

**HL2006: Modernism**  
NTU Semester 2, AY 2023/2024



*Synthesis* by František Kupka (1929)

## **HL2006: Modernism**

*Course guide subject to minor alterations*

*Please print only when necessary*

Reflecting the profound historical and cultural transitions of the late 19th / early 20th centuries, Modernism produced both ground-breaking literary developments and new ways of understanding ourselves and the world. By studying some of the key texts and writers of Modernism (or various 'Modernisms'), we will seek to understand the main concerns and features of this hugely significant phenomenon.

### **Course coordinator**

Associate Professor Richard Alan Barlow

SHHK-03-70

rbarlow@ntu.edu.sg

### **Course texts**

Please obtain a copy of Djuna Barnes' novel *Nightwood*. Apart from that, all texts can be found in the Norton anthology or will be made available on Blackboard.

### **Course Assessment**

a) 15% – Class participation

Student participation in seminars will be assessed.

b) 35% – 2,500 word essay to be submitted no later than Friday, March 22.

The essay must cover two course texts and involve original research. The essay should also include a coherent argument supported by close reading of the texts. All paragraphs should be related to a central theme and adhere to a sound structure. Claims/readings/arguments should be properly developed and supported by relevant quotations from the texts. Relevant critical sources must be utilized and correctly cited.

c) 50% – 2 1/2 hour exam

Students will sit a 2 1/2 hour closed-book exam. The exam will test the students' knowledge and understanding of the texts/themes of the course and their ability to construct arguments and critical positions relating to the course concepts.

**NB: Generative AI *cannot* be used for course assignments.**

## Seminar schedule (subject to minor changes)

Week one: Introduction – Modernism and its historical/cultural contexts

Week two: Make it New

Virginia Woolf, 'Modern Fiction' (1919), T.S. Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1919), Eugene Jolas, 'Manifesto: The Revolution of the Word' (1929)

Week three: Yeats – Romantic or Modernist?

Selection of Yeats' poetry

Week four: Imagism

F. S. Flint, 'Imagisme' (1913), Ezra Pound, 'A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste' (1913). Poetry by Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and H.D. Imagiste

Week five: Scrupulous meanness

James Joyce, 'Eveline', and 'Two Gallants' from *Dubliners* (1914)

Week six: Horror and misfortune

Franz Kafka, 'The Metamorphosis' (1915) 'Before the Law' (1916), and 'An Imperial Message' (1919)

Week seven: Mythic Modernism

T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land* (1922) and 'Ulysses, Order, and Myth' (1922)

Week eight: Modernism and Feminism

Mina Loy, 'Feminist Manifesto' (1914) and Virginia Woolf, 'A Room of One's Own' (1929)

Week nine: "Poetry is the supreme fiction, madame."

Poems by Wallace Stevens

Week ten: Late Modernism

Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (1936)

Week eleven: Modernism/Postmodernism

Samuel Beckett, 'Ping' (1967)

Week twelve: Conclusion: What was Modernism?

Week thirteen: Revision / exam preparation

### Further reading (suggested)

- Armstrong, Tim. *Modernism: A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Polity, 2005.
- Bradshaw, David and Dettmar, Kevin J. H (eds.). *A Companion to Modernist Literature and Culture*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishing, 2006.
- Brooker et al (eds.). *The Oxford Handbook of Modernisms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Carter, Mia and Friedmann, Alan Warren (eds.). *Modernism and Literature: An Introduction and Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 2013.
- Danius, Sara. *The Sense of Modernism: Technology, Perception, and Aesthetics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002.
- Eysteinson, Astradur. *The Concept of Modernism*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1990.
- Huysen, Andreas. *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986.
- Kalaidjian, Walter (ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to American Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
- Kolocotroni, Vassiliki et al (eds.). *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998.
- Lewis, Pericles. *The Cambridge Introduction to Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Levenson, Michael. *A Genealogy of Modernism: A Study of English Literary Doctrine 1908–1922*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Levenson, Michael. *Modernism*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011.
- Levenson, Michael (ed). *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Lewis, Pericles (ed). *The Cambridge Introduction to European Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.