

ENGL 3915: London Modernisms: 1915-1925; Parallels and Prospects 2015-2025
(4 credits; Interdisciplinary Capstone Course credit)
Fall 2017; Wednesdays, 2:00 - 5:00; Fordham London Centre

John P. Harrington, Dean of A&S Faculty, Professor of English

Course Description:

Matthew Arnold, a very influential and controversial English poet and essayist of the 19th century, presented in 1857 the theory that “intellectual deliverance is the peculiar demand of those ages which are called modern; and those nations are said to be imbued with the modern spirit most eminently in which the demand for such a deliverance has been made with most zeal, and satisfied with most completeness.”

British literary modernism is associated with London and the post-war period of 1915-1925, and particularly with the “annus mirabilis” of 1922, when many new literary works appeared in what was perceived as a new, “modern” literary style. But just as Arnold located “the modern spirit” across different times from the classical to his contemporary, this course will focus on the nature of literary modernism in the early 20th century and connect it to modernism in the early 21st century, our contemporary. Literary modernism a century ago developed in the context of social conditions that resemble our own: migrations and immigrations; tensions between Global and Local orientations; consciousness of society under siege by anarchy; and the increasing influence of technology. For the poet T. S. Eliot, the accomplishment of the writer James Joyce as “giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history.” We will explore how that shape was achieved in 1915-1925 and how that is attempted in London today.

London was an intellectual, cultural, and literary center in the early 20th century, and it is that today. This course will draw on the Fordham University focus for study abroad in London as “the city as text” by visiting both historical locations in the city and the region and also contemporary centers of cultural activity including significant sites, museums, theaters, and music venues.

As an Interdisciplinary Capstone Course, “London Modernisms” will draw on the disciplines of historical studies and literary studies, compare them, and integrate them. Our treatment of modernism will be interdisciplinary, particularly drawing on history and art history, and it will include British guest lecturers most qualified in 20th century political, social, and visual histories.

Requirements for the course will include joining group excursions on class time and independent ones outside class time; participation in discussions in an active classroom; reports based on historical or literary perspectives; independent engagement with current events in London; and presentations on individual research projects. This class will meet in the city of London and it will bring London the city into our classroom.

Course Learning Outcomes:

This course will present a general chronology of notable modern British literature works in prose, poetry, and drama in 1915-1925 in historical context; students will learn this chronology and understand the significance and distinctive characteristics of historical events and literary works in it; students will learn interdisciplinary methods through visiting faculty members and comparing the methodologies of historical and literary studies; students will learn the actual and the cultural geography of modern and contemporary London through visits to its sites, cultural institutions, and performing arts venues; students will use and improve verbal and written communication skills through presentations and writing assignments.

Course Requirements and Assessment:

1. Active oral class participation and excursions [20%]: throughout the term.
2. Two short class report presentations, one literary report and one historical report [15%]:
Scheduled throughout the semester
3. One short (3 pp.) essay of one-month assessment of the course [15%]: Week 4.
4. In-Class Mid-term Examination in Class [15%]: Week 6.
5. One review (3 pp.) of a play, other performance, or exhibition of your choice related to the course [15%]: Due by Week 10.
6. One research report (5-10 pp.), topics to be developed in class, that include historical context and literary analysis; verbal presentation in class and final written paper [20%]: Final Presentations and Paper Week 14.

Attendance:

Fordham University Undergraduate Handbook: "Students are expected to attend every class of every course for which they are registered. Each class meeting has its own dynamics and provides a unique opportunity for learning.

Academic Integrity Policy:

"A University, by its nature, strives to foster and recognize originality of thought, which can be recognized only when people produce work that is theirs alone and properly acknowledge information and ideas that are obtained from the work of others. It is therefore important that students must maintain the highest standards with regard to honesty, effort, and performance."

