
This seminar will serve as an intensive introduction to some of the germinal texts of British and Irish Modernism. Modernism, a large, heterogeneous movement, has been characterized as both politically retrogressive – a frustrated attempt on the part of privileged white men to regain control over a world that seemed increasingly beyond the control of any individual or group – and alternatively as politically radical and idealistic – as a heroic rejection of the Cartesian values and norms of representation that led to the horrors of colonial genocide, trench warfare, and urban ghettos. In this seminar we will focus on one nexus around which debates concerning modernism’s purportedly conservative or progressive biases have cohered: sex and sexuality. Starting with Julie Anne Taddeo’s recent study of Lytton Strachey’s sexual writings and philosophy and Michel Foucault’s *History of Sexuality*, *Volume I*, we will consider the complexities of labeling a given text as either progressive or retrogressive even from the narrow standpoint of sexual politics, let alone within the broader force-field of oppressions and liberational struggles in early twentieth-century Britain. In the weeks that follow, we will explore representations of gender, sexuality, and sexual identity in some of the most celebrated modernist texts, and consider the prices that various modernist authors paid (ethically and aesthetically speaking) to push the envelope of who and what may be sympathetically represented, and how.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be able to conduct an independent research project
2. Students will be able to demonstrate knowledge of the modernist period and the conventions of modernist form.

**Week 1**  
Thurs. 8/24  
Course overview. Handouts on seminar participation.

**Week 2**  
Thurs. 8/31  
*Lytton Strachey and the Search for Modern Sexual Identity: The Last Eminent Victorian;*  
Foucault’s *History of Sexuality, Vol. I.*

**Week 3**  
Thurs. 9/7  
*Dracula*  
The *Gothic Family Romance,* Chapter 4

**Week 4**  
Thurs. 9/14  
The *Picture of Dorian Gray*  
The *Gothic Family Romance,* Chapter 5

**Week 5**  
Thurs. 9/21  
The *Last September*  
The *Gothic Family Romance,* Chapter 6

**Week 6**  
Thurs. 9/28  
*Mrs. Dalloway* and “The Waste Land”

**Week 7**  
Thurs. 10/5  
The *Well of Loneliness,* Radclyffe Hall.  
3-5 pp. exploratory close reading of a modernist text
Week 8
Thurs. 10/12
*Ulysses*
Essays from *A Companion to James Joyce’s Ulysses*

Week 9
Thurs. 10/19
*Ulysses*
Essays: from *A Companion to James Joyce’s Ulysses*

Week 10
Thurs. 10/26
*Ulysses.*
Essays: from *A Companion to James Joyce’s Ulysses*

Week 11
Thurs. 11/2
*Ulysses.*
Essays: from *A Companion to James Joyce’s Ulysses*

Week 12
Thurs. 11/9
*Nightwood, Djuna Barnes*
*Male Fantasies, Vol. I, Klaus Theweliet*

Week 13
Thurs. 11/16
*A Passage to India, E.M. Forster*
*Male Fantasies, Vol. I, Klaus Theweliet*

Week 14
Thurs. 11/23
Thanksgiving

Week 15
Thurs. 11/30
*Molloy, Samuel Beckett*
*Male Fantasies, Vol. I, Klaus Theweliet*

Week 16
20 pp. seminar paper due.

**Course Requirements:**

- class participation
- 1 short (3-5 pp.) close reading
- 1 longer (8-10 pp.) overview of existing scholarship on a text to be presented to the seminar and used as the basis for group discussion, which the presenter will facilitate.
- 1 full-length (20 pp.) seminar paper, which can developed from either of the shorter papers, or written up as a separate project.