

**Carleton University  
Winter 2014  
Department of English**

**ENGL 4806B: 4<sup>th</sup> Year Seminar  
*The Canadian Modernist Poetry Project*  
(Preliminary Outline)**

***Prerequisite: Fourth-year standing in Honours English or permission of the dept***

**Mondays 6:05 to 8:55 p.m.  
Location: 112 PA  
(Please confirm location on Carleton Central)**

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Questioning boundaries and breaking away from the past are fundamental to the spirit of modernism. In order to do this, not only do the barriers to change have to be overcome, but vehicles of expression have to be found in order to draw like-minded people together who can build the momentum required to make a new vision reality. As John Sutherland, Louis Dudek, Raymond Souster, Michael Gnarowski and others have shown, during the modernist movement in Canada it was little magazines and little presses that provided that impetus and published often unknown poets who were experimenting with new techniques and forms.

In Montreal, three important little presses were founded that span and reflect the changing spirit of modernism from the 1940's in First Statement Press, the 1950's, in Contact Press and the 1960's, in Delta Canada. These little presses and the movement they inspired played a significant role in the development of Canadian poetry. The advantage of the little press was that it brought like-minded poets together who were equally committed to a greater cause, which was moving poetry forward. The little magazine and, by extension, the little press, was a form of resistance against the conservative, commercially-driven publishing practices demonstrated by large, depersonalized organizations that have controlled the publishing industry in Canada since the 1920's. Being self-financed and non-profit entities, the little presses were able to stand on the front lines of Canadian poetry and publish the vanguard, the experimental, the young. Made up of poets who had a personal commitment to the presses and to the poets and books they published, the presses were rebellious, ambitious and intellectually intense. With these qualities, they were able to serve as a barometer of the social and literary climate in their closeness to the pulse of the times.

In this seminar course we will consider the history and context of First Statement, Contact and Delta Canada. We will examine how they began, who began them, and how they contributed to the development of modernist poetry in Canada.

**Grading:**

Class Participation & Seminar: 40%

Essay (10-12 pages): 60%