

# THE WARD PHILLIPS LECTURES, 2006

## DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

# CHARLES BERNSTEIN

## NOVEMBER 27, 28, 29

(All events scheduled in the Hesburgh Center Auditorium)

## THE ATTACK OF THE DIFFICULT POEMS: POETICS, TECHNOLOGY, INVENTION

### Monday, November 27

5:00 p.m. "The Task of Poetics, the Fate of Innovation,  
and the Aesthetics of Criticism"

*Topics will include the role of close reading and poetry criticism for contemporary writing; the relation of theory to poetics and poetic practice; the professionalization of academic literary scholarship; the role of aesthetics for poetry and scholarship.*

6:30 p.m. A reception at the Morris Inn will follow the lecture

### Tuesday, November 28

5:00 p.m. "The Poetics of Invention & the Art of Teaching"

*Is innovation a tired metaphor of modernist utopian thinking? Is it possible to teach difficult poetic works to uninitiated students? Includes some practical discussion of using the web and my own "poem profiler," as well as the "wreading experiments" list in teaching.*

7:00 p.m. A reading by Charles Bernstein of his poetry will follow a brief reception in the atrium of the Hesburgh Center

### Wednesday, November 29

5:00 p.m. "Objectivist Blues & the Art of Immemorability"

*How has language recording technology (from the alphabet to sound recording to the digital archive) affected the development of poetry? The lecture focuses on second wave modernist poets, tin pan alley lyricists, and blues performers, with special reference to their innovations in recording speech (in writing and song). Among the artists discussed are Louis Zukofsky, James Weldon Johnson, Vachel Lindsay, Ira Gershwin, Oscar Hammerstein II, Charley Patton, Paul Robeson, and Cole Porter.*

1:30 p.m. Prior to the lecture, a public discussion of ideas presented thus far will be led by UND professors, local scholars and poets including Stephen Fredman, Romana Huk, Gerald Bruns, John Wilkinson, Joyelle McSweeney, Johannes Göransson, Jennifer Scappettone (University of Chicago) and Steve Tomasula.



Charles Bernstein, Donald T. Regan Professor of English at the University of Pennsylvania, is widely considered the most prominent figure in innovative American poetics. He is the author of 25 books of poetry, 5 librettos and numerous collaborative art projects; his essays have appeared in over 150 periodicals, and his three collections—*My Way: Speeches and Poems* (University of Chicago Press, 1999); *A Poetics* (Harvard University Press, 1992), and *Content's Dream: Essays 1975-1984* (Sun & Moon Press, 1986)—are among the most influential books of prose on the topic of postmodern poetry. The same is true for the collections he has edited, among them *Close Listening: Poetry and the Performed Word* (Oxford University Press, 1998), *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy* (Roof Books, 1990), and *The L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E Book* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1984). His poetry and essays have appeared in translation in over one hundred anthologies and periodicals, and more than 400 essays and reviews on his work have been published to date. He has given upwards of 200 featured readings and 150 lectures/talks throughout the world, including France, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Serbia, Spain, Canada, Brazil, England, New Zealand, and the U.S. A recipient of many awards, including Guggenheim and NEA fellowships, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2006.

From the start Bernstein has been interested in poetry and pedagogy, and has been instrumental in producing the most useful and widely known web-based tools for teaching what he calls "the difficult poem," including the world-renowned Electronic Poetry Center (<http://epc.buffalo.edu>) and PennSound (<http://writing.upenn.edu/pennsound>). Currently at work on a book of prose about the relations between poetry and theory, Bernstein will offer three lectures on poetics, technology and invention.

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