

Fall/Winter 2021-2022

AP/EN 4163 6.0A (Y)	Course Title: Visionaries
Course Director:	Name: B.W. Powe Office: 623 Atkinson Home phone: 905-640-8077 E-mail: bpowe@yorku.ca
Time:	Thursday, 11:30-2:30
Delivery Format:s	REMOTE – (synchronous delivery) – There are scheduled meeting times for this course (see above). Students should plan to be available for course-related activities during the appointed times. For more information, see the Description and/or Requirements below.
Description:	<p>This course offers explorations of a wide selection of visionary writers. We'll explore the visionary streams in selected poets, novelists, memoirists, essayists and songwriters. The visionary element in literature offers streams of ineffable experiences, trauma, trance, transcendental and metaphysical awareness, engagement, heretical speculations and inspiration. Writers often must develop innovative techniques to express the apocalyptic or transcendent moment. Searching for forms of breakthrough to higher states of consciousness and ultra-sensitivity, the poets and prose writers may explore alternative imaginative conditions through gnosticism, alchemy, hermeticism, and kabbalah. These modes of consciousness form a counter-current to official modes of academic study and to official religions. Writers register a sense of transcendental pressures on their minds and sensibilities; this affects their forms and expressions. The prophetic streak in writers can lead to proclamation and denunciation. We'll also engage the nature of inspiration itself, what Hildegard von Bingen calls "greening".</p> <p>It is a thematic centre of this course that by studying visionaries we'll discover keys to imaginative literature. Prophetic legacies and streams underscore the mythic, imaginative streams of literature. Some literary artists may rest at ease in the spiritual expressions of their day. Others proceed to reinvent the expressions of inwardness and inspiration, exploding poetics and religious dogma, the social structures and repressive political and cultural systems, that they engaged. Writers driven towards finding ways of expressing the ineffable will often not fit into anything other than what they invent for themselves.</p> <p>What are the words that identify the prophetic tradition? Trust, passion, wisdom, vision, stamina, eloquence, and the sparks of inspiration... However, these words are open to many kinds of interpretation. The visionary streams move through Hildegard, Rumi and Hallaj, and Teresa of Avila, Dante through to Blake, Emily Bronte, Whitman, and Dickinson, and exist in</p>

	<p>iconoclastic implosions of form and style in Rimbaud, and then emerge in fragmented inklings in Eliot, in HD's vast recollections of the Hermetic codes, in occult twists in the ironic Yeats. It becomes masked, or deflected, by ironies, in Kafka and Plath, and in Dylan and Joni Mitchell. It resurfaces reinvented in the questing, turbulent Beats; sometimes in ironic or desperate states. It appears, shattered in Celan's holocaust poems. It resurfaces whole in James Baldwin and Patti Smith. We are likely to find that the visionary-prophetic stream is charged with artists experience highly unorthodox and sometimes enigmatic codes, searching for ways to articulate the sense of heightened existence in its crossroads with matter and spirit.</p>
Category:	B
Historical Requirement:	N/A
Requirements:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Two-page short essay, option for creative or analytical response, or a mix of the two. On attempting to articulate Visionary Experience (5%). 2. Research essay on two authors of student's choice. Analytical response (25%). 3. Journal-analytical, creative mix of responses to all the writers on the course reading list. Short responses to each author (40%). 4. Take-home test in April – using images and associative words to spark, prompt responses to the discussions and readings (25%) 5. Class engagement (5%)
Reading List:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hildegard von Bingen, Plainsongs; Teresa of Avila, <i>The Interior Castle*</i>, selections 2. Dante, <i>La Vita Nuova*</i> 3. Selections of poems by Rumi and Hallaj (the Sufi mystical traditions)* 4. William Blake, <i>Poems</i>, selected by Patti Smith 5. Emily Bronte, selected poems in <i>The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte</i> 6. Walt Whitman, <i>Leaves of Grass</i> (1855 edition) 7. Emily Dickinson, selected poems in <i>Essential Dickinson</i>, edited by Joyce Carol Oates 8. Arthur Rimbaud, <i>A Season in Hell*</i>, Preface by Patti Smith 9. HD (Hilda Doolittle), <i>Notes on Thought and Vision</i>, selections from <i>Hermetic Definition</i> 10. William Butler Yeats, three poems, "Sailing to Byzantium", "Byzantium", "The Second Coming" 11. T.S. Eliot, <i>Four Quartets</i> 12. Franz Kafka, <i>The Blue Octavo Notebooks*</i>, primarily the section called <i>Reflections</i>, edited by Max Brod 13. Federico Garcia Lorca, <i>In Search of Duende*</i>, selections

	<p>14. Allen Ginsberg, <i>The Fall of America</i>, and the short essay, Your Reason and Blake’s System, to be read in conjunction with Diane di Prima’s <i>Revolutionary Letters</i></p> <p>15. Jack Kerouac, <i>The Dharma Bums</i></p> <p>16. Sylvia Plath, “Daddy” and “Lady Lazarus”</p> <p>17. Paul Celan, selected poems in Selected Poems and Prose of Paul Celan*</p> <p>18. James Baldwin, <i>The Fire Next Time</i></p> <p>19. Bob Dylan, the songs “Like a Rolling Stone”, “Desolation Row”, “Shelter from the Storm”, and selections from his memoir, Chronicles, Vol. 1</p> <p>20. Patti Smith, <i>M Train</i></p> <p>21. Joni Mitchell, “Woodstock,” “Taming the Tiger”, “Slouching Towards Bethlehem”</p> <p><i>Asterisks indicate works to be read in translation</i></p>
Open To:	Year 4 in Honours