

**To request a large-print copy of this syllabus, please email
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MODERNISM



COURSE DESCRIPTION

While its limits and meanings remain a topic of debate among scholars today, modernism's significance as a phenomenon that changed the way we represent the world is unquestioned. Broadly situated between 1900 and 1950, modernism includes some of the most influential artists, writers, and filmmakers of the last century: Pablo Picasso, Virginia Woolf, and Charlie Chaplin were all modernists. These figures are some of our best teachers about the modern world. We are still, as Richard Ellmann wrote of James Joyce, learning to be their contemporaries.

This course explores a range of works in different media and genres, including poems, short stories, novels, films, plays, essays and other experimental pieces, in order to give a comprehensive view of modernism written in English. We will begin our exploration by looking at modernist manifestos and thinking about some of the reasons that writers and artists give for turning to radical, new ways of representing the world in the early twentieth century. We will then investigate different themes as they relate to these reasons, stopping in the modernist cities of T.S. Eliot's London, James Joyce's Dublin, and Langston Hughes's Harlem; traveling with Joseph Conrad's Marlow into the heart of the Congo to face disturbing new realizations about mankind; and facing the horrors of the First World War through the eyes of young British poets. Throughout we will ask ourselves, what is modernism? Why did it happen when it happened? How did it change over its course? What purposes can modernist writing serve? And what does it teach us?

GOALS

The study of modernism, one of the most exciting, varied, and revolutionary periods in literary history, is also, in many ways, the study of the world that we live in today. In its broadest outlines this course will help you reflect critically on why our arts represent the world the way they do, what they mean, and how the things around you—novels, poems, plays, short stories, architecture, films, paintings, music—fit into the aesthetic history of the last century. This course will also, among other things: **1)** guide you towards enjoying important texts that may have seemed inaccessible at first; **2)** enable you to identify the works, methods, political agendas of the most influential writers of the last century; **3)** familiarize you with some of their key ethical implications; **4)** give you the tools to write a sophisticated critical analysis of a modernist work; **5)** allow you to engage intellectually in contemporary debates about the meanings of modernism; **6)** provide you with an opportunity to express yourself in an original creative reaction to modernism; and hence **7)** allow you to see how strongly this period in literature has affected the way we represent the world to ourselves.

STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

Your grade for this course will be evaluated on the following basis (make sure you read the small print!):

25% Participation – Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, contribute regularly, and give one five minute oral presentation on a text of their choice.

I believe the efforts of students who enrich discussion by offering their own views in class should be rewarded. Out of respect to students presenting their ideas, **this class has a strict policy on attendance and late arrivals.** More than three absences or late arrivals will compromise your participation grade. If you must be absent for more than three classes due to medical or other emergency reasons, please bring documentation of these issues. Please inform me of any absences due to sports, religious holidays, or disabilities at the beginning of the term. A late arrival is defined as more than five minutes after the beginning of the class.

25% Midterm Position Paper – 1000 word essay on any text discussed in the first half of the term.

You are free to choose your own topic of discussion, but I will recommend possible questions to address in class. Hard copies of this paper are due in the first class back after the midterm break. In grading your paper I will arrange a time to meet with you during the following week. This meeting is compulsory. In order to ensure that all students have the same amount of time to write, late submissions will be penalized at the rate of 5% of your paper grade each day. The word limit is strict – keep between 900 and 1100 words.

25% Final Position Paper – 1000 word essay on any text discussed in the second half of the term.

Hard copies due one week after the last day of class. Same rules apply as for the Midterm position paper.

25% Creative Response – A piece of original, creative work inspired by modernism, along with an explanation of your engagement with a particular modernist author or text.

In place of a final exam, this course will test your engagement with the material by asking you to write a creative piece in the style of a modernist writer or text. We will discuss ideas for what such a creative piece may include in the last few weeks of the semester. These responses may be in any form—including an online project or film—but please keep them under a thousand words or ten minutes.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Please buy the following books:

- *Modernism, An Anthology*, ed. Lawrence Rainey. Malden: Blackwell, 2005.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Waiting for Godot = En attendant Godot*. New York, NY: Grove, 2009. Print.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Criticism*. Ed. Robert Kimbrough. New York, NY: Norton, 2006. Print.
- Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

The majority of texts for this course will be posted on Blackboard. Please print the relevant class documents and bring them to each class. Computers will not be used during class time. Printing costs are part of the course costs.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with, and adhere to Penn's code of academic integrity (http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html). Plagiarism can easily be avoided by putting other people's work in quotation marks and citing sources.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Unless marked with a star, please read all works listed **before** the class. M stands for *Modernism: An Anthology*. Hence M3-6 means that a particular text can be found on pages 3-6 of *Modernism: An Anthology*. If no page numbers are given, the text will be available through online course-ware. Please check the course website regularly for updates.

