

# U.S. Literature in the Media Age

## ENGL 7/8398: Cultural Contexts of American Literature

### Fall 2018



Marilyn Monroe Reading Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*

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**Professor:**

Donal Harris

**Class Information:**

Monday, 1pm

**Contact:**

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**Office Hours:**

TBA

& by appointment

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**Course Information**

**Description:** This class will selectively explore how U.S. literature has responded to other art forms and media formats since the Civil War. We will look at the ways that certain key writers and literary movements from the period incorporate, reject, and augment new methods of representation such as photography, phonography, film, television, and the internet. We'll revisit the questions these art forms and media technologies raise for novelists and poets, and we'll consider how the increased competition among books, radio, movies, TV, and the web impacts the form and content of U.S. literature.

**Possible primary readings:** Stephen Crane's *Red Badge of Courage*, James Weldon Johnson's *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*, Marianne Moore's Imagist poetry, Nathaniel West's *The Day of the Locust*, Richard Wright's *12 Million Black Voices*, Frank O'Hara's *Lunch Poems*, Joan Didion's *The White Album*, David Foster Wallace's journalism and short fiction, Tao Lin's *Taipei*, Dana Spiotta's *Innocents and Others*, and Teju Cole's social media fictions.

**Secondary readings:** Benjamin, Greenberg, Adorno and Horkheimer, Barthes, Sontag, Kittler, Hayles, and others.

**Assignments:** bi-weekly response papers (~3p), academic review (~5p), in-class presentation (~15min), formal project proposal and bibliography (~6p), and abbreviated seminar paper (~15p).