

Carleton University
Department of English
Winter 2011

ENGL 5706: American Literature
Topic: American Bohemians

Time: Mondays 10:00 – 1:00 p.m.
Location: 1816DT

Professor R. Holton
Office: 1919DT
Phone: 613 520-2600 ext. 2308

“the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French call *la bohème*” (Marx).

Course Description

The course will begin with a consideration of the idea of bohemia as it emerged in Paris in the 1800s following the turbulence of the Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. By mid-century, Parisian bohemia was famous as a haven for both artists and eccentrics, a space where creativity was prized and transgression was permitted and even celebrated. The concept was widely exported and by the late 1800s America had a burgeoning bohemian culture as well. The analysis of early bohemia provided by Walter Benjamin, Pierre Bourdieu, Jerrold Seigel and others will frame our approach to American bohemians and bohemian subcultures including the Greenwich Village group that formed around the turn of the 20th century, Henry Miller and Anais Nin, the Beat Generation and the hippies. The course will conclude with a look at the recent studies of bohemia by Richard Florida and others. Issues to be considered along the way include bohemia as a response to capitalism and to bourgeois conventions, the overlap between bohemians and the lumpenproletariat, gender relations in bohemia, the relation of bohemia to the avant-garde, and bohemians and political commitment.

Tentative Syllabus:

Week One	Paris - Theory - Benjamin, Bourdieu, Seigel
Week Two	Theory - America - Pfaff's - "What is a bohemian" (1859) - Bohemia in fiction
Week Three	Early Greenwich Village - may include Floyd Dell, Randolph Bourne, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Max Bodenheim, Joseph Freeman, Emma Goldman . . .

Week Four	Early Greenwich Village - may include Floyd Dell, Randolph Bourne, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Max Bodenheimer, Joseph Freeman, Emma Goldman . . .
Week Five	Early Greenwich Village - may include Floyd Dell, Randolph Bourne, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Max Bodenheimer, Joseph Freeman, Emma Goldman . . .
Week Six	Henry Miller and Anais Nin
Week Seven	Beats and Hippies and Others - may include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Diane DiPrima, Gary Snyder, Charles Bukowski, Bob Dylan, the Diggers . . .
Week Eight	Beats and Hippies and Others - may include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Diane DiPrima, Gary Snyder, Charles Bukowski, Bob Dylan, the Diggers . . .
Week Nine	Beats and Hippies and Others - may include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Diane DiPrima, Gary Snyder, Charles Bukowski, Bob Dylan, the Diggers . . .

Week Ten Beats and Hippies and Others - may include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Diane DiPrima, Gary Snyder, Charles Bukowski, Bob Dylan, the Diggers . . .

Week Eleven Beats and Hippies and Others - may include Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Diane DiPrima, Gary Snyder, Charles Bukowski, Bob Dylan, the Diggers . . .

Week Twelve
Richard Lloyd Contemporary images of bohemia - Richard Florida, David Brooks,