



## Modernism

### Introduction

#### Course title and description

<b>Course Title: Modernism</b>
<b>Description:</b> This course will examine the twentieth-century literary movement known as modernism. There are many different locations of literary modernism and this course will focus on European and American modernism. However, the course will also refer to writers from the fringes of European modernism by looking at writers who began their writing careers in such countries as Algeria and Ireland. The course will examine many of the leading modernist writers. Since early modernism is noted for its difficulty, the course will begin by reading these ‘difficult’ modernists and by trying to understand how their various experimental formal techniques contribute to the modernist enterprise. The course will also examine broader themes important for these writers such as gender and literary style, national identity, the relationship between visual art and poetry, writing and journalism, and writing and new technologies. We will also have interviews and videos with international critics and authors.

#### Content, highlighting fundamental concepts

Topic	Contents
Week 1 (Sept. 9): Introduction: What is/was Modernism?  Is it Modernist?	Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Critics on Modernism: Peter Childs, Malcolm Bradbury, Lawrence Rainey</li> <li>• Modernism and Visual Art</li> <li>• How to approach modernism’s ‘difficult texts’?</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Henry James: “The Figure in the Carpet”</li> <li>• W. B. Yeats: “Sailing to Byzantium”</li> </ul>
Week 2 (Sept. 16): European Modernist fiction	James Joyce and the ‘mythic method’. Reading <i>Ulysses</i> , “Proteus”
Week 3 (Sept. 23): European Modernist fiction	James Joyce, <i>Ulysses</i> , “Nausicaa”
Week 4 (Sept. 30): European Modernist and memory	Marcel Proust, <i>In Search of Lost Time</i> (extracts)
Week 5 (Oct. 7): European Modernist prose and poetry	Thomas Mann “Death in Venice”; Rilke <i>Duino Elegies</i> (extracts)
Week 6 (Oct. 14): Modernism and epic theatre	Virginia Woolf & Katherine Mansfield: Feminism & Modernism – <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> (extract); “The Stranger”
Week 7 (Oct. 21): American & African-American Modernism	The Other Side of Modernism: Popular Best-Selling, Plot-Driven Fiction: Hans Fallada, <i>Little Man, What Now?</i> ; H. G. Wells <i>The Sleeper Awakes</i>
Week 8 (Oct. 28): Modernist drama	Eugene O’Neill, <i>Long Day’s Journey Into Night</i> & Samuel Beckett <i>Endgame</i> <a href="https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.182217/2015.182217.Long-Days-Journey-Into-Night_djvu.txt">https://archive.org/stream/in.ernet.dli.2015.182217/2015.182217.Long-Days-Journey-Into-Night_djvu.txt</a>
Week 8 (Nov. 4): Modernism and film	Ingmar Bergman, <i>Persona</i>



<p>Week 9: (Nov. 11) Confessional Poetry &amp; beyond to the Beats</p> <p>Week 10 (Nov. 18): Modernist Poetry, the Beats, and the Asian influence</p> <p>Week 11 (Nov. 25): Group Presentations</p> <p>Week 12 (Dec. 2): Moving beyond Modernism</p>	<p>Watch it here: <a href="https://archive.org/details/Persona1966Pt.1VideoDailymotion/Persona+(1966)+pt.+1++Video+Dailymotion.mp4">https://archive.org/details/Persona1966Pt.1VideoDailymotion/Persona+(1966)+pt.+1++Video+Dailymotion.mp4</a> And here is a great list of modernist films: <a href="https://mubi.com/lists/modernism">https://mubi.com/lists/modernism</a></p> <p>Poems from Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Kenneth Rexroth &amp; Allen Ginsberg, <i>Howl</i>;</p> <p>Wallace Stevens, Adrienne Rich, Kenneth Rexroth, Gary Snider</p> <p>Louis Zukovsky poems; “Sentence” by Donald Barthelme; Folk Music, the songs of Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen <a href="https://biblioklept.org/2017/05/07/sentence-a-short-story-by-donald-barthelme/">https://biblioklept.org/2017/05/07/sentence-a-short-story-by-donald-barthelme/</a></p>
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**Learning outcomes**

