

English 440a

Modernism in the Magazines

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Office hours: M 10:30–11:20 am and W
3:30–4:20 pm in Padelford A504
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That modernism was made in the magazines is one of the pivotal insights to take hold in recent modernist scholarship. Not only did works like James Joyce's *Ulysses*, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, Anita Loos's *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, and the poetry of Marianne Moore first see print in the pages of small- and large-circulation periodicals, but the culture of aesthetic innovation and social debate vital to modernism was sustained by networks of editors, artists, writers, and publishers who produced modernist magazines. By focusing on transatlantic periodical culture of the early twentieth century, this capstone seminar will investigate modernist literature in conversation with its original publication contexts—often a heady mix of literary and non-literary genres, art, graphic design, and advertising.

With the help of digitized magazines collected by the Modernist Journals Project (MJP), this class will give you the opportunity to conduct primary archival research in an area of interest to you. More specifically, you will write a capstone essay of 10–15 pages in which you will have the option to either focus on one magazine and a modernist poem or short story that it published, or to connect the construction of a social or aesthetic issue in the MJP archive to a major modernist text. In the process, you will contribute knowledge from your reading to the seminar, deliver two presentations, and do preliminary writing to develop your research project.

Objectives

The learning goals for this class are to:

1. Develop a foundational understanding of modernist print culture and its stakes for literature.
2. Develop further dexterity in critical thinking, including mediating in flexible ways between text and context.
3. Practice identifying and developing a line of inquiry that draws on original archival research.
4. Extend skills for writing a longer argumentative essay that makes a research contribution.
5. Continue developing skills for effectively conveying ideas verbally through presentations and discussion.

The seminar will be based primarily in discussion and will incorporate short lectures, presentations, and some group work.

Texts

Assigned texts are all electronic, available either on MJP (<http://modjourn.org>) or the class Canvas site under “Modules.”

For your research, an array of digital resources is posted on Canvas. Print resources (reference texts and secondary sources) are available on course reserve at Odegaard Library.

Deadlines

F April 29

Research proposal (10%)

May 23–June 1

Conference presentation (10%)

W June 8

Research essay (50%)

Ethos

Constructing knowledge is a collective process, and the *seminar* (from the Latin for *seed-plot*) names a privileged community organized around the project of collectively germinating ideas. To arrive at fuller, more nuanced understandings (sprouts?) than those we might come up with alone, we rely on each other to ask questions, provoke discussion, and test out new points of view. Each of these tasks depends on listening actively to what others have to say and taking the risk to make considered contributions to the group. At its best, the seminar is a richly generous—and generative—circle in which it is equally imperative that we leave space to hear from everyone in the room and that each person seizes opportunities to speak. As we move forward, please be mindful of balance and your role in this conversation.

It is also important to recognize that literature confronts complex subjects that may challenge our prior understandings of cultural categories such as gender, sexuality, race, class, religion, nationality, language background, and ability. To engage in this kind of work, respect for diversity of all kinds is vital. So are curiosity and openness to new questions and to the possibility of reframing cultural knowledge. In committing to this class you are agreeing to:

1. approach topics, texts, and seminar contributions with interest and critically-tuned but open minds;
2. subject your own viewpoints, however natural or normal they may seem to you, to the same scrutiny you would apply to those of others;
3. be willing to risk your ideas to thoughtful examination by others; and
4. respect the right of all others to express viewpoints different from your own.

If you feel this agreement is not being observed in the course of our work together, please set up a conversation with me as soon as possible.

Requirements

Final research project (50%)

The main product of the seminar will be a polished essay of 10-15 pages based on your research in the modernist periodical archive. As a capstone to your English major at UW, this course is meant to be the culmination of your literary study to date. Although modernism may be a new field for you, there will be room to shape your project so that it connects with the kinds of issues or approaches that have become most interesting to you. We will work together to construct projects that not only have something to teach us about modernism but that extend the broader priorities of your studies. You will have the option to craft your project according to one of two paradigms that in this class we'll call *landscape* and *database*. The class is structured to explore these two modes by leading you through examples of each one.

A **landscape project** will focus on a particular text published in a modernist-era magazine and will explore the relationship between that text and its periodical context. How you compose the “landscape” of your study—that is, how you construe “text” and “context” in identifying foreground and background—will be up to you and will communicate your critical priorities.

A **database project** will analyze a modernist text of your choosing (novel, poem, short story, or play) in relation to a significant term, concept, or social issue that it engages. You will use the MJP archive (as well as any other digital repositories) as a database in which to: (a) research how this term, concept, or issue surfaced in contemporary discourse; (b) understand its significance; and (c) reconstruct a context against which you may judge your modernist author's intervention.

Reading journal, weeks 1–5 (5%)

The first stage of your research process will be to read eclectically from modernist periodicals beyond the class's reading assignments—to both skim breezily through multiple journals and linger in fascination when your interest gets caught. To begin forging a line of inquiry out of this organic process, you will keep track of what you read in the first five weeks using a reading journal. Save the journal as a Google Doc and “share” with me at arvidson@uw.edu (see blue button and padlock icon at top right corner of your screen). By Thursday of each week

(or more frequently, as you like) write at least 250-300 words that summarize what's interesting in what you've been reading outside of class. I will read the journal intermittently to get a sense of how your ideas are developing.

