

Historia Literaria 1
Colegio de Letras Modernas Inglesas
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras

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Course Description:

The first half of the twentieth century was a period marked by imperialism, social and political upheaval and war that created unprecedented movements of people and a general sense of dislocation and disillusionment. British writers engaged differently with historical, social and cultural events, and their experiments with literary form may be read as attempts to address the disorder that surrounded them. In this course we will explore those literary responses, looking at how writers represented human thought and perception, how they viewed individual and collective identities and the nature of community and how they engaged with or ignored sociopolitical issues such as militarism, pacifism, class, race, religion, gender and empire. Examining work by writers such as Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, poems by Rupert Brooke, Wilfred Owen, Siegfried Sassoon, T.S. Eliot, and W.B. Yeats, and a selection of essays and criticism, we will seek to understand one of the most influential periods in modern literary history.

Although British Modernism tends to be read as a single artistic movement, our approach will emphasize the difficulty of viewing it as a homogeneous literary period, given that some of its major texts were written by authors who were not 'English' (Conrad, Eliot, Yeats) and others by authors who did not belong to the literary establishment. With texts by Harold Pinter, Doris Lessing and Sam Selvon, the second part of the course will carry these questions about coherence and continuity through to a focus on the even more diverse literature of the period after World War II. We will focus on the tensions created by the opposing forces of tradition and change, problems of alienation, psychic fragmentation, the exploration of "inner space", etc., all contemporary issues that have found frequent representation in British literature of the twentieth century. At the end of the second term I expect each of you to work on one novel, play or collection of poems written after 1980. It is important that you choose and read your text during the first term.

Materials/Texts: *The Norton Anthology of British Literature, Vol. 2*, will serve as primary text. Photocopies will be provided when necessary.

Unabridged editions of the following texts: Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway, James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.

A bibliography and other useful information may be found at the following address:

Course Requirements:

In addition to regular and intensive reading, this course requires the following:

1) An informal but intelligent and thoughtful paragraph about a problem that bothers or intrigues you in one of the assigned texts is due *at every session*; the point of this is to give us topics to discuss. You will not be graded on this note, but it is required if you want to pass the course.

2) This is a discussion class, so it succeeds only if everyone participates. If you consistently contribute to an atmosphere of serious engagement with the literature and with your classmates' ideas, you will receive a high participation grade.

3) One presentation of 5-10 minutes. The final shape of the presentations will depend on enrollment, but expect to introduce the class to one aspect of the period which interests you and which need not be literary, such as politics, the arts, architecture, popular culture, the General Strike, fascism, the women's movement, film, etc.

4) Memorise a poem by W.H. Auden

5) Two essays, one to be handed in half-way through the term, the other at the end.

Your papers will vary in length: your first paper will be 5-6 pages, and your second paper will be 8-10 pages. We will discuss potential paper topics in class ahead of time, but provided that it meets the broad course criteria, and provided that you get prior approval from me, you are always encouraged to develop your own topics. Each paper must be presented in MLA Format or I will hand it back to you (I will provide you with the essential guidelines of the MLA format at the beginning of term.), and I prefer that you use recycled paper. *Late papers will not be accepted.* Computer-related failures are not acceptable excuses for late work.

Do not under any circumstances use another person's *ideas* without citing them (including page numbers where the ideas can be found) or use someone else's words without quoting them *and* giving the full citation. **Plagiarism will not be tolerated.** Any student who is found to plagiarise all or part of a paper will automatically fail the course.

Particulars:

In this class I expect you to treat each other with respect. Cell phones must be turned off while class is in session.

Attendance: I take roll at the beginning of every class. Your presence in class and arrival *on time* are essential and will be reflected in the grade you receive. You will be permitted only three (3) absences, and a culmination of more than five absences from this class will result in failure. Your final grade will be

dropped one full grade for every absence you have over three. After five absences you will be advised to withdraw from the course.

This syllabus is subject to change and you will be responsible for adhering to its additions and/or deletions as they are announced, whether you are in class or not.

Required Texts:

Week 1. Introduction

Week 2. Modernity

E.M. Forster. "The Machine Stops." [1909] Collected Short Stories. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982. 109-146. (copies will be provided)

Also available on the internet: <http://brighton.ncsa.uiuc.edu/~prajlich/forster.html>

Week 3 and 4. The Rise and Fall of Empire.

Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness [1902] (N 1958)

Joseph Conrad, Preface to The Nigger of the 'Narcissus' [1898] (N 1954)

Chinua Achebe, from "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" [1977] (N 2035)

Week 5. Writing the Great War

Rupert Brook, "The Soldier" (N 2050)

Siegfried Sassoon, "The Rear Guard" (N 2056), "Glory of Women" (N 2057).

Wilfred Owen, "Anthem for Doomed Youth" (N 2066), "Dulce et Decorum Est" (N 2069)

Rebecca West, "The Return of the Soldier." [1918] (copies will be provided)

Week 6: "I Tiresias, Though Blind": A Modern Perspective on Vision and Humanity

William Butler Yeats. "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" (N 2092), "Adam's Curse" (N 2097), "The Wild Swans at Coole" (N 2101), "The Second Coming" (N 2106), "Leda and the Swan" (N 2110), "Sailing to Byzantium" (N 2109), "Byzantium" (N 2115), "The Circus Animals' Desertion" (N 2120).

[1931] Edmund Wilson. "Symbolism" and "W.B. Yeats." Axel's Castle: A Study of the Imaginative Literature of 1870-1930. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959. 1-25 and 26-63 respectively.

Week 7. The New Bildungsroman

James Joyce. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man [1916] (any unabridged edition will do)

Week 8. Modernism and the City

Virginia Woolf, "Modern Fiction" [1925] (N 2148)

---. "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown" [1924] (copies will be provided)

Week 9.

Virginia Woolf, Mrs Dalloway [1925] (any unabridged edition will do)

Week 10. T.S. Eliot

"Tradition and the Individual Talent" [1920] (N 2395)

"The Three Senses of Culture" and "The Class and the Elite" Notes Towards the Definition of Culture. [1948] (copies will be provided)

Week 11.

"The Wasteland" [1922] (N 2370-2383)

* The class will be divided into five groups, each in charge of explicating one section of the poem to the rest of the group.

Week 12 and 13. The Auden Generation: Popular Culture, Suburbia, the Masses: the 1930s

Writings on literature and politics by Margaret Storm Jameson, F.R Leavis, Alick West, Ralph Fox, William Empson, Stephen Spender, C. Day Lewis, E.M. Forster, W.H. Auden and George Orwell.

Each student will choose one poem by W.H. Auden to be memorised and discussed in class.