is no more everything. No more presence in everything loved.

In the expanding model things slowly drift and everything better than the present is lost in no time.

A day mulches according to gravity  
 and the sow bug marches. Gone, the hinge cracks, the gate swings a breeze,  
 breeze contingent upon a grace opening to air,  
 velocity tied to winging clay. Every anything in its peculiar station.

The sun brightens as it bleaches, fades the spectral value in everything seen. And chaos is no better model  
 when we come adrift.

When we have lost a presence when there is no more everything. No more presence in everything loved,  
 losing anything to the present. I heard a fly buzz. I heard revealed nature,  
 cars in the street and the garbage, footprints of a world, every fly a perpetual window,  
 unalloyed life, gling, pinnacles of tar.

There is no better everything than loss when we have time. No lack in the present better than everything.

In this expanding model rain falls  
 according to laws of physics, things drift. And everything better than the present is gone  
 in no time. A certain declension, a variable speed.  
 Is there no better presence than loss?  
 A grace opening to air.  
 No better time than the present.

Peter Gizzi

## Life

A child is born  
 into a great landscape  
 half a century later  
 he's just a dead soldier  
 and this was the man  
 we saw appear and set down  
 a heavy sack of apples  
 two or three of which rolled  
 making sound among sounds of a world  
 where the bird sang on the door's  
 stone threshold.

Translated from the French by Mark Irwin

## Vie

Il naît un enfant  
 dans un grand paysage  
 un demi-siècle après  
 il n'est qu'un soldat mort  
 et c'était là cet homme  
 que l'on vit apparaître  
 et puis poser par terre  
 tout un lourd sac de pommes  
 dont deux ou trois roulèrent  
 bruit parmi ceux d'un monde  
 où l'oiseau chantait  
 sur la pierre du seuil.

Jean Follain

## On Jean Follain's "Vie"

I've been obsessed with this brilliant poem ever since I first glimpsed it in a Paris bookstall along the Seine in 1977. It's a kind of epic written by a miniaturist? Here, I use the term to reference both literature and the visual arts, for many of his poems display painterly aspects, each regaining itself from an almost still life, then moving on the way a paper bag might, hesitant in the wind. Follain married a painter, Madeleine Dinès, the daughter of another painter, Maurice Denis, who was somewhat of a symbolist. Follain practiced law briefly in Normandy, and then became a judge in Charleville, the birthplace of Arthur Rimbaud. The austere brevity and reductive power of Follain's poems may have been influenced by his familiarity with legal briefs, especially as a judge, but I by no means wish to underestimate the high artistry here.

The protraction and collapse of time in "Vie" is uncanny. The watercolor of this "great landscape" is hardly dry before the infant becomes a "dead soldier," and yet this is where the poem/painting beautifully backtracks: "this was the man / we saw appear and set down / a heavy sack of apples." I'm reminded of Heidegger's notion that "the happening of being" moves toward death.

The weight of many autumns along with Eden is there in this desperate and terrifying middle of the poem: "two or three of which rolled / making sound among sounds of a world." *May they never be picked up* and keep rolling, for it is our commerce with the world, our touch with it, that keeps us/it alive. The French literal translation, "bruit parmi ceux d'un monde" (sound among those of a world), but I like protracting the sound within the sound, the seconds within the minutes: "making sound among sounds of a world." And of course all of this, this one

sentence, this one life is poured into the “monde/world” “where the bird sang on the door’s / stone threshold.” Yes, where the entry to *house* is magically transposed to *gravestone*. The entire poem shivering within the parenthesis of life and death. —A sentence beyond the scope of any judge, except for this poet.

Mark Irwin

*Plume*, July, 2024



*Yours truly,*

*It was the best of times, it was*

*the worst of times:* every book I had

ever read came back

to read me, along with the 474,500

migrating birds that, according to

*Birdcast*, have crossed over Champaign County

flying south, so far tonight: American Redstarts,

Swainson's Thrushes, Gray Catbirds, White-crowned

Sparrows, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks. Even now

325,500 birds are in flight at an attitude,

I mean altitude, of 1,700 feet

and a speed of 27 mph, while across the Atlantic

at Paris Fashion Week, two men waving

canisters of Fabrican's liquid

fiber

circle and spray a dress onto an almost

naked model. When the white downy sheath

is complete, another woman steps forward

and shapes shoulder straps with her hands, sliding them

off the shoulders before cutting a slit

up one leg from floor to thigh. Still,

so many questions: will I love you forever

or leave you forever? And will forever be long enough

to do both? Like Huck, *I reckon I got to light out*

*for the Territory*, out where you knew the way

to my house the way a blood clot

knows the way to a heart.

Angie Estes

From: *Last Day on Earth in the Eternal City*, Unbound Editions, 2025.

## ***Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems***

### **Academic Integrity:**

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

## ***Statement on University Academic and Support Systems***

### **Students and Disability Accommodations:**

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. [The Office of Student Accessibility Services](#) (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at [osas.usc.edu](https://osas.usc.edu). You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at [osasfrontdesk@usc.edu](mailto:osasfrontdesk@usc.edu).

### **Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:**

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

### **Support Systems:**

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline consists of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-2500

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

[The Office of Student Accessibility Services \(OSAS\)](#) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

[USC Campus Support and Intervention](#) - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#) - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

[USC Emergency](#) - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

[USC Department of Public Safety](#) - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

[Office of the Ombuds](#) - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

[Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice](#) - (323) 442-2850 or [otfp@med.usc.edu](mailto:otfp@med.usc.edu)

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.