Week One – Manifestly Modern

M – Introductions, syllabus, and film clips from Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times*.*

W – F.T. Marinetti, "Futurist Manifesto," M3-6; Pound, "Imagist Manifestos," M94-97; Wyndham Lewis, "Manifesto," M201-206.

F – *Think about how these works display the credos of Imagist manifesto.* Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" "Salutation, the Third," (M43) and H.D., "Oread" and "Sea Rose" (M441, 443).

Week Two – Joseph Conrad

M – Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, chapter 1

W – Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, chapter 2

F – Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, chapter 3

Week 3 – T.S. Eliot

M – The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock M 114-16, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," and "The Lesson of Baudelaire." M152-157.

W – *The Waste Land* Parts I and II: “The Burial of the Dead” and “A Game of Chess.” M123-130.

F – *The Waste Land* Parts III and IV: “Death by Water” and “What the Thunder Said” M130-142.

Week Four – Modern Women

M – Dorothy Richardson, “Sunday,” “Death,” “The Reality of Feminism,” and “Women and the Future.” M578-580, 587-594.

W – Mina Loy, “Feminist Manifesto,” “Virgins Plus Curtains, Minus Dots,” and “The Effectual Marriage” M417-420.

F – Rebecca West, “Indissoluble Matrimony” and “The *Freewoman*.” M693-709.

Week Five – The Metropolis

M – Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Modern Life”; Modernist architecture prezi; clip from Fritz Laing, *Metropolis*.*

W – “Araby” from James Joyce, *Dubliners* M212-214.

F – “A Little Cloud” and “The Sisters” in two versions from the *Irish Homestead* (1904) and *Dubliners* (1914). M 215-222 and Blackboard.

Week Six – War

M – Wilfred Owen, “Anthem for Doomed Youth,” and “The Disabled Soldier”; Vera Brittain “To my Brother”, Alfred Lichtenstein, “Prayer Before Battle.” Also look at paintings by Otto Dix.*

W – D.H. Lawrence, “With the Guns,” “The Prussian Officer,” “England, My England”

F – Ezra Pound: *Hugh Selwyn Mauberly* M 48-60; Siegfried Sassoon: ‘On Passing Menin-Gate’

Week Seven – Virginia Woolf

M – Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* I, pp. 1-66.

W – *Mrs. Dalloway* II, pp. 67-120.

F – *Mrs Dalloway* III, pp. 121-165.

Week Eight – Modern Film

(These films are all available online, but I will also arrange a screening during the week.)

M – Edison Kinetoscope Films, and D.W. Griffith, *The Lonely Villa* (1909)* (No reading for this class).

W – Sergei Eisenstein, *Battleship Potemkin* (1925).

F – Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times* (1934).

Week Nine – Stein, Williams and Modern Art

M – Gertrude Stein – *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (extract). Also look at Pablo Picasso, *The Demoiselles d’Avignon*.*

W – Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (M373-399) and “A Completed Portrait of Picasso”

F – William Carlos Williams, *Spring and All* (M500-536), “The Great Figure,”

Look at the Charles Demuth, "Number 5,"*
Marcel Duchamp and Man Ray, "New York
Dada" M493-97.

Week Ten – The New Negro

M – Alain Locke's "[The New Negro](#)." (Optional:
YouTube: Open Yale Courses: Jonathan
Holloway's "[The New Negroes](#).") Nancy
Cunard, "Harlem Reviewed," M770-74.

W – Jean Toomer, from *Cane*; Gwendolyn
Brooks, "We Real Cool," and "Kitchenette
Building."

F – Langston Hughes, *Montage of a Dream
Deferred*.

Week Eleven – Women's Short Stories

M – Djuna Barnes, "To the Dogs" M922-926,
and Elizabeth Bowen, "The Apple Tree,"
M974-79.

W – Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden Party"
and Dorothy Richardson, "The Garden"
M581.

F – Jean Rhys, "Illusion," and "Mixing
Cocktails," M950-51, 957-58, Mary Butts,
"Green" M800-806.

Week Twelve – Masterpieces or Nonsense? Late Modernism

M – James Joyce, *Anna Livia Plurabelle* (1939)
from *Finnegans Wake* M283-300; William
Carlos Williams, "A Note on the Recent Work
of James Joyce," M542-44.

W – Ezra Pound, "Canto LXXXI."

F – Gertrude Stein, "What are Masterpieces and
Why are there so Few of Them" M412-416;
Extract from *Stanzas in Meditation*. William
Carlos Williams, "The Work of Gertrude
Stein," M545-547.

Week Thirteen – Beckett

M – Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* Part I

W – Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* Part II

F – Samuel Beckett, "Quad," and a small
selection of short plays on film.* (No reading
for this class.)

Week Fourteen – Theories of Modernism

M – Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the
Age of Mechanical Reproduction" M1095-
1112

W – Andreas Huyssen, "Introduction," *After the
Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture and
Postmodernism*.

F – Reflections, theorizations, and presentations
for final papers and creative responses.

