

Postwar American Poetry

In the second half of the twentieth century, American poetry moves away from modernism and splinters into several directions, including beat poetry, confessional poetry, political poetry, and, perhaps as a response to the modernist wasteland in poetry, something of a return to nature. While several are experimenting with free verse, others are returning to traditional forms or finding ways to make those forms contemporary. We'll examine some of these movements since 1950, focusing on a (regrettably very) few representative poets from each genre, exploring them as individual artists as well as their lineage in the broader American poetic canon.

Week 1: Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Allen Ginsberg, Gary Snyder, Diane DiPrima, Gregory Corso

Week 2: Elizabeth Bishop, Robert Lowell

Week 3: Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, John Berryman

Week 4: Gwendolyn Brooks, Adrienne Rich

Week 5: Theodore Roethke, James Wright, Robert Hass, Mary Oliver

Week 6: Sharon Olds, Billy Collins, Mark Jarman, Natasha Trethewey, Kim Addonizio