
While scholars across the humanities disciplines value the work of Gertrude Stein, students often struggle to share in their instructor's enthusiasm for her writing. Logan Esdale and Deborah H. Mix's collection, *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Gertrude Stein*, offers strategies for faculty to overcome that disconnect and successfully incorporate Stein's work into their syllabi. The book is part of the *Approaches to Teaching World Literature* series from The Modern Language Association of America. Esdale is a lecturer in the English Department at Chapman University and California State University, Long Beach and Mix is a professor of English at Ball State University. Together they have compiled a book that provides instructors with a range of pedagogical approaches as broad as the styles and works of Stein herself.

As with other works in this series, the volume is divided into two parts: "Materials" and "Approaches." The first, "Materials," provides an overview of the significant milestones in Stein's life and work. In this section, Esdale and Mix deliver a concise history of Stein's unique education and key relationships, especially with Alice Toklas. They also include detailed background on the archiving, publication, reception, and influence of her work, both during her life and since. "Materials" acknowledges that Stein, her work, and her relationships to Toklas and other writers, such as Hemingway, are complicated and often grounds for debate among scholars. However, Esdale and Mix's treatment of the more controversial aspects of Stein remains neutral throughout the section, keeping the discussion centered on information most relevant to providing faculty and students sufficient context with which to encounter Stein's writing.

Part two, "Approaches," includes an introduction, by Esdale and Mix, and fours subsections of essays grouped by genre from scholars across the liberal arts. The introduction to "Approaches," is grounded in a combination of literature on Stein and surveys collected by the editors from scholars who have taught and published on her work. Esdale and Mix begin with a brief discussion of the difficulty instructors can face in getting students interested in Stein's writing, followed by an outline of the key themes with which students struggle, and finally the pedagogical approaches represented by the collected essays. Based on the results of the surveys and their own experience, those themes include identity,
pleasure, reading, context, and structure and the approaches cover close listening, close reading, contextualization, and creative exercises (Esdale and Mix 31-39). Esdale and Mix close the introduction with a discussion of how "the contributors close the gap between the description of a Stein text and the reading experience of that text" (38).

The first group of essays focuses on Stein's "Narrative Prose," with approaches to Q.E.D, "Melanctha," The Making of Americans, The Autobiography of Alice B. Tolkas, and Wars I Have Seen. These essays emphasize reading strategies for understanding Steins' narrative experimentation and distinctive writing style. There is also a clear focus on working with students to examine the language of the text in detail through targeted in-class reading, discussion, and performance activities designed to help students collaboratively come to an understanding of the meaning behind Stein's words and structures. This section could apply to courses across the humanities curriculum but would be especially useful for courses in English graduate studies.

The next section, "Poetry and Portraits," includes methods for engaging Stein's poems, portraits, and meditations, with a particular emphasis on Tender Buttons. These essays recommend how faculty can use Stein's poems and short pieces to engage students on themes of identity and feminism, as well as their own relationships to language. "Poetry and Portraits" includes essays ideal for instructors looking to incorporate accessible works by Stein into their undergraduate syllabi.

"Plays and Operas," then, contains essays on teaching Stein's prolific, but lesser-known, dramatic works. It is the shortest section, with four essays, and incorporates approaches to both reading and performing Stein's plays in courses across the disciplines. These essays discuss the utility of listening and responding to Stein's language and emphasize the relationship between sound and understanding in these works. Though the essays are best adapted to English and theater courses, History faculty would find the approaches to The Mother of Us All beneficial as well.

The final section, "Creative Principles," focuses on teaching strategies for Stein's theoretical work on writing. These essays include approaches to Stein's lectures and essays that can be used to both give instructors tactics for writing instruction and assignment design, as well as aid students in understanding Stein's own approach to writing. These approaches to Stein's writing on writing are applicable to instructors using Stein's work for a variety of
assignments from thesis development in First-Year writing to workshopping in the advanced creative writing classroom.

Approaches to Teaching the Works of Gertrude Stein, comprises interdisciplinary methods for incorporating Stein's work into the classroom through techniques that are both culturally competent and pedagogically effective for meeting diverse course objectives in communication and critical thinking across the curriculum. In the introduction to "Approaches," Esdale and Mix explain their reasoning in organizing the essays by the genre of Stein's work that each address so that readers can easily choose essays that apply to the texts or themes they want to include in their courses. Though some essays give more attention to the discussion of key themes or ideas over detailing specific teaching strategies, readers should find the book useful for understanding how students engage with Stein's body of work in a variety of classroom settings and from diverse experience levels. Esdale and Mix's collection would be a valuable resource for faculty and scholars looking to include more of Stein's difficult, but significant, writing into their teaching repertoire, as well as discover new interpretations for their own study.

LAUREN SPERANDIO PHELPS is a PhD candidate in English at the University of Texas at Arlington. She is a doctoral teaching fellow, teaching courses in English literature, Women's and Gender Studies, and First-Year Writing. She also serves as the assistant director of the English Writing Center. Her research includes projects on feminist and cultural criticism and modernist women's writing.