

Comparative Literature 24: Bob Dylan and the Poets

NB: This is a one-credit seminar offered for Freshmen. Students were asked to bring their listening and reading skills, to make a brief presentation and to write a brief paper at the end of term.

UC BERKELEY, Fall 2023

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Professor of Comparative Literature

Syllabus

8/23: Introduction: Dylan, "Song to Woody," "Subterranean Homesick Blues"
Woody Guthrie, "1913 Massacre," Chuck Berry, "Too Much Monkey Business"

I. History, Epic, Myth

8/30: Ginsberg, "Howl" (excerpt)
Ezekiel, Chapter 6-7.
Dylan, "A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall."
Robert Johnson, "Come on in my Kitchen"

9/6: Homer, *Odyssey*, Ovid, *Tristia* (excerpts)
Dylan, "Blind Willie McTell," "Workingman's Blues #2"
McTell, "Statesboro Blues"
Louis Armstrong, "Saint James Infirmary"

9/13: Brecht, "The Black Freighter," Weldon Kees, "August 1943"
Dylan, "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll,"
"Idiot Wind."

9/20: Whitman, *Leaves of Grass* (excerpt)
Dylan, "I Contain Multitudes," "Murder Most Foul"

9/27: Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode to a Nightingale"
Dylan, "Chimes of Freedom," "Jokerman"

II. Vision, Wonder

10/4: Blake, "Auguries of Innocence"
Dylan, "Every Grain of Sand," "Lay Down Your Weary Tune"

10/11: Baudelaire, "Evening Harmony," "The Carcass"
Dylan, "Like a Rolling Stone," "Sad Eyed Lady of the Lowlands"

10/18: Rimbaud, “The Drunken Boat,” Letters (excerpts), “The Custom Officers”
Dylan, “She Belongs to Me,” “Visions of Johanna.”

10/25: T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”
Billie Holiday, “Strange Fruit.”
Dylan, “Desolation Row.”

III. Desire, Error, Memory

10/25: Petrarch, Sonnets, Kerouac, *On the Road* (excerpt)
Dylan, “Tangled Up in Blue,” “You’re Gonna Make Me Lonesome When You Go,”

11/1: Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (excerpt).
Dylan, “Ballad of a Thin Man,” “Summer Days”

11/8: Bible, Isaiah 21. Rimbaud, “Barbarian.”
Dylan, “When the Ship Comes In,” “All Along the Watchtower,”

11/15: Robert Browning, “Up at a Villa—Down in the City,” T.S. Eliot, “Gerontion,” Burns,
“My Heart’s in the Highlands.”
Dylan, “Highlands,” “Key West,” “Subterranean Homesick Blues.”

Evening Meeting—Special Event—Projection of “The Last Waltz.”

11/29: Wrap Up.