

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

Meets: Wednesdays 14:30-17:30  
Location: LHS-TR+44  
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 characterization, whether in geographical, historical, or generic terms. 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:

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* (9780141183414)  
Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (9781590173022)  
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée* (0520261291)  
Course Reader (available B1 of HSS)

## Course Assignments and Assessment:

Participation, Preparation, and Presentations	15%
Poetry Mini Essay	10%
Image Essay	25%
Comparative Essay	35%
Summative Reflection Exercise	15%

## Prospective Itinerary

### Week 1 – Modern Overtures: Untimely Beginnings

August 14 – Benjamin, “On Some Motifs in Baudelaire”

### Week 2 – Modernity without the Modernism

August 21 – Verne, *Around the World in Eighty Days*

**Week 3 – Falling into Modernism**

August 28 – Strindberg, Preface to *Miss Julie* and *A Dream Play*; Freud, from “On Dreams”

**Week 4 – Looking Around**

September 4 – Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction;” Sontag, “In Plato’s Cave”

Image Draft Due

**Week 5 – Writing What We See**

September 11 – Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

**Week 6 – Screen Memories**

September 18 – Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions;” selected films; Freud, “Screen Memories”

**Week 7 – Speed and Stillness**

September 25 – Marinetti, “The Futurist Manifesto;” Maeterlinck, “Modern Drama” and “The Tragical in Everyday Life;” Pessoa, “The Mariner”

Image Essay Due (~750 words)

**Recess**

**Week 8 – The Times of Narrative**

October 9 – Woolf, “The Window”

**Week 9 – Time Passing (And After)**

October 16 – Woolf, “Time Passes” and “The Lighthouse”

Poetry Mini-Essay Due (~500 words)

**Week 10 – Stage Time**

October 23 – Artaud, “No More Masterpieces” and “Spurt of Blood”; Cocteau, *The Wedding on the Eiffel Tower*; Yeats, *Purgatory*

**Week 11 – Late Arrivals or Alternative Routes**

October 30 – Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

**Week 12 – Taking Stock**

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

Summative Reflection Exercise Due (TBD)

**Week 13 – Modernism Remains (Group Presentations)**

November 13 – Cha, *Dictée*

November 29 – Comparative Essay Due (~1500 words)