

EXPLORING THE LIFE AND TIMES OF VISIONARY FEMINIST POET, MURIEL RUKEYSER SYLLABUS

This course will explore the work of this 20th-century, cutting-edge writer and activist. Rukeyser documented through poetry and prose some of key issues of her time, from the failed Republican uprising against Franco in Spain, to the civil rights and anti-war movements in the United States, to the welcoming of Vietnam into the United Nations.

The instructor, a colleague of and collaborator with the late poet, will share personal anecdotes and recorded interviews with the poet to give students a view into the life of this early feminist creator and educator. Together we'll dive deep into the work of this visionary who, 50 years ago, asked and answered: "What would happen if one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open!"

THE TEXT FOR THE COURSE IS: THE COLLECTED POEMS OF MURIEL RUKEYSER, ANY EDITION: EACH WEEK WE WILL ALSO FEATURE SOUND RECORDINGS OF MURIEL AND RELATED TO HER READING AN WRITING.

WEEK ONE: POET OF WITNESS/

<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/muriel-rukeyser>

1. Poet as Reporter/frontline front-line eye-witness to war and disaster-- selected readings from "The Gates" and "The Book of the Dead" both poems included in their entirety in "The Collected poems of Muriel Rukeyser" any edition...also teacher handouts.

WEEK TWO: WOMEN IN POETRY: HOW THE PERSONAL BECOMES POLITICAL <https://jwa.org/thisweek/may/08/1942/muriel-rukeyser>

1. Poem: Kathe Kollwitz: "What would happen if one one woman told the truth about her life? The world would split open."
<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/90874/kathe-kollwitz>
Also found in the Collected Poems of Muriel Rukeyser
2. "Poem out of Childhood", "Effort at Speech Between Two People" , "Dream-Drumming"

WEEK THREE: "THE LIFE OF POETRY": POETRY AND EVERYDAY LIFE <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/47657/poem-56d22843a6a62>

1. Teacher handouts..."My Inner Greet"

2. Poems: “St. Roach”, “The Ballad of Orange and Grape” “To Be a Jew in the 20th Century”, “Breaking Open” from the Collected Poems.

WEEK FOUR: “THEY ARE THEIR OWN GIFTS”

<https://archive.org/details/theyaretheirowngifts>

1. A review of the life and times of Muriel Rukeyser
2. We will view the Film “They Are Their Own Gifts” which features a moving interview with the poet about her life and work.
3. A random writing of Rukeyser poetry and related material
4. Any student writing written as a result of class material