Full information on infractions of academic integrity including punishments up to and including dismissal from Fordham University can be found at:

http://www.fordham.edu/info/25380/undergraduate_academic_integrity_policy

Course Syllabus:

September 6

Week 1: Overview; Course Web Site; Interdisciplinary Capstone Course design; Course Resources

BBC British History Timeline: Historical Studies as Discipline

Oxford English Literature Timeline: Literary Studies as Discipline

ICC Methodology and key texts for term:

Matthew Arnold, "On the Modern Element in Literature" (1857)

Francis Sheppard, London: A History, (Oxford University Press, 1998), "Uncertain Metropolis: 1914-1997": pp. 321-338

Roy Porter, London: A Social History (Harvard University Press, 1994), "Modern Growth, Modern Government: 1890-1945": 326-343

September 13

Week 2: Modernism of Social Content: Prose Fiction

Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent (1907)

Historical Accounts of Greenwich Observatory Bombing in 1894

Events Listings:

Joseph Conrad Society UK: <http://www.josephconradsociety.org/>

City as Text Group Excursion: Royal Museum Greenwich

September 20

Week 3: Modernism of Social Content:

Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent (1907)

Virginia Woolf, "Joseph Conrad" (1914)

Literary Account: V. S. Naipaul, "Conrad's Darkness" (1974)

City as Text Excursion Reports: Historical and Literary Accounts

September 27

Week 4: Modernism of Social Content: Drama

BBC History of Modern British Theatre

Bernard Shaw, Pygmalion (1914)

Bernard Shaw, The Quintessence of Ibsenism (1891, 1917 Preface)

Events Listings: The Shaw Society of UK

City as Text Excursion: Production of Contemporary Play TBD

Due: One short (3 pp.) essay of one-month assessment of the course

October 4

Week 5: Social Modernism: Cultural History Visitor George Regkoukos, Historian: War Years and the Roaring 20s (Science, Medicine and Technology)
Maynard Keynes, "The Economic Consequences of Peace" (1920)(excerpt)
Bertrand Russell, "What I Believe" (1925)
City as Text Excursion Reports

October 11

Week 6: Modernism of New Form: Prose Fiction
James Joyce, Ulysses (1922) (excerpts)
T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth" (1923)
Contemporary Writers: Parallels to Classical Literature

Mid-term Examination in Class

October 18

Week 7: Midterm Examination

[October 25: London Term Break: No class]

November 1

Week 8: Modernism of New Form: Visual Arts and Architecture
Visitor: Geoff Snell, Art Historian: A New Century; Twentieth Century Art
Roger Fry, excerpts from Vision and Design (1920)
Excursions: Courtauld Gallery

November 8

Week 9: Modernism of New Form: Poetry
T. S. Eliot, Prufrock and Other Poems (1919)
T. S. Eliot, The Waste Land (1922)
Ezra Pound, Selected Texts
Contemporary Writers: Anne Carson

Photo Archive, London 1920's:

<http://londonist.com/london/best-of-london/in-photos-london-in-the-1920s>

Events Listings:

T. S. Eliot Society of UK: <http://www.eliotsonline.org.uk/>

November 15

Week 10: Modernism of New Form: Drama
W. B. Yeats, "The People's Theatre" (1919)
W. B. Yeats, "At the Hawk's Well" (1914)
T. S. Eliot, "The Cocktail Party" (1949)

Contemporary Writers: Caryl Churchill, Harold Pinter, Lucy Kirkwood
Events Listings:
London Fringe Theatre

Due: Final date for submission of one review (3 pp.) of a play, other performance, or exhibition of your choice related to the course

November 22

Week 11: The Bloomsbury Group
City as Text Group Excursion: Bloomsbury Walking Tour
Juliet Nicolson, The Great Silence (Grove Press, 2011), "Introduction" and "Wound," pp. 1-25
Electronic Resources:
Tate Museum Bloomsbury Timeline and Resources:
<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/bloomsbury-group>

