

Modernism In and Beyond the Local/Global, National/Post National, Human/Post-Human

Modernism (1890-1940) traditionally has been understood as a Euro-American movement that breaks from the past literary traditions and is marked most signally by aesthetic innovation and formal experimentation. However, recent studies of Modernism have redefined the movement as ground breaking not merely in its stylistic innovations, but also in its explorations of nationalism and nation building through the lenses of gender, sexuality, race, and ethnicity. Further, modernist writers have looked beyond their own national borders to re-define and re-view notions of modernity and nationality and include the significance of global, post national and post-humanist perspectives. This course will examine how certain canonical writers such as Rebecca West, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf have expanded the portrayals of their literary horizons to include local and global perspectives and show how such shifts allow us to nuance and historicize our understandings of Modernism and modernity. While this course will focus on some of the canonical works of modernists, the course will also concentrate on other literary contributions to modernism that challenged and re-wrote the Euro-American modernist visions of modernity. Of particular interest will be challenges posed by, Kazuo Ishiguro's *Never Let Me Go*, Ian McEwan's *Saturday*, Maria Viramonte's *Under The Feet of Jesus*, Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, and Jeannette Winterson's *The Powerbook*. Taken together, these writers widen the panoramic view of modernist writing and reveal how critical and vigorous debate about identity and democracy provides crucial insights into the intensely troubled movement of modernism. While emphasizing close readings, this course will examine how modernists developed a critical consciousness of nationalism not merely as "an imagined community"; in fact, these writers vigorously engaged in supporting as well as in denouncing the various states of modernity, and consequently examined the relevance of not just local and national perspectives but more significantly the pivotal aspects of global and post national discourses of modernism. To these writers Modernism was possible only if their debates of modernity were simultaneously and undeniably grounded in the local and the global, in the national and the post national. The seminar aims at drawing conclusions from the seismological shifts in perspectives that encompass the history of the nation, and the political, geographical, and transnational re-locations of the different milieus that shape the representation of these writers.

Literary Texts:

Rebecca West, *The Return of the Soldier*
James Joyce, *Dubliners*, *Ulysses* (excerpts)
Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*
Brian Friel, *Translations*
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*
Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia*.
Ian McEwan, *Saturday*
Maria Viramonte's *Under The Feet of Jesus*
Jeannette Winterson's *The Powerbook*
Salman Rushdie, *Shalimar the Clown*

Films:

Neil Jordan, *The Crying Game*
Ridley Scott, *The Blade Runner*
John Ford, *Grapes of Wrath*

Theory: Selections from David Lloyd, Homi Bhabha, Raymond Williams, Frederick Jameson, Gayatri Spivak, Edward Said, Eve Sedgwick, James Phelan.

Course Requirements and Assignments:

- ❖ Weekly 250 – word on-line reading response
- ❖ Participation in class discussions
- ❖ 15-20 page critical, researched paper
- ❖ Two oral presentations
- ❖ One page paper prospectus and annotated bibliography
- ❖ Final Exam

Issues explored in the seminar:

- ❖ The Cataclysmic Upheavals and Impossible Narratives: World Wars and Modernism
- ❖ Visions of Modernity: Modernism and Alternative Modernisms
- ❖ The Legacy of Empire: Colonial Bearings and Postcolonial Ruptures
- ❖ Comparative Diasporas: Dislocating the Local and the Global
- ❖ Debating the Nation, Nation-state and Nationalism: Post-nationalism and Globalization
- ❖ Deterritorialisations: Cosmo- politics, Diaspora and Wanderers of the Earth
- ❖ Literary Narratives: Science, Dystopia and Post-humanism
- ❖ Globalization, Global Labor and Human Rights. Where Are We And Where Do We Go?