Group magazine presentation (5%)

In a group of 2, you will give a short, pithy presentation to introduce the rest of us to an MJP journal we won't be reading as a class. By short, I mean very short: 6 minutes, 40 seconds. Using the PechaKucha format of 20 slides for 20 seconds each, you will present a profile of the magazine that covers contents, material structure, sensibility, advertising, and major contributors. In week 2, I'll ask you to sign up for a presentation slot; journal options will likely include *The English Review*, *Rhythm*, *Coterie*, *The Masses*, *Others*, *Poetry*, *McClure's*, *The Seven Arts*, and *Scribner's*.

Research proposal (10%)

A three-page description of your proposed research project is due F April 29. The proposal needs to give an introduction to and rationale for the line of inquiry you are pursuing; a provisional statement of the argument you will make; and a research plan that identifies a clear, concrete focus and manageable scope for your inquiry. We will workshop the proposal in groups.

Conference presentation (10%)

The final two weeks of class will be devoted to conference-style presentations of research papers. You will offer a 10-minute overview of your argument and research findings. Papers will be organized into panels of 3 or 4, and on days when you are not presenting you will act as a respondent to another panel.

Participation and preparation (20%)

In addition to foundational aspects of effective participation—attending every class, arriving on-time, coming prepared, refraining from side conversations and cell-phone use—this course will require you to be an engaged and generous member of a collaborative learning community. Your comments in class should demonstrate both that you've been thinking critically about the reading and that you're listening to what others are saying and situating your comments in relation to the seminar conversation. While I recognize that there is diversity in the way students participate in class, in this seminar there will be no substitute for offering your ideas to the group. If you are concerned about your ability to participate fully in class, please arrange to meet with me in office hours to discuss strategies.

Absences

My expectation is that you will attend every scheduled class meeting. However, I understand that illness or emergency may prevent you from attending one or two classes. If you need to miss more than that, contact me to make arrangements. It is your responsibility to make up missed material, so be sure that you have contact information for several other students.

Late submissions

All assignments are due as electronic documents on our class Canvas site. I do not accept any assignments by email. Unless you have made a prior arrangement with me, work submitted after this time will be considered late and incur a penalty of 0.2 grade points per day. Also note that I do not provide comments on late work; you should instead arrange to bring your work to office hours for feedback.

Resources

Office hours

I encourage you to make early and frequent use of my office hours, which I hold in Padelford A504 on Mondays, 10:30–11:20 am, and Wednesdays, 3:30–4:20 pm. These sessions are casual and low-stakes. If your schedule conflicts with these times, you can also contact me by email to request an appointment (arvidson@uw.edu).

If you have any kind of concerns about the class, please take them up with me as they arise. As elsewhere at the University, you are entitled to generically communicate any complicating factors (family, work, health, etc.) that may affect your performance in the class if you would prefer not to disclose details.

Accommodations

Please let me know if you need accommodations. I am happy to work with UW Disability Resources for Students (DRS) and am very willing to take suggestions specific to this class. I consider myself to be learning on an ongoing basis how to make my classes more accessible and will appreciate your feedback. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials—just ask.

Writing centers

The Odegaard Writing and Research Center (OWRC) offers free, one-on-one help with all aspects of writing and at any stage in the writing process. Located on the third floor of the Odegaard Library, the OWRC is open Sunday through Thursday; check the appointment schedule for available times. To make an appointment or browse the center's online resources, visit depts.washington.edu/owrc. Appointments fill up quickly—I recommend signing up for a session on Sunday mornings to ensure you get a spot that week.

The CLUE Writing Center in Mary Gates Hall (main level) is open Sunday to Thursday from 6.30 pm to midnight. CLUE is first-come, first-served. In case tutors are having a busy night, arrive early and be prepared to wait. See depts.washington.edu/clue for more information.

Academic Integrity

In written work for this course I am interested exclusively in *your* thinking about our texts and topics. If you are responding to someone else's intellectual work or getting help from someone else's overview of a text, the distinction between your thinking and theirs must be made absolutely, plainly clear. Academic integrity means rigorously keeping aware of and acknowledging the sources of your ideas.

By contrast, plagiarism means presenting someone else's **ideas** or **writing** as your own—which includes integrating someone else's ideas or writing in an unmarked way. **Any source that you consult, quote, or refer to in your work needs to be cited in MLA format.** This includes any contextual information that you find on the Internet: if a source shapes or informs what you write, it must be documented. Pragmatically, this means that you should only be consulting reliable, authoritative sources and should be avoiding informal pieces by unknown authors. They will look bad as citations, and yet if omitted from documentation, they may undermine your academic integrity.

Plagiarism is serious offense. University policy requires that any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing be reported to the College of Arts & Sciences for review. For more information, refer to UW's Student Conduct Code at www.washington.edu/students/handbook/conduct.html. **Holding yourself to the highest possible standard of academic integrity is your responsibility: be sure you know what this means.** If you are ever uncertain about appropriately and productively building from and referring to others' work, ask for clarification in class or office hours.