

## Modernism: Where to Begin M, 4-6:30 / ML 405

Eric Hayot  
ML 430 ✉ [ehayot@u.arizona.edu](mailto:ehayot@u.arizona.edu)  
Office hours: T/Th 9:30-11 and by appointment  
<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~ehayot>

### Texts:

Joseph Conrad, *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897)  
Ernest Fenollosa, "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" (1918)  
Wyndham Lewis, *Blast 1* (1914)  
Michael Levenson, *The Genealogy of Modernism*  
James Joyce, *The Portable James Joyce* (mainly *Dubliners*, 1914)  
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *Three Guineas* (1938)  
Gertrude Stein, *Selected Writings*  
Ernest Hemingway, *In Our Time* (1924)  
Kolocotroni, *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*  
Alain Locke, *The New Negro Anthology* (1925)  
F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)  
Wallace Stevens, *The Palm at the End of the Mind*  
Willa Cather, *The Professor's House* (1925)  
William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929)

In addition to these books, we will have a coursepack, which will be available at Arizona Print/Copy, (1033 N. Park Avenue; 882-3995).

### Course description:

*"Even an ordinary 'was,' in a report of something that was not, acquires a new formal quality from the fact that it was not so."* – Theodor Adorno

Frame for a movement, mask of complication, foil of the avant-garde: the term "modernism" has come, in the literary context, to reveal as much as it conceals, to tell as much as it holds in reserve. Our approach to the question of what modernism is will therefore be general of necessity; it will grasp its definitions where it can find them: trope, style, habit, frame, figure.

The course makes its way through modernism's literary and literary critical greatest hits so as to give a broad introduction to the historical and intellectual shape of the period; it also attends to the more practical questions of how modernism gets defined in the academy through syllabi, conferences, journals, and the like. Students should leave the class with a clear sense of how they might approach teaching a modernism survey as well as how they might begin to think about doing dissertation-level work in the field.

### Assignments and grading

A seven-page paper (20 percent), a class presentation (20 percent), and a final paper of 20 pages (60 percent). You may be required to present your work at "Works in Progress 3," shortly before Thanksgiving.

Your final essay will be due during exam week. It ought to engage substantively ideas central to the course, though it does not necessarily have to focus on texts that we have read in class. Your essays should show that you're familiar with the relevant critical and theoretical work on the texts you choose (and should, therefore, be impeccably cited and footnoted in MLA style). That is, your essays should intercede in a debate that precedes them, and take up their positions in relation to the critical debates that surround the work you're reading. Part of what you're learning here is how to write a paper whose audience is academia in general, rather than just a professor or a class. If theory is relevant to that discussion, you'll need to bring it in as well.

In exceptional circumstances I will consider the granting of a grade of incomplete, but only when all but a minor portion of the course work has been successfully completed.

#### Lateness and absences:

Don't miss class. Don't hand things in late unless you've discussed it with me or us first.

#### Plagiarism and academic honesty:

If you use someone else's ideas, whether through direct quotation or paraphrase, you need to say so. Use parenthetical references and a works cited list (as explained in the *MLA Style Guide*, available in the library or at the bookstore) to credit your sources. I expect you to abide by the university's code of academic integrity.

Daily syllabus. Have everything read *before* coming to class.

August 25

Michael Levenson, "Introduction," *Cambridge Companion to Modernism*  
Jane Gallop, "The Ethics of Close Reading."

Sept 1 – no class (labor day).

Harry Levin, "What Was Modernism?" *Mass Review* 1 (Aug 1960)

Robert Martin Adams, "What Was Modernism?" *Hudson Review* 31 (Spring 1978)

Also, go to [http://msa.press.jhu.edu/MSA5\\_schedule.htm](http://msa.press.jhu.edu/MSA5_schedule.htm) and read over the entire schedule for the next meeting of the Modernist Studies Association.

Then, post to the class listserv about one or more of these texts, reading it as a document that tells you what "modernism" is at a given historical moment. Three hundred words MAXIMUM for your initial posting.

#### **Modernist precursors**

Sept 8

*Modernism* 93-168

Conrad, *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897)

Michael North, *The Dialect of Modernism*, ch. 2

Sept 15

Yeats, selected poems

Selected symbolist poets (Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine)

Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms*, ch. 3

#### **British Modernisms**

Sept 22

Pound, *Cathay* (1915), "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste,"  
 H.D., selected poems  
 Fenollosa, "The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry" (1918)  
*Blast 1* (1914)

Sept 29

T.S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* (1915), *The Wasteland* (1922) (if you don't own them, both of these are most easily available online at <http://www.prufrock.org/poem/fulltext.html> and <http://www.bartleby.com/201/1.html>), "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "The Modern Mind" and "Conclusion" from *The Uses of Poetry*.

Oct 6

Michael Levenson, *The Genealogy of Modernism*  
*Modernism* 249-315

Oct 13

James Joyce, *Dubliners* (1914), excerpts from *Ulysses* (1922) and *Finnegan's Wake* (1939)  
 T.S. Eliot, "Ulysses, Order, and Myth."

Oct 20

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *Three Guineas* (1938)  
 Rita Felski, *The Gender of Modernity*, excerpts

*Short paper due (7 pages)*

### **American Modernisms**

Oct 27

Gertrude Stein, *Selected Writings*  
 Michael North, *Dialect of Modernism* ch. 3  
 Marjorie Perloff, "Barbed-Wire Entanglements"

Nov 3

Hemingway, *In Our Time* (1924)  
*Modernism* 321-456

Nov 10

Alain Locke, *The New Negro Anthology* (1925)  
 Houston Baker, *Modernism and the Harlem Renaissance*, excerpts

Nov 17

Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1926)  
 David Trotter, "The Modernist Novel" (*Cambridge Companion*)

Nov 19-20 *Works in Progress 3*

Nov 24

Williams, *Spring and All* (1923)  
 Stevens, *Palm at the End of the Mind*, selections tba  
 Pound, selected late Cantos

Marjorie Perloff, "Pound/Stevens: Whose Era?"

Dec 1

Willa Cather, *The Professor's House* (1925)

William Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury* (1929)

Dec 8

Michael North, *Reading 1922*, excerpts

Anne Banfield, "L'imparfait de l'objectif"

Mary Anne Doane, "Freud, Marey, and the Cinema"