This course will focus on 20th and 21st century poets and writers who write inside and outside certain kinds of institutions, establishments, and communities. What will be interesting to explore is how their role and/or position has changed through the years, and what we mean when we define a writer as “inside” or “outside” the canon—or are there multiple meanings when we talk about it in terms of publication (big press/small press), race, class, gender, sexuality, ableism, eco vs. urban, academic, anti-academic, language, narrative, or lyric, etc.? What does poetic and creative writing experimentation, nontraditional writing, activism or its opposite (dominant, mainstream publishing requirements—which may be shifting their meanings) look like today? Current close readings of “outsider” texts tend to focus on new ways of approaching the canon; namely, looking at how creative writing might write through other texts, defamiliarize itself through tone, voice, or style, or in fact, “assemble a dummy” through which many voices, theories and uncomfortable ideas are expressed. In class we will work towards developing our unique voices while we respond to other writers who have created their own. Poets and writers discussed (video links to readings and performances will also be viewed and discussed): Thomas Sayers Ellis, Amiri Baraka (Leroi Jones), Tisa Bryant, Raymond Carver, Lucy Corin, Robert Creeley, Lydia Davis, Samuel R. Delany, kari edwards, Allen Ginsberg, Lily Hoang Stephen Graham Jones, Bhanu Kapil, Bernadette Mayer, Heather McGowan, Eileen Myles, Michael Ondaatje, Vanessa Place, Claudia Rankine, Laura Riding (Jackson), Ed Sanders, Carmen Giménez Smith, Lehua Taitano, John Wieners, Ofelia Zepeda and others. We will also discuss contemporary poetic theory and the book MFA vs NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction by Chad Harbach. [This list may be modified. A PDF reader of stories, poems, and excerpts will be provided by Professor Sharma.]

Books:

*Bharat Jiva*, Kari Edwards
*MFA vs. NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction*, Chad Harbach, editor
*Schizophrene*, by Bhanu Kapil
*Midwinter Day*, Bernadette Mayer
*Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, Michael Ondaatje
*A Bell Made of Stones*, Lehua Taitano

PDF Reader on Moodle [10-20 pages per week including links]

You will be expected to write creatively, experiment with your writing, read assigned texts, and offer constructive criticism in the form of response papers (3 pp.), presentations (10-15
minutes), group panel discussions/presentations, and a mid-term (6-8 pp.) and final end-of-the-semester academic paper or creative work (8-10 pp.).

Grading Policy
35% in class participation, 20% weekly assignments/responses (on time!) 10% panels and presentations and 35% mid-term & final essay. I expect full participation and will allow for only three absences*. There will be discussions and response-generated assignments on Moodle2—make sure you have upgraded and learned Moodle2.

Students with disabilities.
Qualified students with disabilities will receive appropriate accommodations in this course. Please speak with me after class or in my office hours. Please be prepared to provide a letter from your DSS Coordinator, so I can do my best to support you.

*Policy on absences and lateness:
The standard policy is that no more than three absences in a sixteen-week term may result in a grade of “no-credit.” Please arrive on time for class and stay until dismissal. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. If there is an emergency please speak to me (or e-mail me) about it as soon as you can.

All course work (unless stated otherwise) must be typed or computer printed on standard white 20-24lb paper, double-spaced and with a minimum of 1-inch margins. Keep a copy (electronic or otherwise) of all material you submit to me or the class.

Aspects of student writing that will be assessed in writing assignments:
• voice that is consistent & appropriate to the audience & purpose;
• correct diction & sentence structure;
• sound judgments unified by a clear message;
• evidence or reasons supporting all judgments;
• logical linkage of judgments and evidence;
• transitions that connect a series of ideas and evidence;
• strong paragraph structure;
• correct spelling and punctuation;
• proper MLA style documentation

Scholastic Dishonesty: Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty—in as much as they keep the individual student as well as the collective community from learning—will result in an automatic F and may entail a variety of other sanctions up to and including expulsion from the University. FOR A DEFINITION OF PLAGIARISM SEE http://www.lib.umt.edu/services/plagiarism/index.htm. IF YOU ARE UNSURE ABOUT YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES, PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO CONSULT THE STUDENT CONDUCT CODE ON THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA’S WEB SITE.

August 26
Introduction
Canonical works defined
Read before first class:
http://www.poets.org/viewmedia.php/prmMID/16915
Students must bring in what they perceive as a well-known canonical 20th century poem,
essay, or short story.
Homework: http://chronicle.com/article/Uncreative-Writing/128908/
http://lareviewofbooks.org/interview/unalienated-uncreativity-interview-kenneth-goldsmith/#

August 28
Introduction (continued)
Fiction and Poetry discussion.
The Punk Singer (film) screened-first part (40 min.)
Homework: MFA vs. NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction
Read first half of book (up to “Money (2006)” Gessen)

September 2
Discussion & overview of first half of MFA vs. NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction
Small group creative writing exercises: define your current and past experiences with your
creative community, mentors, and life experience defined by class, race, gender, sexuality,
etc. or any other identity markers that you find self-defining.
Homework: Turn these into uncreative conceptual projects.