November 29

Week 12: End of Decade: 1925
Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (1925)
Contemporary Writers: Zadie Smith, "Northwest London Blues" (2012)
City as Text Excursions Reports
Events Listings:
Virginia Woolf Society of UK: <http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/>

December 6

Week 13: End of Decade: 1925
Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway (1925)
Virginia Woolf, The London Scene (essays 1931-1932)
Presentations of Research Projects

December 13 (Exam Week)

Week 14: Presentations of Research Projects
Review and summary:
Matthew Arnold, "On the Modern Element in Literature" (1857)
Francis Sheppard, London: A History, (Oxford University Press, 1998), "Uncertain Metropolis: 1914-1997": pp. 321-338
Roy Porter, London: A Social History (Harvard University Press, 1994), "Modern Growth, Modern Government: 1890-1945": 326-343

Course Resources:

Required book texts:

Joseph Conrad, The Secret Agent
Bernard Shaw, Pygmalion
T. S. Eliot, Selected Poems
Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway

Required book excerpts provided:

Francis Sheppard, London: A History, (Oxford University Press, 1998), "Uncertain Metropolis: 1914-1997": pp. 321-338
Roy Porter, London: A Social History (Harvard University Press, 1994), "Modern Growth, Modern Government: 1890-1945": 326-343
Juliet Nicolson, The Great Silence (Grove Press, 2011), "Introduction" and "Wound," pp. 1-25

Other texts will be provided electronically; additional titles may be required for individual research projects.

Course Electronic Resources:

Joseph Conrad:

The Secret Agent archive: <https://archive.org/details/secretagentasimp031220mbp>

Joseph Conrad Society UK: <http://www.josephconradsociety.org/>

Historical Account of Greenwich Observatory Bombing in 1894:
<https://www.theguardian.com/science/the-h-word/2016/aug/05/secret-agent-greenwich-observatory-bombing-of-1894>

Bernard Shaw:

Pygmalion etext: <http://www.bartleby.com/138/>
BBC History Modern British Theatre: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zwx9j6f#z2njxsg>

James Joyce:

T. S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth": <https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/review-of-ulysses-by-t-s-eliot-from-the-dial>

Virginia Woolf on Ulysses, The Modernism Lab, Yale:
https://modernism.research.yale.edu/wiki/index.php?title=Woolf%27s_Reading_of_Joyce%27s_Ulysses,_1918-1920&oldid=6054&printable=yes

Links from the James Joyce Society: <http://joycesociety.org/links.html>

The Joyce Project Ulysses online: <http://cas.umd.edu/english/joyce/#>

T. S. Eliot:

Exploring The Waste Land:

<http://world.std.com/%7Eraparker/exploring/thewasteland/explore.html>

The Waste Land Hypertext: <http://eliotswasteland.tripod.com/>

Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent": <http://www.bartleby.com/200/sw4.html>

T. S. Eliot Society of UK: <http://www.eliotociety.org.uk/>

Virginia Woolf:

Mrs Dalloway Electronic Text: <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91md/>

Mrs Dalloway's London Mapping Project:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/viewer?mid=1mRbzQIldTLYIoty-9AEnjh6JTog&hl=en_US&ll=51.5127768755441%2C-0.14119499999992513&z=13

Mrs Dalloway Mapping Project: <http://mrsdallowaymappingproject.weebly.com/>

Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain: <http://www.virginiawoolfsociety.co.uk/>

Tate Museum Bloomsbury Resources:

<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/bloomsbury-group>

Woolf, "Modern Fiction": <https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/w/woolf/virginia/w91c/chapter13.html>

Related Texts and General Sources:

Oxford English Literature Timeline:

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780191737053.timeline.0001>

BBC British History Timeline:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/launch_tl_british.shtml

Roger Fry, Vision and Design:

<https://archive.org/stream/visiondesign00fryr#page/n11/mode/2up>

Keynes, "Economic Consequences of Peace" excerpts:

<http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1920keynes.html>