

Fall/Winter 2018-2019

AP/EN 4170 6.0A (Y)

Modernism/Postmodernism

Course Director:

Marie-Christine Leps (mcleps@aol.com)

Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Seminar: Thursday 11:30am-2:30pm

Description:

Between the death of Queen Victoria and the “death of the author” (Barthes), what are the conditions of possibility for modernist and postmodernist literature and culture? Focusing on novels from the long twentieth century (from 1890s to 2010s), this course is structured by three main areas of investigation: cities, wars, and identities. We will approach each area from both modernist and postmodernist perspectives. After a two-week introduction of the major formal, intellectual, political, scientific, and technological developments of modern and postmodern times, we will begin with a Toronto novel, Ondaatje’s *In the Skin of a Lion*, and then proceed to build a history of our present. Art, music, film, and architecture, as well as literary and philosophical critique, will form an integral part of our inquiries, in order to experience “the new” anew, from crossdisciplinary, transnational, and World Literature perspectives. Our work will take us to major Anglo-American cities (Toronto, London and New York City), but also to France, Russia, and China with short story variations of individual descent into madness, the training camps and trenches of Nazi Germany, and the desert in Kenya with *City of Thorns*, the non-fiction work of investigative reporter Ben Lawrence on Dadaab (largest refugee camp in the world, where York University teaches degrees in Education and Geography). By the end of the year, we will have worked with texts that require readers to rethink the truths they take for granted, and studied various ways of analyzing and coming to terms with them.

Category:

B

Historical Requirement:

N/A

Requirements:

Two short response papers (250 words, 5% each), one per term.

Two 15-minute oral seminar presentations (10% each), submitted in essay form (1800 to 2000 words each, 15%), one per term.

Final research paper (2000 words, 30%, in three phases: topic and annotated bibliography, thesis and outline of argumentation, and final draft, each worth 10%).

Seminar participation (10%)

Reading List:

Paul Auster, *City of Glass* (Penguin); Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (Penguin); Don De Lillo, *White Noise* (Penguin USA); William Faulkner, *Light in August* (Vintage); Nikolai Gogol, "Diary of a Madman"; Kazuo Ishiguro, *Remains of the Day* (Key Porter); Guy de Maupassant, "Letter of a Madman"; Michael Ondaatje: *In the Skin of a Lion* and *Anil's Ghost* (Vintage Canada); Selections of Ben Rawlence, *City of Thorns* (Vintage); Erich Maria Remarque, *All Quiet on the Western Front* (Ballantine Books); Art Spiegelman: *Maus I & II*; Gertrude Stein, *Three Lives* (Simon and Shuster); Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (OUP World's Classics); Lu Xun, "A Madman's Diary."

Short stories, poems, essays, and theoretical texts will be assembled in two course kits.

**Open To:**

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