

The Unrealized: Poetics & the Sacred
RAST 2000 level, 1.5 units
August 9-13, 2010, 9-1:00

[draft Nov 09]

Christina Hutchins, PhD

Office Hours: Office Location: DSF Office, bottom northwest corner of Ecumenical Center of Berkeley (just across the street from PSR parking lot). Door is on ECB parking lot side.

Email: ckhutchins@juno.com and dsf@psr.edu

Learning Outcomes

By course's end, the student will:

- 1.) understand more deeply, appreciatively, and critically, her/his own creative processes and be able more responsibly to attend to the imaginative abilities of his/her community;
- 2.) gain basic knowledge of some theologies of creativity and contemporary poetics & have reflected on how these approaches serve social transformation.
- 3.) practice an increased *aesthetic* emphasis in/for progressive Christianity, in particular, grow more alert to relations of beauty and "the unrealized" in/for dismantling racism, sexism, heterosexism, war economies, and in developing environmentally and humanly responsible communities.
- 4.) have enhanced her/his awareness of the *disciplined practice* and *attention to craft* in language and other arts in relation to *public* discourse;
- 5.) have critically considered process/poetic notions of creation, incarnation and eschatology.

Learning Tools and Requirements

1. Students will write three brief reflection papers in relation to course readings, *30% of the course grade*.
2. Class participation is crucial to this course. This includes **close reading** of assigned essays and poems, **class attendance**, and participating as both speaker and active listener during **class discussions**. *30% of the grade*.
3. Each student **will write a final essay (5 pages, typed)** critically analyzing some social issue, theological conundrum, or literary work in relation to the creative process and concepts of "the sacred unrealized" considered in class. The paper will cite course readings on poetics, aesthetics, and philosophy/theology, and **is due via email on Tuesday Aug 17th at 11 pm**. **Due date is firm**. *Final paper contributes 40% of the course grade*.

Grading & Plagiarism Policies: <http://www.psr.edu/grades>;
<http://www.psr.edu/plagiarism-policy>

Textbooks

The following books, or selections from them, form the main **required** reading for the course. Available at the CAL bookstore and on reserve at the GTU Library:

- Ghiselin, Brewster, ed *The Creative Process: Reflections on Invention in the Arts and Science* (Univ of CA Press)
Whitehead, Alfred North, *Adventures of Ideas* (Macmillan, 1933)

Short additional readings will be distributed in class, including excerpts from some of the following texts (no need to purchase these books unless you want to have them):

- Adams, Doug, Cecilia Davis Cunningham, Paul Tillich, David Tracy and others, in *Art, Creativity and the Sacred*, ed. Diane Aposotolos-Cappadona (Crossroad Press, 1991)
Bachelard, Gaston *The Poetics of Reverie: Childhood, Language and the Cosmos*. Transl Daniel Russel (Beacon Press 1969)
Buckley, Christopher and Christopher Merrill, ed. *What Will Suffice: Contemporary Poets on the Art of Poetry* (Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1995)
Butler, Judith, "On Never Having Learned How to Live (Derrida's Gift)" in *differences: a Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 16.3
Dewey, John, *Art As Experience*
Harmon, William, ed. *Classic Writings on Poetry* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003)
Keller, Catherine, ed., *Apophatic Theologies* (Routledge, 2009)
Keller, Catherin, *On the Mystery: Discerning, Divinity in Process* (Fortress Press)
Lorde, Audre, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Crossing Press, 1984)
Miller, E. Ethelbert, ed. *In Search of Color Everywhere: A Collection of African-American Poetry* (Stewart, Tamori & Chang, 1994)
Moraga, Cherie, *This Bridge Called my Back*
Orr, Gregory and Ellen Bryant Voit, *Poets Teaching Poets: Self and the World* (Michigan UP, 996)
Rankine, Claudia and Lisa Sewell, *American Poets in the 21st Century: The New Poetics* (Wesleyan UP, 2007)
Thurman, Howard, *Meditations of the Heart and Deep Is the Hunger* (Friends United Press)
Winterson, Jeannette, *Art Objects: Essay on Ecstasy and Effrontery* (Vintage, 1995)

Calendar of Assignments

Reading is to be completed **BEFORE** the class date on which it appears. [note: this is preliminary and will change somewhat!]

Aug 9th: *Introduction to the Course*

Lecture/Discussion: What Is Poetics? What is Theology? What is Aesthetics? To Whom Does the Sacred Belong?

Break

The Birth & Death of a Poem: Movement, Process, & Eschatologies
In class writing exercise

Aug 10th: *Lecture/Discussion: Loving What “Isn’t There” & the Role of Gaps: Apophatic Theology*

Break

In class writing exercise

Preface to the “Unrealized”

Reading: Henry Moore “Notes on Sculpture”, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, “East to West,” & Harold Shapero, “The Musical Mind” in TCP

Very brief excerpt from Dewey, *Art as Experience*

Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, “The Human Soul”

an essay (author tbd) from Keller et al, *Apophatic Theologies*

Reflection Paper # 1 due on one of these readings.

Aug 11th: *Lecture & Discussion: The Unrealized & “the Thinking of the Body”*

Break

In class writing exercise.

Reflections of the Past into the Future

Reading: Mary Wigman, “Composition in Pure Movement”, William Wordsworth, “Preface to the Lyrical Ballads”; Nietzsche, “The Composition of Thus Spake Zarathustra” in TCP

Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, “Witness of the Body”, “Foresight”

Audre Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic as Power”

Reflection Paper # 2 due on one of these readings.

Aug 12th: *Discussion: Using, Teaching, Speaking, & Listening to the “Unrealized”: Practical dimensions in sacred communities.*

In class writing exercise

Break

Reverie and Responsibility: How Does the Sacred Move?

Reading: Brief excerpt from Keller, *On the Mystery*

Excerpts from Thurman, *Deep Is the Hunger & Meditations of the Heart*

Whitehead, *Adventures*, “Truth,” “Beauty” “Truth and Beauty”

Audre Lorde, “Master’s Tools”

W.B. Yeats, “Three Pieces on the Creative Process”, TCP.

Reflection Paper # 3 due on one of these readings.

August 13th: *Peace and Poetics*

In class writing exercise

Break

The Adventure of Remaining Unsettled

Reading: Henry Miller, “Reflections on Writing”, TCP

Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, “Adventure” & “Peace”

Cherie Moraga, excerpt

Excerpt from Bachelard, *Poetics of Reverie*