

## **POLISH 326 - POLISH TWENTIETH-CENTURY LITERATURE**

### **Description:**

The course offers the survey of 20<sup>th</sup>-century Polish literature, from the Young Poland up to the breakdown of Communism and its aftermath. This is a continuation of Polish 325, although there is no prerequisite. Polish literary movements are discussed in the context of Poland's turbulent 20<sup>th</sup>-century history as well as in the broader comparative context of European literature. Special attention is paid to most important individual authors and to close analyses of selected 20<sup>th</sup>-century Polish literary masterpieces. A knowledge of Polish is NOT required. All readings in English translation.

**Papers and Exams:** Two short (5-7 page) papers and a final test. **GRADING:** papers (25% each), test (25%), class participation (25%).

### **Syllabus:**

#### **I. THE YOUNG POLAND: 1890-1918**

Historical and cultural background

Literary program: Stanisław Przybyszewski's "Confiteor"

Poetry of Kazimierz Tetmajer, Jan Kasprowicz, and Bolesław Leśmian

Drama: Stanisław Wyspiański

Novel: Władysław Reymont, Karol Irzykowski and Stefan Zeromski

#### **II. THE INTERWAR PERIOD: 1918-1939**

Historical and cultural background. Poetry of the "Skamander"

Avant-garde poetry: Futurism and the Cracow Avantgarde: Julian Przyboś

Drama: Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz's *The Shoemakers*

Novel: Bruno Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles*

Bruno Schulz's *The Street of Crocodiles*

Novel: Witold Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke*

Witold Gombrowicz's *Ferdydurke*

#### **III. THE WAR: 1939-1945**

Historical background. Poets: Władysław Szlengel, Tadeusz Gajcy, Krzysztof Baczyński  
Tadeusz Borowski's "This Way for the Gas..." and "A Day at Harmenz."

#### **FIRST PAPER DUE**

#### **IV. THE POSTWAR PERIOD: 1945-2000**

Historical and cultural background. Czesław Miłosz's *The Captive Mind*

Postwar Polish Poetry: Anna Swirszczynska and Miron Białoszewski.  
Białoszewski's *A Memoir of the Warsaw Uprising*

Postwar Polish Poetry: Czesław Miłosz

Postwar Polish Poetry: Czesław Miłosz

Postwar Polish Poetry: Tadeusz Różewicz

Postwar Polish Poetry: Zbigniew Herbert

Postwar Polish Poetry: Zbigniew Herbert

Postwar Polish Poetry: Wisława Szymborska

Postwar Drama: Sławomir Mrożek's *Tango*

Generation 68: Stanisław Barańczak, Adam Zagajewski, Ryszard Krynicki

Literature of the 80s and 90s

Prose: Paweł Huelle's *Who Is David Weisser*

Prose: Andrzej Stasiuk's *Tales of Galicia*

#### **TEST**

#### **SECOND PAPER DUE**

#### **Required Readings:**

Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz: *The Shoemakers* (CP)

Bruno Schulz: *The Street of Crocodiles*. London: Penguin, 1963.

Witold Gombrowicz: *Ferdydurke*. New Haven: Yale U. Press, 2000.

Tadeusz Borowski: "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen" and "A Day at Harmenz" (CP)

Czeslaw Milosz: *Captive Mind* ("The Pill of Murti-Bing")  
*Postwar Polish Poetry*. Berkeley: UCP, 1983.

Wisława Szymborska: *View with a Grain of Sand*. New York: Harbrace, 1993.

Paweł Huelle: *Who Is David Weisser*. New York: Harbrace, 1992

Andrzej Stasiuk: *Tales of Galicia*. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 2003.

### **Coursepack: Polish 326 at Accu Copy (Part I and Part II)**

#### **Recommended Readings:**

Władysław Reymont: *The Peasants*

Stefan Żeromski: *Ashes*

Witold Gombrowicz: *Cosmos, The Marriage*

Jerzy Andrzejewski: *Ashes and Diamonds*

Tadeusz Konwicki: *A Dreambook of Our Time, The Polish Complex*

Czeslaw Milosz: *Collected Poems*

*The Issa Valley*

Tadeusz Rozewicz: *The Survivor*

Anna Świr: *Happy as a Dog's Tail, Talking to My Body*

Miron Białoszewski: *A Memoir of the Warsaw Uprising*

Zbigniew Herbert: *Mr. Cogito, Report from the Besieged City, Barbarian in the Garden*

Adam Zagajewski: *Solidarity, Solitude* (essays), *Without End* (poetry)

#### **Anthologies:**

*Spoling Cannibals' Fun. Polish Poetry of the Last Two Decades of Communist Rule*. Ed. & tr. by Stanisław Baranczak and Clare Cavanagh. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1991.

*Ambers Aglow. An Anthology of Contemporary Polish Women's Poetry*. Ed. & Tr. by Regina Grol. Austin, TX: Host Publishers, 1996.

**Recommended Reference Book:** Czeslaw Milosz: *The History of Polish Literature*. Berkeley: UCP