

Modernist Women Writers

Junior Tutorial

Room and Time TBD

Instructor: Miles Osgood
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Course Description

In the early decades of the twentieth century, women were at the center of literary and artistic culture as never before: they revolutionized poetic and fictional forms, they organized societies and salons, they edited and published avant-garde material, and they joined in important collaborations with each other. The same modernist period was a time of change for women more generally, as nineteenth-century models of womanhood gave way to increased political rights, geographical and social mobility, sexual freedom, and professional possibilities. This course accounts for both of these narratives, by considering literary works *by* modernist women writers and *about* modern women.

“Modernist Women Writers” will survey the variety of modernism’s styles and sources by considering writers throughout the English-speaking world, including such famous metropolitan forces as Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and Zora Neale Hurston, but also Caribbean novelist Jean Rhys, New Zealand short-story writer Katherine Mansfield, Chinese short-story writer Ling Shuhua, and roving expatriates like Mina Loy and Djuna Barnes. Among many topics that will arise from these texts and an array of critical readings, the course pays special attention to themes of individual identity (a “Portraits” unit), artistic collaboration (a “Networks” unit), and compositional craft (a “Revisions” unit).

Tutorial Goals

This course is designed to introduce junior English concentrators to the discipline and practice of English literary criticism, by preparing students to write a revised **20-25 pp. research paper**. As such, readings include a variety of book excerpts and articles by literary critics who use different methodologies to analyze modernism, women’s writing, or literature more generally. These will be as much a topic of in-class discussion as the novels, poems, and short stories.

Students will also begin doing research early in the course by means of **two in-class presentations** on critical articles, background knowledge, or alternative primary texts. These presentations should explain the content of the material, propose possible insights or arguments about the primary reading for that week, and pose questions for the seminar discussion. Meanwhile, all students are expected to come prepared for discussions, with specific passages (or poems) marked and arguments or questions ready.

One other goal of this class is to make use of special manuscript, typescript, correspondence, and first edition materials specially available at Harvard. We’ll be taking at least one trip as a class to **Houghton Library** to look at unique objects indicative of the revision and collaboration work of modernism. I encourage research projects to use these materials as much as possible.

As more concrete preparation for the paper, students will write **one short essay, a prospectus, an annotated bibliography, and a preliminary draft**. There will be several opportunities to workshop ideas with other students and to meet in private conferences with me. Students are also expected to participate in Junior Tutorial Workshops with their peers and to present

for the Junior Tutorial Conference at the end of the semester.

Course Materials

- Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (New Directions, 9780811216715)
- *Modernist Women Poets: An Anthology* (Counterpoint, 9781619025424) [MWP, below]
- Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (Norton, 9780393311464)
- Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton, 9780393960129)
- Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (Vintage, 9780679724636)
- Virginia Woolf, *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf* (Mariner, 9780156212502)
- Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (Harcourt, 9780156030359)
- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Harcourt, 9780156907392)

- Other readings in the schedule below will be provided as scans or links.

Course Requirements and Grading

- Attendance and Participation: **15%**
- Two Presentations (10 min. each) **15%**
- Short Close-Reading Paper (5-6 pp.): **15%**
- Final Paper (20-25 pp.): **55%**
 - Prospectus (2 pp.) and Presentation (5 min.): 5%
 - Annotated Bibliography: 10%
 - Preliminary Draft (10-15 pp.): 10%
 - Final Draft: 30% [Note that a student cannot pass the course without turning in this final paper]

Course Schedule

Introduction	[Assignments and readings below]
Week 1 – 9/6 Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Introductory discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Modernism and its many forms - Women’s history in the early twentieth century - Depictions of men and women across the modernist arts - Readings to be completed before class: short selected excerpts from James Joyce, “Nausicaa” and “Penelope” (1922), and Virginia Woolf, “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown” (1924) and <i>The Waves</i> (1931)
UNIT 1: PORTRAITS <i>- What are the commonalities and distinctions among modernist characterizations? How do these writers adapt biographical material? What is the relation between textual and visual portraits? What happens to characters with changes in perspective, identity, or time?</i>	
Week 2 – 9/13 A Family Portrait	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Virginia Woolf, <i>To the Lighthouse</i> (1927) + Bonnie Kime Scott, “Introduction” to <i>The Gender of Modernism</i>

