

Ezra Pound at the Regent Street Polytechnic

In January 1909 Ezra Pound gave a course of 7 lectures on The Development of Literature in Southern Europe. They were held at 5pm on Thursday afternoons. Pound was billed as Ezra Pound MA “Sometime Fellow in the University of Pennsylvania” and “Author of ‘A Lume Spento’, ‘A Quinzaine for this Yule’ etc.”. The fee was 7s. 6d. for the course, 1s 6d for a single lecture, with the introductory lecture free of charge.

In October 1909 Pound gave a course of lectures of Medieval Literature, running from 11 October 1909 – 28 March 1910 on Monday evenings at 8.30pm. The fee was 25s for the whole course, 15s for a term and 2s for a single lecture. He was described again as “Sometime Fellow in the University of Pennsylvania” and also as “Author of ‘Personae’”.

Biographers

According to Charles Norman’s biography [*Ezra Pound*, Rev Ed 1969 (Macdonald)], being short of funds Pound presented him at the Polytechnic and insisted that, rather than registering as a student, he wished to register as a teacher and to give a course on the Romance Literature of Southern Europe. One of the students to register on the 1909-10 course was Dorothy Shakespear, along with her mother the London society hostess Mrs Olivia Shakespear. Pound would go on to marry Dorothy in 1914.

Nigel Stock’s *The Life of Ezra Pound* (Pantheon Books, 1970) has him applying to fill the vacancy left by the death of Churton Collins at the Polytechnic and being appointed as a result of this application. Stock also records that only 20 students turned up for the first lecture in the 1909-10 series, about half the number hoped for.

Available archive resources

The University Archive holds three prospectuses which mention Pound’s lecture series (Spring 1909, Winter 1909 and Spring 1910) as well as a ledger of agreements between the Polytechnic and its teaching staff with details of Pound’s pay.