

# IS322 Modernism, Cosmopolitanism and the Aesthetics of Internationalism

Seminar Leader: Laura Scuriatti

Course Times: Tue 9:00 - 10:30, Thu 11:00 - 12:30

Office Hours: Thursdays 13.30-15.00

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## Course Description

In the aesthetic and cultural moment we identify as Modernism, newness in art became a defining value. At the beginning of the twentieth century, experiments in style, technique and content characterised the arts and generated close interdisciplinary dialogue between them. Modernist experimentation also had, in some cases, socio-political implications: while some authors and artists lived cosmopolitan lives, numerous avant-garde and modernist movements questioned the meaning of national identities and boundaries, both politically and culturally. Focusing on a broad range of modernist texts, the course explores the significance, aesthetics and politics of different versions of modernist internationalism – exile, cosmopolitanism, colonialism, multilingualism, orientalism and exoticism. It also aims at understanding the emergence of modernism, the political contexts in which its practices could thrive, as well as its legacy.

## Week 1 – Modernism/Modernity I: An Introduction

Tuesday 30 January and Thursday 2 February

Readings for the week:

Charles Baudelaire, *The Painter of Modern Life*

## Week 2 – Modernism/Modernity II

Tuesday 7 February

Readings for the session:

Marshall Berman, “Baudelaire: Modernism in the Streets”

Matei Calinescu, *Five faces of Modernity* (excerpts)

Thursday 9 February

Readings for the session:

Marshall Berman, “Modernity – Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”

## Week 3 – Modernism/Modernity III

Tuesday 14 February

Readings for the session:

Georg Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life”

Thursday 16 February

Readings for the session:

Sigfried Krakauer, *The Mass Ornament* (excerpts)

## Week 4 – Modernism, Modernity, Technology

Tuesday 21 February and Thursday 23 February

Reading for the week:

Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction”

**Special session TBC:** Saturday 25 February, visit of the exhibition: “Ernst Ludwig Kirchner. Hieroglyphs” at Hamburger Bahnhof.

## Week 5 – The International Avant-Garde

Tuesday 28 February

Readings for the session:

F.T. Marinetti, *The Founding Manifesto of Futurism*

Valentine de Saint Point, *The Manifesto of the Futurist Woman*

Ramon Gómez de la Serna, *Futurist Proclamation to the Spaniards*  
Other material: Futurist paintings

Thursday 2 March

Readings for the session:  
*dada excites everything*  
Francis Picabia, *dada Cannibalistic Manifesto*  
R. Aldington and others, *Our Vortex*  
Wyndham Lewis, *Bless England*

**Week 6 - Modernism, Primitivism, and the Harlem Renaissance**

Tuesday 7 March

Readings for the session:  
Tristan Tzara, “Note 6 on Negro Art”  
Roger Fry, “Negro Sculpture” and “The Art of the Bushmen”

Thursday 9 March

Readings for the session:  
Suzanne Césaire, “Surrealism and Us”  
Alain Locke (ed.), *The New Negro: An Interpretation* (excerpts)

**Weeks 7 and 8 – Modernist Cosmopolitanism and Bohemian Lives**

Tuesday 14 March, Thursday 16 March and Tuesday 21 March

Reading for these sessions:  
Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*

Saturday 18 March: ESSAY DUE

**Week 8 – Cosmopolitanism, Internationalism, Culture and the Community I**

Thursday 23 March

Reading for the session:  
David Miller, “Cosmopolitanism”

## Week 9 – Mongrel Poetics

Tuesday 28 March

Reading for the session:  
Mina Loy, *Anglo-Mongrels and the Rose* (excerpts)

Thursday 30 March

Reading for the session:  
Mina Loy, “Modern Poetry”

## Week 10 – Cosmopolitanism, Internationalism, Culture and the Community II

Tuesday 4 April

Reading for the session:  
S. Pollock, H. Bhabha, C. A. Breckenridge, D. Chakrabarty, “Cosmopolitanisms”

Thursday 6 April

Reading for the session:  
Seyla Benhabib, *The Claims of Culture. Equality and Diversity in the Global Era* (excerpts)

## Spring Break

## Week 11 – Writing, Experiment and Forms of Exile I: Woolf and Joyce

Tuesday 11 April

Reading for the session:  
V. Woolf, *Three Guineas*

Thursday 13 April

Reading for the week:  
James Joyce, *Ulysses* (excerpts)

## Weeks 12-14 – Writing, Experiment and Forms of Exile II – Joyce’s *Ulysses*

Tuesday 18 April to Tuesday 2 May

Reading for the weeks:  
James Joyce, *Ulysses* (excerpts)

Thursday 4 May: FINAL EXAM

## Week 15 – Farewell to Modernism

Tuesday 9 May

Readings for the session:  
Stefan Zweig, *Yesterday's World* (excerpts)

Thursday 11 May

Open session

## Requirements

### Attendance

Attendance at ALL classes is expected. Absences are registered in all classes, and lateness influences the class performance grade. More than two absences (that is absences from two sessions of 90 minutes) in a semester will significantly affect the grade for the course. Please consult the absence policy in the Student Handbook.

### Assessment

Students will be assessed on the basis of **one written exam to be held in class, one essay, one response paper, one oral presentation** (details below), and **participation** during class.

**Response papers** are short pieces of writing in response to a reading assignment. At the beginning of the course each student will choose one text to respond to. Response papers should be sent to Laura Scuriatti per email before class starts on the day in which the chosen text is discussed.

Length: approx. 1000 words

### **Written exam**

To be held on: Thursday 4 May

Students will be asked to answer two questions in an essay-like format.

### **Essay**

Approx. length: 3500 words

Due date: Thursday 18 March, 23:59 hrs

Please submit the essay electronically to the server.

### **Oral presentation**

Each student will be in charge of an **oral presentation**. For the oral presentation, students will bring to class one or more pages of written notes with questions and bullet-points intended to introduce the assigned reading and to facilitate the discussion. These notes will be handed to the instructor at the end of the class and will be part of the presentation grade.

### **Policy on Late Submission of Papers**

All written work must be submitted electronically and on time. The network administrator will create a file for course essay submissions ahead of each deadline, and all essays are submitted electronically.

Please note that:

*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.*

### **Grade Breakdown**

Class performance: 20 %

Oral presentation: 20 %

Response paper: 10 %

Written exam: 25 %

Essay: 25%

Classes start on Monday, January 30 and run until Friday, May 12 with spring break planned for the week of April 10. Completion week is from May 15 to 19. Students are required to be on campus during completion week.

Scheduled class times are available online under the relevant course heading:

<http://www.berlin.bard.edu/academics/courses/spring-2017/>