	<p>[Feminism, Critical Survey]</p> <p>* Presentation: Hermione Lee, <i>Virginia Woolf</i> (on the Stephen family)</p>
<p>Week 3 – 9/20 Word Art</p>	<p>- Gertrude Stein, “Tender Buttons: Objects” (1914) and “If I Told Him” (1924) from <i>MWP</i>, <i>The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas</i> (1933) p. 3-85</p> <p>- Mina Loy, all selected poems from <i>Modernist Women Poets</i>; “Feminist Manifesto” (1914) and “Aphorisms on Futurism” (1914) (also in <i>MWP</i>)</p> <p>+ Frederic Jameson, “Beyond the Cave” [Marxism, Historicism, Intellectual History]</p> <p>* Presentation: F.T. Marinetti, <i>Futurist Manifesto</i>; the artwork of cubism, fauvism, futurism</p>
<p>Week 4 – 9/27 Painted Faces</p>	<p>- Djuna Barnes, <i>Nightwood</i> (including “Introduction” by T.S. Eliot) (1936)</p> <p>+ Judith Butler, <i>Gender Trouble</i> (Conclusion) [Feminism, Theory of Gender and Sexuality]</p> <p>* Presentation: Joseph Frank, “Spatial Form in Modern Literature”</p>
<p>Friday, 9/30</p>	<p>→ Short Close-Reading Paper. Write a paper of 5-6 pages about one of the works considered so far, using a passage for which you can comment on composition and revision.</p>
<p>UNIT 2: NETWORKS</p> <p>- How global is modernism? How do writers’ collaborations affect individual texts? What role do presses, journals, and editors have in shaping artistic experiments?</p>	
<p>Week 5 – 10/4 Bloomsbury and Beyond</p>	<p>- Katherine Mansfield, “How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped” (1912), “The Garden Party” (1922), “The Fly” (1922)</p> <p>- Virginia Woolf, “The Mark on the Wall” (1919), “The Lady in the Looking Glass” (1929)</p> <p>- Ling Shuhua, “Mid-Autumn Eve” (1928), “Embroidered Pillow” (1928)</p> <p>+ Sara Blair, “Local Modernity, Global Modernism” [New Historicism, Geography]</p>

	<p>* Presentation: Patricia Lawrence, <i>Lily Briscoe's Chinese Eyes</i> (at least Ch. 1)</p>
<p>Week 6 – 10/11 Imagism and its Associates</p>	<p>- From <i>MWP</i>: all selected poems by Amy Lowell, H.D., and Marianne Moore</p> <p>- Additional poems by H.D. and Marianne Moore in preparation for Houghton Library visit</p> <p>+ Jayne E. Marek, <i>Women Editing Modernism</i>, Ch. 4 [Book History, Biography]</p> <p>* Presentation: Ezra Pound and Imagism (“A Few Don’ts,” editing H.D., “Amygism,” Ch. 6 in Marek...)</p>
<p>Week 7 – 10/18 The Harlem Renaissance</p> <p>* <u><i>Visit to Houghton Library</i></u></p>	<p>- Zora Neale Hurston, “Spunk” (1925)</p> <p>- Nella Larsen, “Sanctuary” (1930)</p> <p>- <i>Fire!!</i> (literary magazine, 1926): especially Zora Neale Hurston, “Color Struck,” “Sweat”; Gwendolyn Bennett, “Wedding Day”</p> <p>+ Henry Louis Gates, “The ‘Blackness of Blackness’” [Semiotics, Post-Structuralism, African-American Literary Theory]</p> <p>* No presentation this week: Houghton visit</p>
<p>Friday, 10/21</p>	<p>→ Prospectus. Write 2 pages describing the research project you intend to take on. Consider the questions that will guide your research; you do not need to have answers or arguments just yet, but you should have a topic and a clear sense of your next steps. Prepare to present this idea to the class for about 5 minutes.</p>
<p>UNIT 3: REVISIONS</p> <p>- How should readers account for earlier or alternate versions of texts? Why is revision such a prevalent feature of modernist composition? What happens when writers return with new ideas to themes or characters later in their careers?</p>	
<p>Week 8 – 10/25 Voyage #1</p>	<p>- Jean Rhys, <i>Voyage in the Dark</i> (1934)</p> <p>+ Michael North, <i>The Dialect of Modernism</i> (Ch. 1) [New Historicism]</p> <p>* Presentation: Manuscript for “Part IV” of <i>Voyage</i></p>

