



UNDERWORLD POETICS: WRITING FROM OTHER DIMENSIONS

CHID 250B

Visionary poets can stand in strange relation to the world. Some come from or speak from another world. Others inhabit worlds that are illuminated, haunted, or transparent. Some recount travel between layers of reality, or report enhanced encounters with animals, plants, and other beings. This class explores ways some writers cross into and write out of other dimensions—including punk clubs, gay underworlds, subway tunnels, fleabag hotels, outer space, undersea civilizations, angelic and demonic realms. We will read and discuss poetry and supporting texts, from Dickinson to Anzaldúa, Rimbaud to Drexciya, attending to writers' perception and cultivation of more-than-human entanglements. Class writings will probe poetic relations to natural and social environments, via automatic writing, somatic composition, text collage, and other techniques. Students will keep illustrated journals of their otherworldly engagements, and develop underworld poets' statements. The performative “final exam” project consists of improvising an underworld together.