1. To introduce students to a central movement in Western literature.
2. To enable students to spend time with difficult modernist texts.
3. To enable students to understand some of the experimental writing techniques being used by the leading modernist writers.
4. To get students thinking about different critical approaches to literary texts, e.g. New Criticism, Historicism, and Reader Response theories of reading literature.
5. To enable students to understand how different writing techniques can affect what is being communicated. E
6. To enable students to understand how literature is a key resource for enabling us to understand ethical dilemmas and how individuals approach such ethical dilemmas.

<b>Task nature</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Tutorial Presentation	individual presentation followed by facilitating of class discussions; attendance and contribution	10%
Term Paper I	4-5 pages, font size 12, double-spaced essay	30%
Term Paper II	5-6 pages, font size 12, double-spaced essay	40%
Group Presentation	Group Presentation (this can be a dramatic piece, a short film, a group presentation on some aspect of modernism and the Hong Kong context or some other format that you discuss with the lecturer).	20%

**Learning resources for students**

- State the textbook required (if any).
- List suggested/required additional readings or textbooks including title, publisher, edition, year of publication, and/or links to the readings if they are accessible online. Some of these resources may be eBooks.
- List any recommended online web pages with the appropriate URL addresses.

**Modernism**



*Required Reading*

*Modernism* by Peter Childs  
The Course Reader

Other key works on desk reserve

*Modernism* by Peter Childs  
*Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*. Malcolm Bradbury & James McFarlane (Eds.)  
*Modernism: An Anthology*. Lawrence Rainey (Ed.). London: Blackwell Publishing, 2005.  
*Nationalism and Modernism*. Anthony D. Smith. London: Routledge, 1998.  
*The Difficulties of Modernism*. Leonard Diepeveen.  
*The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*. Pericles Lewis. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Selected Works on Modernism by Prof. O’Sullivan:

*The Incarnation of Language: Joyce, Proust, and a philosophy of the flesh*. London: Bloomsbury, 2014 [paperback].  
<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/the-incarnation-of-language-9781441101426/>  
*Weakness: A Literary and Philosophical History*. London: Continuum/Bloomsbury, 2014 [paperback].  
<https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/weakness-a-literary-and-philosophical-history-9781472568359/>  
*Beckett Re-Membered: After the Centenary*. Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing (co-edited with James Carney, Leonard Madden and Karl White), 2012.  
<https://www.amazon.com/Beckett-Re-membered-Centenary-James-Carney/dp/1443835005>  
“Henry James, loneliness and the more intimate education inside” *Textual Practice*, 2018.  
“The Sentimental Kindness of Criticism and Joyce’s ‘cup of kindness yet’”, *Textual Practice* 27.2, 2013, pp. 295-314.  
“Giving Up Control: Narrative Authority and Animal Experience in Coetzee and Kafka”, *Mosaic: a journal for the interdisciplinary study of literature* 44.2 (2011): 119-135.  
“Metaphor’s Lost Time: Notes on the new translations of Proust,” *Nottingham French Studies*, Vol. 44 No. 2, Summer 2005, pp. 31-41.  
“‘Bare Life’ and the Garden Politics of Roethke and Heaney” for a special edition of *Mosaic*, December 2005, pp. 17-34.  
“Deleuze, Francis Bacon and Three Images for an East-West Humanities” in *Deleuze and the Humanities: East and West*. Eds. Rosi Braidotti and Kin Yuen Wong. New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018, pp. 120-132.  
“Loneliness and the Submerged Population: Frank O’Connor’s *The Lonely Voice* and Joyce’s ‘The Dead’”. *The Irish Short Story*. Ed. Elke D’Hoker. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2015.

**Feedback for evaluation**

Please email me: [osullivan@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:osullivan@cuhk.edu.hk)

**Teachers’ or TA’s contact details**

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**Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Please read carefully the information regarding academic honesty on the following website:  
<http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>

Fill in the declaration form and attach it to your paper.