

University of California San Diego

Literatures in English (LTEN) 130GS | Contemporary British Poetry <DRAFT>

Summer 2022 | Global Seminar | Edinburgh, UK

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What's App:

The United Kingdom today has a diverse population, which is reflected in its vibrant poetry scene. This course surveys the current state of British poetry. It will look at how the tradition of western literature is being used to think about contemporary concerns, and it will keep returning to the question of what it means to be “British” in the 21st century.

*This is a draft.* Elements of this syllabus and the course are subject to change.

### Lectures

**Time:** TBA

**Location:** TBA

### Office Hours

**Time:** TBA and by appointment

**Location:** TBA

### Assignments

You must fulfill *all* course requirements in order to pass the course.

- **Participation (30%)**
- **Weekly Journal Responses (40%)** — Due every Wednesday @11:59pm
- **Final Essay & Conversation (30%)**

### Course Texts

All texts are available as PDFs on Canvas.

## Class Schedule: Topics & Readings

### Week 1

**6/27 | Program Orientation (led by IFSA-Butler)**

**6/28-29 | Course Introduction & the Poet Laureate**

- Simon Armitage, selected poems from *Paper Aeroplanes* & *Sandlettie Light Vessel Automatic*

*Armitage is the current UK Poet Laureate. He is known for the conversational style of his verse, his translations of English medieval texts, and his public poetry projects that embed poetry in the world.*

**6/30 | Excursion 1: Edinburgh City Walk**

### Week 2

**7/4 | Home in the Highlands**

- Thomas A Clark, selected poems from *Farm by the Shore* and *Threadbare*

*Clark is a Scottish poet focused on the beauty of the natural world in the Scottish highlands and islands.*

**7/5-6 | Nature & Tradition**

- Alice Oswald, selected poems from *Woods, etc* and *Nobody*

*Oswald, the current Oxford Professor of Poetry, is known for her concern for nature and the environment as well as her engagement with ancient Greek texts, such as Homer's Iliad in Memorial and the Odyssey in Nobody.*

**7/7 | Excursion 2: Arthur's Seat, Holyrood Palace, & Scottish Parliament**

### Week 3

**7/11-12 | Tradition & Hip Hop**

- Kae Tempest, selected poems from *Hold Your Own* and the audio album, *Let Them Eat Chaos*

*Tempest's verse engages with the boundaries between genders. In Hold Your Own, Tempest uses the Greek myth of Tiresias, the blind prophet of Thebes who lived as both a man and woman, to explore how gender affects one's life*

*experiences. Recently Tempest changed pronouns to “they” and their name to “Kae Tempest.” Tempest’s style is indebted to spoken word poetry and hip-hop. Tempest’s 2016 album, Let Them Eat Chaos, takes a kaleidoscopic view of London’s residents: men and women, young and old, working class and upper class.*

### **7/13 | Scots Makar**

- Jackie Kay, selected work

*Kay is of Scottish and Nigerian heritage. She has worked in both theatre and poetry on themes including her family history and same sex relationships. She was the Scottish Makar (poet laureate) 2016-2021.*

### **7/14 | Excursion 3: Stirling Castle (Day Trip)**

## **Week 4**

### **7/18 | Thinking in Two Languages: English & Shaetlan**

- Roseanne Watt, selected poems from *Moder Dy*

*Watt was raised in the Shetland Islands north of mainland Scotland. Her poetry moves between English and the local Scots dialect, Shaetlan. She includes what she calls “uneasy translations” of her Shaetlan poems.*

### **7/18-19 | What does it mean to be British today?**

- Zaffar Kunial, selected poems from *Us*

*Kunial was born to a white, English mother and a Pakistani father. His verse engages with questions of finding one’s own identity when it draws from multiple cultures and traditions.*

### **7/21 | Excursion 4: Grasmere & the Lake District (Overnight Trip)**

## **Week 5**

### **7/25 | What does it mean to be British today?**

- Kayo Chingonyi, selected poems from *Kumukanda* and *A Blood Condition*

*Chingonyi was born in Zambia and raised in the UK. His poetry reflects on living in the globalized, multicultural UK. He’s particularly attuned to the connections between music and poetry.*

## 7/26 | Dear Hearing World

- Raymond Antrobus, selected poems from *Perseverance*

*Antrobus is closely connected with the spoken word community in London. He is of Jamaican and English heritage and is Deaf. His debut collection Perseverance explores his intersectional challenges to identity formation.*

## 7/27 | Final Conversation: On Contemporary British Poetry

### Additional Course Information

**Academic Integrity.** You are expected to observe the [UCSD Policy on Integrity of Scholarship](#) in this course. Examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to the following: cheating on an exam; plagiarism (using words or ideas without proper attribution); collaborating on an assignment, essay, or project when the instructor has specifically stated students should not do so; submitting the same essay for more than one assignment or class; or allowing another individual to assume one's identity for the purpose of enhancing one's grade. Academic dishonesty of any type by a student provides grounds for disciplinary action.

For more information, visit the Academic Integrity Office's [website](#). AIO and Geisel Library offer several tutorials that students may take to understand what constitutes plagiarism that are available [here](#) and [here](#).

Students agree that by taking this course all required work will be subject to text-similarity review through Turnitin.com for the detection of plagiarism.

**Copyright.** All course material is the intellectual property of the professor. Lectures, PDFs of the course material, and your course notes are for personal use only. Any reproduction or distribution of the course material is prohibited and will be treated as an act of academic dishonesty.

**Inclusion.** I value an inclusive and equitable classroom environment in which everyone shows respect to each other as persons and scholars. If you need accommodation for disability or religious reasons, please contact me as soon as possible so that the appropriate arrangements can be made.

**OSD Accommodations** will be provided with written request. Please provide me with your AFA letter prior to departure. Work through the [Office for Students with Disabilities](#).