

University of Jordan  
Department of English  
Ph.D. in Literature Program

Major Figure: T. S. Eliot,

### **Course Description**

T. S. Eliot has dominated the literary scene in the English-speaking world since the early decades of the twentieth century. Knowledge of Eliot's contribution to English literature is essential for any student of modern literature. According to Helen Gardner, "The major poet's work must have bulk; he must attempt with success one or other of the greater poetic forms, which tests his gifts of invention and variation; he cannot claim the title on a handful of lyrics however exquisite. His subject-matter must have universally recognized importance, and he must treat it with the imaginative authority we call originality; he must have something at once personal and of general relevance to say on important aspects of human experience." Part of our task in this course is to examine how these criteria, together with what Helen Gardner calls "a special power of language," apply to T. S. Eliot. We will try to study the bulk of his poetry, his major critical essays, and three of his plays. Because of the influence Eliot's poetry has exercised on modern Arabic poetry and drama, students will be encouraged to explore this aspect of his impact as an area of special interest.

### **Evaluation**

Mid-term Examination:	30%
Reports, Presentations, and a 20-page research paper:	30%
Final Examination:	40%

*Note:* The research paper will be due two weeks before the date of the final examination. No late submissions will be accepted. Students will, therefore, be well advised to start working on the paper as early in the course as possible. They should aim at producing original, well-documented work that can potentially be published.

### **Course Policies**

- University of Jordan policy on attendance applies to Ph. D. students.
- Plagiarism will result in automatic failure in the course.
- Students are urged to make copies of their reports for other members of the class for mutual benefit. This does not apply to research papers.

- Students are expected to submit both an electronic as well as a print version of their reports and papers.
- The instructor's email address is: [mhmasfour@gmail.com](mailto:mhmasfour@gmail.com)

### **Texts**

Faber & Faber are the publishers of Eliot's works in Great Britain. Get the latest editions of his *Collected Poems*, *Selected Essays*, *On Poetry and Poets*, and the plays *Murder in the Cathedral*, *The Family Reunion*, *The Cocktail Party*. Eliot's *Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward, is also very useful. It was published by Penguin Books in association with Faber & Faber

### **Assignments**

#### **Eliot the Poet**

Week 1: Introduction to the Course. *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

Week 2: "Portrait of a Lady," "Preludes," "Rhapsody on a Windy Night"

Week 3: "Mr. Aollinax," "La Figlia Che Piange," "Gerontion"

Week 4: Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar," "Sweeney Erect," "Whispers of Immortality," "Mr. Eliot's Sunday Morning Service," "Sweeney among the Nightingales"

Week 5: *The Waste Land*

Week 6: *Ash-Wednesday*, "The Hollow Men," "A Note on War Poetry"

Week 7: "Journey of the Magi," "Marina," *Four Quartets*

Week 8: Midterm Exam

#### **Eliot the Critic**

Week 9: "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "The Function of Criticism," "The Social Function of Poetry"

Week 10: "The Music of Poetry," "The Frontiers of Criticism," "The Three Voices of Poetry"

Week 11: "'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama," "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry," "Hamlet and His Problems"

Week 12: "Poetry and Drama," "Religion and Literature"

#### **Eliot the Dramatist**

Week 13: *Murder in the Cathedral*

Week 14: *The Family Reunion*

Week 15: *The Cocktail Party*

Week 16: Final Examination

### **References**

Eliot has engaged the minds of many prominent critics. The following list is only a beginning:



- Bush, Ronald. *T. S. Eliot, The Modernist in History*, New York, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1991.
- Crawford, *The Savage and the City in the Work of T. S. Eliot*, Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987.
- Drew, Elizabeth. *T. S. Eliot, The Design of His Poetry*. New York: Scribner's Sons, 1949.
- Ellmann, *The Poetics of Impersonality*, Cambridge, Mass, Harvard Univ. Press, 1988.
- Frye, Northrop. *T. S. Eliot: An Introduction*. Chicago & London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982.
- Gallup, Donald. *T. S. Eliot, A Bibliography*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1953.
- Gardner, Helen. *The Art of T. S. Eliot*. New York: Dutton, 1959.
- Headings, Philip R. *T. S. Eliot*. New York: Twayne, 1964.
- Kenner, Hugh. *The Invisible Poet: T. S. Eliot*. New York: Ivan Oblonsky, 1959
- Mattheiessen, F. O. *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959.
- Menand, *Discovering Modernism: T. S. Eliot and His Context*, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1987.
- Moody, A. D. *Thomas Stearns Eliot, Poet*, Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1979.
- Shusterman, *Eliot and the Philosophy of Criticism*, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1988.
- Smith, Grover C. *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1956.
- Southam, B. C. *A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T. S. Eliot*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Traversi, Derek. *T. S. Eliot: The Longer Poems*. London: The Bodley Head, 1976.
- Williamson, George. *A Reader's Guide to T. S. Eliot*. New York: Noonday Press, 1957.