September 4
Discussion & overview of first half of MFA vs. NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction,
continued.
Guest Amanda Fortini
“Uncreative” conceptual projects continued
critique essays/definitions drafts for homework

September 9
“Uncreative” conceptual project brainstorm (read in class)
MFA vs. NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction, continued (discussion only on Batuman &
Jameson essays).
Start: Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Michael Ondaatje

September 11
MFA vs. NYC: The Two Cultures of American Fiction, continued.
Collected Works of Billy the Kid, Michael Ondaatje

September 16
Discussion and response papers to *Collected Works of Billy the Kid*, Michael Ondaatje (3 page responses due).

September 18  
From All Poets Welcome: The Lower East Side Poetry Scene in the 1960s” (Chapters: “Community through Poetry, pp.1-27; Oral Poetics on the Lower East Side pp. 28-57; The Aesthetics of the Little 57-123.)  
Screen: *Dutchman* (1967, 55 min.)

September 23  
*The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*  
Preface to the Reader, Editor’s note & Introduction (pp. XI-XXXI)  
The Beat Period (1957-1962) read: “Preface to a Twenty Volume Suicide Note,” Hymm for Lanie Poo,” “In Memory of Radio,” “Look for You Yesterday, Here you Come Today,” and “Notes for a Speech”  
The Transitional Period (1963-1965) read chapter.  
Handout: Transition (114) Baraka tribute

September 25  
*The LeRoi Jones/Amiri Baraka Reader*  
The Black Nationalist Period (1965-1974) read chapter.  
Third World Marxist Period (1974-present) read chapter.  
Later poems (3 page responses due)  
Suggested reading: [http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/black-body-re-reading-james-baldwins-stranger-village](http://www.newyorker.com/books/page-turner/black-body-re-reading-james-baldwins-stranger-village)

September 30  
*Schizophren*  
Bhanu Kapil (video/excerpt)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cz_v1FiaLtY  
Give away form/trauma writing exercise

October 2  
Continue with form/trauma exercise  
Kathy Acker handout

October 7  
Kathy Acker/Mathias Vagner SKYPE  
(3 page responses due).

October 9  
Mei-mei Berssenbrugge (excerpt)  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjVy6MHFxZw  
excerpt from Dorothy Wang’s *Thinking Its Presence: Form, Race, and Subjectivity in Contemporary Asian American Poetry*

October 14  
Mei-mei Berssenbrugge
Berssenrugge exercise
Homework: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AZsHxPyB5Dg
(Vanessa Place)

October 16
Vanessa Place
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nmr_6DeuWg4
video performance
(3 page responses due)

October 21
Midwinter Day Bernadette Mayer
Jennifer Moxley handout and discussion

October 23
Bernadette Mayer experiments
Midterm due (creative project or critical essay)

October 28
A Bell Made of Stones Lehua Taitano

October 30
A Bell Made of Stones Lehua Taitano
Exercise generated from Taitano's book

November 4
Samuel R. Delany
Handout

November 6
Stephen Graham Jones
http://www.tor.com/stories/2014/06/chapter-six-stephen-graham-jones

November 11
Creative Performance Lab

November 13
Midterms due
Presentations on: Tisa Bryant, Raymond Carver, CA Conrad, Lucy Corin, Lydia Davis, Debra Earling, Thomas Sayers Ellis, Allen Ginsberg, Lily Hoang, Heather McGowan, Eileen Myles, Claudia Rankine, Laura Riding (Jackson), Ed Sanders, Carmen Giménez Smith, John Wieners

November 18
Presentations on: Tisa Bryant, Raymond Carver, CA Conrad, Lucy Corin, Lydia Davis, Debra Earling, Thomas Sayers Ellis, Allen Ginsberg, Lily Hoang, Heather McGowan, Eileen Myles, Claudia Rankine, Laura Riding (Jackson), Ed Sanders, Carmen Giménez Smith, John Wieners
November 20
Presentations on: Tisa Bryant, Raymond Carver, CA Conrad, Lucy Corin, Lydia Davis, Debra Earling, Thomas Sayers Ellis, Allen Ginsberg, Lily Hoang, Heather McGowan, Eileen Myles, Claudia Rankine, Laura Riding (Jackson), Ed Sanders, Carmen Giménez Smith, John Wieners

November 25
Ofelia Zepeda

November 27
Ofelia Zepeda
(3 page responses due)

December 2
Kari Edwards
http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/peterson/peterson_edwards.pdf

December 4
Final projects/experiments

December 8-12: Final papers due