

Veranstalter	Dr. Dennis Büscher-Ulbrich
Thema	Language Poetry and the End(s) of the Avant-Garde [ENG-7/a, AA-V4a/b, ENG-13, AA-MA3, AA-MA4, AA7, AA11, LAA10, AA13, AA-W, AA-WB]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-565
Zeit	Mi 8.30-10
Raum	Phil 1269
Beginn	6. April 2016

Course description:

The course provides an introduction to a post-1960s vanguard of US-American poets and critical theorists (Charles Bernstein, Bruce Andrews, Lyn Hejinian, Ron Silliman, Bob Perelman, Rae Armantrout, Barrett Watten, Erica Hunt, etc.), whose work was closely tied to newsletters and journals such as *This*, *Tottle's* or *L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E* and which came to be known as Language Poetry. We will read key texts by theoretically-inclined poets well-versed in Russian formalism, post/structuralism and Western Marxism, who are known for their passionate attachment to "the materiality of the signifier," "difficulty" and "defamiliarization," but also "play" and "pleasure."

The goal of this course is threefold: First, it seeks to provide a survey of key Language Poets and explore their critical poetics. Second, it encourages students to historicize and radically contextualize both the critical-theoretical framework and aesthetico-political tendency, or cultural practice, of the group to facilitate decidedly materialist readings. Third, it approaches Language Poetry from the perspective of historical and contemporary avant-garde theory and practice to allow for comparative readings and further broaden the scope of analysis and critique. To this end, we will also rehearse arguments about the politicization of art and the politics of poetic form in the work of Benjamin, Adorno, Kristeva, Deleuze, and Rancière. Moving on to the notion of the "neo-avant-garde" (Buchloh) and the problem of the "post avant" (Silliman/Armand), we will critique the ubiquitous discourses of "the return" and "the end" of the avant-garde, of postmodernism, of politics, etc. Will the avant-garde necessarily "remain a crucial coarticulation of artistic and political forms" (Foster)? How can it prevent being or becoming "an easy rider on the flood tide of capital" (Andrews)? How are we to understand the cultural and political impact of Language Poetry and its relationship with Flarf and (neo-)Conceptualism, not to mention neoliberal capital?

Students will be asked to join the upcoming events on April 15. Under the rubric "Writing and Reading Experimentally in the Twenty-First Century: A Transatlantic Dialogue on Contemporary Poetry," the American Studies Department (in cooperation with the U.S. Consulate General and the Amerikazentrum) will be hosting a panel discussion and scholarly workshop with Marjorie Perloff, Charles Bernstein, Susanne Rohr, and Heinz Ickstadt.