Prof. Dr. Susanne Rohr
Confessional Poetry
[ENG-7, ENG-7a, ENG-13, AA7, AA11, LAA10,
LAA13, AA-MA01, AA-MA02, AA-MA03, AA-
MA04]
Seminar II
53-561
2st. Mi 12-14

Course description:

The term confessional poetry was introduced to the cultural scene in US in the late 1950 in a review of Robert Lowell's *Life Stories* (1959). In these poems, Lowell unsparingly explores and lays open even his most painful personal problems such as the relentless cycles of his bipolar disorder or the difficulties of his marital life. In these poems, the relationship between a poem's speaker and the self was recalibrated, a heretic act according to New Criticism's dictate that had dominated the rules of poetic expression for decades. Yet with this kind of poetic style that followed colloquial speech rhythms and referred to actual historical events and real persons, Lowell, as one literary scholar put it, "made himself available, not as the abstract and universal poet but as a particular person in a particular place and time."

This new style of poetry was deemed revolutionary and had a lasting effect on the American poetic production and literary landscape. In this seminar, we will trace the history of this particular form of poetry from its beginning in the 1950 to the contemporary "post-confessional" poems and poets. Authors under consideration are, among others, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, Sharon Old, Olena Kalytiak Davis, Meg Freitag, and Terrance Hayes.

Prerequisites for successful participation in this seminar? An interest in – better yet a love for – poetry and willingness to do extensive close readings of the poetic material. I am looking forward to embarking with you on this soul-searching journey!

Please note:

Following the university's administrative guidelines regulating instruction during the pandemic situation, the course will be taught online, the details of which will be announced in due time.

Sprechstunden im Semester:	s. Sprechstundenliste
Sprechstunden in der vorlesungsfreien Zeit:	s. Sprechstundenliste