

The University of Jordan  
Faculty of Foreign Languages  
Department of English  
Graduate Studies Program: (MA in Literature and Criticism)

Tentative Syllabus (Revised)

**Course Information**

Course title: Modernism/Postmodernism in English & American Literature

Course Number: 2201719

Office Hours: To be arranged with students

**Main Texts**

Rainey, Lawrence, ed. (2005). **Modernism: An Anthology**. Blackwell.

Note: Students will find most poetry selections in any latest editions of **The Norton Anthology of English Literature**, vol. 2 and **The Norton Anthology of American Literature**, vol. 2 , as well as in the complete works of the individual poets. Handouts of other materials will also be available to students.

**Students must obtain their own copies of the novels and plays assigned for the course.**

**Course Description:**

This course will give an overview of literature written in Great Britain, Ireland and the United States of America between ca. 1890-present, the period of modernism/postmodernism, noted for its international and transatlantic dynamics. We will study canonical modernist writers and other more experimental postmodernists, as well as the importance of the various avant-garde manifestoes and magazines. The giants of modernist/postmodernist literature will be amply represented in the course.

The course will focus on the formal and experimental aspects of modernist/postmodernist literary texts. These works will be studied in a larger context (developments in the fields of science and the arts, social and political developments). In addition, a generous selection of texts by avant-garde thinkers and writers from the Continent will be duly featured in the course. These will enable students to trace modernism's interaction with the Futurists, the Dadaist, the Surrealists, the Cubists, the Symbolists and other movements.

### **Course Objectives:**

This course will extend and deepen the power of students' literary and critical analysis through in-depth consideration of texts. Students will explore critical debates central to the literature of the modernist/postmodernist period. The course will also aim to extend the students' skills in the reading of narrative and the understanding of the relationship of a text to its cultural/social context. Students will be encouraged to share analytical and critical views on the texts ascribed in class discussions, and will focus research skills in the writing of a final essay. This essay will be on a relevant subject of their own choice within the parameters of the course, and will further extend the students' critical skills and their ability to produce good, clear writing. A final exam will test the students' knowledge of the literature of the period, and give them an opportunity to display their insight, their familiarity with the texts, and the range of their critical ideas.

### **Learning Outcomes**

After completing the course students will have:

- learned to identify several key works of modernist/postmodernist poetry, fiction and drama
- developed an understanding of the relationship between literature, culture and politics
- developed their critical reading and writing skills
- analyzed the key characteristics of the literary culture of the modernist/postmodernist period
- assessed the literary, historical, cultural and aesthetic significance of modernism/postmodernism
- analyzed and assessed the themes and formal characteristics of the texts studied

### **Requirements**

1. Attendance & participation: (Please note that attendance is strictly mandatory. You are not allowed to miss more than three (excused) absences in the whole semester).
2. Reading: completion of assigned readings is essential. This class is a seminar; you are strongly encouraged to make an active role in class discussions.
3. Weekly oral presentations
4. Mid-term exam

5. Final exam
6. A Final research paper

### **Academic Honesty**

All students in the class are expected to observe the University's guidelines dealing with problems of plagiarism, cheating, etc. Plagiarism will result in failing the entire course.

### **Mode of Instruction**

Three-hour seminar per week; lecture-discussion

### **Grading Policy:**

- course work & class participation: 15%
- mid-term: 30%
- final: 40%
- research paper: 15%

## **Weekly Schedule and Assignments (Tentative)**

### **I. Introduction and Orientation**

#### Week 1

-Introduction: cultural backgrounds; precursors of modernism; definitions and characteristics of modernism/postmodernism

### **II. Poetry (6 Weeks)**

#### Week 2

Ezra Pound: Portrait d'une femme (handout); In a Station of the Metro (handout); Hugh Selwyn Mauberly

From The Cantos: (I)

#### Week 3

T. S. Eliot:

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock; The Waste Land; Portrait of a Lady (handout)



Week 4

W. B. Yeats:

The Second Coming; Sailing to Byzantium; Leda and the Swan; Among School Children; Byzantium; Lapis Lazuli; The Magi (handout); The Gift of Harun Al-Rashid (handout); The Dreaming of the Bones (handout)

Week 5

Wilfred Owen:

(The War Poets)

Anthem for Doomed Youth; Dulce et Decorum Est; Strange Meeting; Futility; Disabled

W. H. Auden:

The Wanderer; Our Hunting Fathers; As I Walked Out One Evening; Lullaby; Musee des Beaus Arts; The Sea and the Mirror; The Shield of Achilles; A Lullaby

Week 6

Langston Hughes:

(Harlem Renaissance)

The Negro Speaks of Rivers; The Weary Blues; Morning After; Madam Past History; Theme for English B; Harlem, or a Dream Deferred (handouts)

Week 7

Dylan Thomas:

And Death Shall Have No Dominion; The Force That through the Green Fuse Drives the Flower; The Hunchback in the Park; Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night; Fern Hill; Portrait of a Lady

### **III. Fiction (5 Weeks)**

Week 8

Virginia Woolf:

**Mrs. Dalloway**

Week 9

James Joyce:

**A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man; first episode from Ulysses**

Week 10

Ernest Hemingway:

**The Sun Also Rises**

Week 11

Jean Rhys:

**Wide Sargasso Sea**

Week 12

Don DeLillo:

**White Noise**

**IV Drama (3 Weeks)**

Week 13

Samuel Beckett:

**Endgame**

Week 14

Sam Shepard:

**Buried Child**

Week 15 (Women Theater)

Marsha Norman:

**'Night Mother**

Week 16

**REVISION**

## References:

- Ayers, David (2004). **Modernism: A Short Introduction**. Blackwell Publishing, Ltd.
- Bradbury, Malcolm, and James McFarlane, eds. (1991). **Modernism: A Guide to European Literature, 1890-1930**. Penguin Books.
- Brooker, Peter, ed. (1992). **Modernism/Postmodernism**. Longman
- Childs, Peters (2008). **Modernism**. Routledge
- Fussell, Paul (2000). **The Great War and Modern Memory**. The University of Oxford Press.
- Gay, Peter (2009). **Modernism: The Lure of Heresy**. Vintage.
- Hassan, Ihab (1971). **The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature**. Oxford University Press.
- Huysen, Andreas (1986). **After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism. Theories of Representation and Difference**. Indiana University Press.
- Joannou, Maroula, ed. (1999). **Women Writers of the 1930s: Gender, Politics, and History**. Edinburgh University Press.
- Sherry, Vincent (2003). **The Great War and the Language of Modernism**. Oxford University Press.
- Williams, Raymond (1989). **The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists**. Verso.
- Woolf, Virginia. "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown." **Collected Essays**. Ed. Leonard Woolf. Vol.1, London: Hogarth, 319-337