This course will examine differences between poetry and poetics of the dominant literary tradition (principally lyric poetry) in English and vernacular forms of poetry (including poems written in dialect, jargon, and slang). In addition, the course will attempt to identify historical and theoretical correspondences between vernacular poetry and manifestations of infidel culture (including the history of nightlife, forgery, and subversive publication). Primary materials will range from examples of canonical lyric poetry (drawn from anthologies) to riddles and poems of the canting tradition (songs composed in the jargon of the criminal underworld), as well as charms, nursery rhymes, oaths, curses, playground chants, and other vernacular forms. The course will encourage original research carried out (and presented in class) by members of the class into marginal forms, texts, jargons, and subcultures.

COLT L/M/CT Track: This is a Critical Thought Concentration Course.

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