<p>Week 9 – 11/1 Revisionism</p>	<p>- Jean Rhys, <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> (1966) and excerpts from Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i> in the Norton edition</p> <p>+ Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, <i>The Madwoman in the Attic</i> (p. 356-62) [Feminism] + Peter Kalliney, “Jean Rhys: Left Bank Modernist as Postcolonial Intellectual” [Global Modernism, Post-colonial Criticism]</p> <p>* Presentation: Jean Rhys’s short stories (“Vienne,” “Let Them Call It Jazz,” “Till September Petronella”...)</p>
<p><i>Friday, 11/4</i> → Annotated Bibliography. Find at least 1 new primary source (another text by the author, a magazine or first edition, letters, etc.) and at least 5 secondary sources (biography, criticism, theory, etc.). Write at least half a page of notes about each source, with attention both to summary and to finding useful details.</p>	
<p>Week 10 – 11/8</p>	<p>- Student-selected readings. Choose 1 creative passage and 1 critical article related to your research. (For novels or academic books, choose excerpts.) Make scans or links to share with the group.</p> <p>+ Hannah Sullivan, <i>The Work of Revision</i> (Introduction, Ch. 1: p. 1-25, 32-61) [Genetic Criticism]</p>
<p>Week 11 – 11/15 Voyage #2</p>	<p>- Virginia Woolf, <i>The Voyage Out</i> (Chapters I–VI) (1915), “An Unwritten Novel” (1921), “Mrs Dalloway in Bond Street” (1923), “The Prime Minister”</p> <p>+ Jed Esty, <i>Unseasonable Youth</i> (selections) [Genre Criticism, Post-Colonial Criticism]</p> <p>* Presentation: Virginia Woolf and Louise DeSalvo, <i>Melymbrosia</i> (characterization of Clarissa Dalloway)</p>
<p><i>Friday, 11/18</i> → Preliminary Draft. 10-15 pages. - Individual Paper conferences will follow</p>	
<p>Week 12 – 11/22 Revision</p>	<p>- Virginia Woolf, <i>Mrs Dalloway</i> (1925)</p> <p>+ Liesl Olson, “Virginia Woolf’s ‘Cotton Wool of Daily Life’” [Formalism, Everyday Life Studies]</p> <p>* Presentation: Virginia Woolf, <i>A Room of One’s Own</i> (Ch. 1, 3, 6)</p>

Week 13 – 11/29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading to be determined by class decision - Thematic options include: legacies of modernism in women’s postmodern, postcolonial, or contemporary literature; women in male modernist texts; recent adaptations of modernist texts
<i>Date TBD</i>	Junior Tutorial Conference. Prepare a 5-minute presentation for all Junior Tutorial students in English.
<i>Friday, 12/9</i>	→ Final Draft. 20-25 pages.

Course Policies

- *Academic Honesty:* Plagiarism is the use of another person’s ideas or writing without giving them proper credit. All assignments are expected to be original work by the student: re-using writing from past courses can also be a form of plagiarism. Consequences of plagiarism can range from failure on the paper to dismissal from the course to even more serious actions. You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with Harvard FAS’s Honor Code: “*Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity – that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one’s own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.*”

- *Collaboration:* This course and the Junior Tutorial program both encourage collaboration. You will be workshopping your ideas and your writing with fellow students during classtime, and I hope you will do so outside of class too. Please be aware, though, that for individual assignments, academic collaboration (like external sources) should always be cited.

- *Attendance:* Your attendance in tutorial is vital to your own success as well as to the success of the class as a whole; so is your attendance in Junior Tutorial General Meetings and at other required events. I will allow each student a “free” tutorial absence to be used in case of sickness, travel, etc: no explanation necessary. Missing more than one class will decrease your participation grade, and excessive absence could result in failing the course. Also, being late really disrupts the work we’re doing together, so I consider 2 lates as equivalent to 1 absence. If you have attenuating circumstances, you must communicate with me in a timely manner so that we can discuss how to deal with it.

- *Computers and Tablets:* Because it will be easiest to circulate some texts digitally, laptop computers or tablets will be allowed in seminar while we’re discussing those texts. Still, feel free to print out these materials if you prefer. Please turn off your Wifi on these devices while we’re in discussion: in such a small group, it will be pretty obvious to all of us if you’re distracted by updates or websites while we’re in class. I’ll also expect digital devices to be put away when we’re discussing books or other paper materials, so please bring a physical notebook.

Due Dates & Late Grades: Unless otherwise specified, assignments are due by 11:59pm on the date listed in the schedule. Late assignments will be docked 1/3 letter grade per day late, except for the final paper, which must be turned in before the due date. Students failing to turn in a final paper, or turning it in late without an official excuse, will fail the tutorial. If, well in advance of an assignment, you expect you will need an extension, please talk with me.

Email: I'll use email to distribute important info throughout the semester—from emailing you handouts to adjusting assignments and deadlines. You are responsible for checking your email on a daily basis. If you have a question that you need to ask me by email, be sure to give me at least 24 hours, or you may not get a response until it's too late. Also, please let me know if you'd like to use a non-Harvard email address.

Accommodations for students with disabilities: “Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term, (9/16). Failure to do so may result in the Course Head's inability to respond in a timely manner. All discussions will remain confidential, although Faculty are invited to contact AEO to discuss appropriate implementation.”