This course focuses on the poetry of two modernist poets, Mina Loy and Marianne Moore. Though their work differs markedly in affect and mode, Ezra Pound linked the two as practitioners of “logopoeia,” which he defined as “poetry that is akin to nothing but language, which is a dance of the intelligence among words and ideas...” Though you might argue with that characterization, both succeeded in part because they eschewed the familiar “feminine” sentimentality of the period. With radically innovative prosodies and revolutionary understandings of what modern women might have to say, their bodies of work turn out to be among the most challenging and the most engaging of the 20th century.

The course will explore the poetry written across the long careers of both poets, the history of scholarship on their work and of the availability of their texts (though both are more available now, Loy was out of print for decades, and Moore’s work was in print only in limited form). We will also look at the role of biography in reception, and read the two most recent biographies of each (Loy [Carolyn Burke, 1997]; Moore [Linda Leavell, 2013]).

In addition, the course will take advantage of the presence at UH this Spring of a major cohort of Moore critics, who will be part of the 21st-century Moore conference on campus March 19-22, 2015.