A. Cover application

1. Proposed field of study: FSLT

2. Course number: MLC 358

3. Desire and Identity in the Renaissance: the Lyric Tradition

4. Catalog description:

A comparative investigation of Italian, French, and English Renaissance lyric poetry.

5. Prerequisites: none

6. Hours of credit: 4 hours (1 unit)

7. Estimate of student enrollment: 20

8. By whom and when the course will be offered: Anthony Russell, Lidia Radi. One section of this course will be offered every third year.

9. Staffing implications: none

10. Adequacy of library, technology, and other resources: Resources are adequate

11. Relation to existing courses and curricula:

This course will count towards the Italian Studies Major and Minor. It will also count for the Interdisciplinary Concentration in Medieval and Renaissance Studies offered in English and Art History.


B. Explanation of Field of Study fulfillment

How the course fulfills FSLT:

This course will satisfy the FSLT requirement by introducing students to some of the basic questions and problems relevant to an understanding of how literary texts construct meaning. Some of the issues students will engage include: the relationship of prosodic form to content in poetic texts; the formation of literary traditions and the various processes by which literary influence operates; the status of the speaking voice in lyric poetry (what continuities or discontinuities are there between speaker and author in a poem); the ways in which different literary modes (pastoral, epithalamium, etc.) are utilized and transformed in texts, and the purposes that these modes serve; the entanglement of literary texts with their social and political contexts.
Proposed Syllabus:

In this course we will trace the development of lyric poetry from the 14th to the 17th centuries, a period of time that spanned the Italian, French, and English Renaissance. The nature of the self and of its relation to the outside world will remain a central concern in all the works examined in this course, though the perspectives articulated will differ widely. Some of the more specific questions or issues to be investigated include: 1) the relation between the poetic imagination and reality. To what degree does imagination reveal or occlude truth? To what degree is the self an unstable poetic construct rather than a divinely constituted and fixed “essence”? Does the self create its own fragmented and illusory reality, or does it inhabit a coherent universe structured by God? 2) the relation between self and other, especially as played out in the context of romantic love. Is physical beauty a manifestation of the divine? Can physical desire be sublimated into spiritual passion? Is it possible to have both? Is genuine contact with an “other” possible? To what degree can the beloved survive the process of absorption into a poetic text? 3) the relation between the poet and his predecessors, between imitation and originality. 4) the relation between ethics and aesthetics. What kind of knowledge does lyric poetry provide? Can poetry be transformative or redemptive, or is it inherently about itself? Is poetic creation and act that reflects or parodies/vervets divine creation? What is the proper relation between art and nature? 5) the relation between poet/poem and the social and political context out of which the work emerges.

Examples of possible required books:

The following is a rough outline of the main sections of this course—in all cases we will be reading a selection from these poets’ works:

1. Dante, *Inferno & Purgatorio*
2. Petrarch, *Rime Sparse*
3. Michelangelo, *Rime*
4. Francesco Berni, *Rime*
5. Tasso, *Rime*
6. Louise Labé, *Sonnets and Elegies*
7. Ronsard, *Amours de Cassandre*
8. Du Bellay, *Les Regrets*
9. Wyatt, selected poems
10. Shakespeare, *Sonnets*
11. Donne, *Songs and Sonnets & Holy Sonnets*
12. Marvell, selected poems

Course requirements:

1. Regular class attendance and active participation.
2. Two papers
3. One Midterm exam
4. One final paper or exam
5. One oral presentation

Grade distribution:
Class attendance and participation 20%
Two papers (30% - 15 % each)
One Midterm exam or paper 15 %
One oral presentation 10%
One final paper (9-10 pages) 25%