IS322 Modernism and Time

BA3-4/PY Core Course
Spring Term 2014-15
(8 ECTS credits)

Seminar Leaders: Laura Scuriatti (course coordinator) and James Harker
Course Times: Tuesdays, 9.00-10.30 and 10.45-12.15
Seminar Room: Laura Scuriatti’s office (Room 004, Platanenstr. 98a)
Office Hours Laura Scuriatti: Tuesdays, 1.30-3.00

Course Description

At the turn into the twentieth century, a new movement arose, now primarily identified with literary and aesthetic practices, but which can be said to reach across all the most important developments in the arts and the social and natural sciences. The category of ‘time’ was central to modernist experiment, whether in defining a change in the way human consciousness was conceived and represented, in the relationship between the present and the past, and in the dynamics of historical transformation itself. ‘Newness’ itself was a fundamental value of modernism, guiding the programs of artistic practice and an embrace of the microcosmically complex and the unpredictable in scientific procedure. During the course, students will engage with a variety of texts and visual materials, investigating the relationship between modernism and modernity, the emergent accounts of the functioning of human consciousness (in psychoanalysis, the discipline of psychology and philosophy), the meaning of modernism in music and the arts, and the specific characteristics of modernist narrative. The course ends with a reflection on the legacy of modernism today, and its implications for the experience and representation of everyday life and the definition of the objects and aims of art, philosophy and politics.

Assessment

Students will be assessed on the basis of two written assignments (details below), an oral presentation (details below) and performance during class.

Writing Assignments

Students are required to submit ONE response paper, ONE presentation essay and ONE final essay.

Response papers are short pieces of writing in response to a reading assignment. At the beginning of the course each student will choose two texts to respond to. Response papers should be sent to Laura Scuriatti per email before class starts.
Length: approx. 500 words
Final essay
Due date: on 13th May 2015, 23.59 hrs
Length: approx. 3000 words

Essay topics
Students will receive in due time a list of prompts, but essays can also be based on the student's oral presentation. Students are also encouraged to write their own questions, after consultation with Laura Scuriatti.

Oral presentation
Each student will be in charge of an oral presentation. For the oral presentation, students will bring to class their written notes in the form of an essay (length: approx. 1500 words) intended to introduce the assigned reading and to facilitate the discussion. The presentation essay will be handed to Laura Scuriatti at the end of the class and will be part of the presentation grade.

Attendance
Attendance at ALL classes is expected. More than one absence in the seminar will significantly affect the grade for the course.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers
All written work must be submitted electronically and on time.

As specified in the Student Handbook, essays that are up to 24 hours late will be downgraded one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline and cannot receive a grade of higher than C. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment.

Grading breakdown
Class performance: 20%
Response paper (500 words): 10%
Presentation and presentation essay (1500 words): 35%
Final essay (3000 words): 35%
Course schedule

Week One: January 26-30 (LS & JH)
Tue: Introduction to the course
Readings:
Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” (1903)

Week Two: February 2-6
Tue: Friedrich Nietzsche, “The Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life” (excerpts, 1874), and “On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense” (1873).

Week Three: February 9-13
Tue: Walter Benjamin, Texts TBA
Guest lecturer: Prof. Dr. Astrid Deuber-Mankowski (Universität Bochum and ICI Berlin)

Week Four: February 16-20 (LS & JH)
Tue: Sigmund Freud, Civilization and its Discontents (1930)

Week Five: February 23-27 (LS & JH)

Week Six: March 2-6 (LS &JH)
Tue: Marcel Proust, “Ouverture”, from In Search of Lost Time (1922)

Week Seven: March 9-13
Tue: Modernism and the Visual Arts (Museum visit)

Spring Break

Week Eight: March 23-27 (LS & MH)
Tue: Modernism and Film

Week Nine: March 30-April 3
Tue: Modernism and Music (Guest lecturer: Paul Festa)

Week Ten: April 6-10
Tue: Modernist Architecture
Week Eleven: April 13-17 (LS & JH)
Tue: James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922), chapters 1-4

Week Twelve: April 20-24 (LS)
Tue: James Joyce, *Ulysses*, chapters 7, 10, 18

Week Thirteen: April 27-May 1 (LS)
Tue: Virginia Woolf, “The Window” and “Time Passes”, from *To the Lighthouse* (1927)

Week Fourteen: May 4-8 (LS)
Tue: Virginia Woolf, “To the Lighthouse”, from *To the Lighthouse*

Week Fifteen: Completion Week
**Final essay deadline: Wednesday 13th May, 23.59 hrs**