

# HL 4020 – Advanced Studies in Modernist Literature: Other Modernisms

Meets: Thursdays 9:30-12:30  
Location: LHS-TR+41  
Professor: Dr. Kevin Riordan

Office: HSS 03-72  
Consultation hours: TBD  
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In their foundational 1978 study, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane provide provisional shape for the subsequent study of modernism. They suggest that modernism “responds to the scenario of our chaos. It is the art consequent on Heisenberg’s ‘Uncertainty principle,’ of the destruction of civilization and reason in the First World War, of the world changed and reinterpreted by Marx, Freud, and Darwin, of capitalism and constant industrial acceleration, of existential exposure to meaninglessness or absurdity.” This course reckons with a range of modernist texts in order to confirm, supplement, and disrupt this proposed characterization of “the scenario of our chaos.”

Bradbury and McFarlane’s *Modernism* is subtitled “*A Guide to European Literature, 1890-1930*,” and much of the field’s more recent scholarship has been devoted to challenging and expanding that implicit definition, whether geographically, historically, or generically. In this seminar, our task will be to learn from and contribute to the field’s consistently shifting ground. We will re-familiarize ourselves with significant works from the literary tradition of the period, but we will also look to objects from the edges of such a modernism in order to grapple with the character and the utility of the category itself.

## Core Texts:

Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground* (0140455124)  
Jules Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days* (0199552517)  
August Strindberg, *Miss Julie and Other Plays* (9780199538041)  
Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography* (0374521344)  
Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (9780141183411)  
Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (9781590173022)  
Course Reader (available B1 of HSS)

## Course Assignments and Assessment:

Participation, Preparation, and Presentations	15%
Written Assignments	35%
Final Exam	50%

## Prospective Itinerary

### Week 1 – Modern Overtures: Untimely Beginnings

January 12 – Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire”

### Week 2 – Brooding in Anticipation

January 19 – Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*

**Week 3 – Modernity without the Modernism**

January 26 – Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days*

**Week 4 – Falling into Modernism**

February 2 – Strindberg, Preface to *Miss Julie* and *A Dream Play*

**Week 5 – Looking Around**

February 9 – Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction;” Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave”

Image Draft Due

**Week 6 – Writing What We See**

February 16 – Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

**Week 7 – Screen Memories**

February 23 – Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions;” selected films

Image Essay Due (~750 words)

*Recess*

**Week 8 – Speed and Stillness**

March 9 – Duffy, “The Adrenaline Aesthetic;” Marinetti, “The Futurist Manifesto;” Maeterlinck, “Modern Drama” and “The Tragical in Everyday Life;” Pessoa, “The Mariner”

**Week 9 – The Times of Narrative**

March 16 – Woolf, “The Window”

**Week 10 – Time Passing**

March 23 – Woolf, “Time Passes” and “The Lighthouse”

**Week 11 – Stage Time**

March 30 – Artaud, “No More Masterpieces” and “Spurt of Blood”; Cocteau, *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*; Yeats, *At the Hawk’s Well* and “Certain Noble Plays of Japan”

**Week 12 – Taking Stock**

April 6 – Kern, from *The Culture of Time and Space*; Friedman, “Planetaryity”

Comparative Essay Due (~2000 words)

**Week 13 – Late Arrivals or Alternative Routes**

April 13 – Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

**Final Exam: 4 May 2017**