



# British and American Modernism



Composante(s)  
UFR Langues et  
Civilisations



Période de  
l'année  
Semestre 2

## En bref

- > **Mobilité d'études:** Oui
- > **Accessible à distance:** Non

## Présentation

### Description

This seminar is about literary and artistic production during the Modernist era seen as a period of crisis (from the Greek *krisis* meaning “decision”), that is both a moment of rupture and a critical moment in the field of art and literature after the First World War. It was also the moment when modernity began with the development of science and technology, the advent of psychoanalysis (the discovery of the unconscious) and the boom of the consumer society during the American Prosperity. D. H. Lawrence thus wrote: “*It was in 1915 the old world ended.*” Not everybody agrees on the date. But it does not really matter. No doubt, after the First World War, as artists were confronted with an unstable world and an uncertain, if not inaccessible, reality, they felt the need to free themselves from traditional art forms and created new modes of expression and representation—hence Picasso’s Cubism, Bartok’s and Stravinsky’s music, Diaghilev’s Russian ballet and on the European literary scene: Virginia Woolf, James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence in Great Britain; Marcel Proust and André Gide in France, to quote only a few writers among the most famous.

In America this new literary “modernity” will be examined in the field of fiction through works like Dos Passos’s *1919* (1932), Hemingway’s *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), and F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *Tender is the Night* (1934). Each novel will be an opportunity to study the tension between satiric representation and formal experimentation, that is, as Michael Levenson put it, the “creative violence” characteristic of Modernism.

The purpose of the second part of this seminar is to look at how modernist writers engage with ordinary life and objects. Far from being solely concerned with subjective interiority, as they are traditionally perceived to be, modernist texts are deeply aware of the external world, not only from a phenomenological standpoint as they explore the sensible aspect of subject/object relationships, but also from a political one. Indeed, their evocation of material life, to paraphrase Marguerite Duras, often leads to or is underwritten by gender and economic considerations. The numerous, sometimes uncanny, encounters with daily matter in modernist fiction are critical *in* the characters’ existence but also *of* the materialistic and consumerist turn of XXth century society.



Mme Ravez will be using *ecampus* ("cours en ligne") as a pedagogical tool for her part of the seminar.

## Heures d'enseignement

British and American Modernism - TD	Travaux Dirigés	12h
British and American Modernism - CM	Cours Magistral	12h

## Contrôle des connaissances

All students following the seminar will be requested to make an oral presentation of either a passage or of a theme from the books on the syllabus during the seminar—i.e. with one of their Professors. A written paper might also be expected of them. Participation in class discussion will also be taken into account in the final grade. Students who cannot attend the seminar on a regular basis are invited to contact both Professor Antolin and Professor Ravez by email at the very beginning of the semester. They will have to write a paper *and* take an oral exam with either of their Professors at the end of the semester.

## Bibliographie

### Primary sources

#### American Modernism

- \* Dos Passos, John. 1919. 1932. Boston: Mariner Books, 2000.
- \* Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. 1926. London: Arrow Books, 2004.
- \* Fitzgerald, Francis Scott. *Tender Is the Night*. 1934. London: Penguin Classics, New Ed (28 juin 2001). ISBN-10: 9780141183596. ISBN-13: 978-0141183596 (do not buy the edition with the green cover as it is an inappropriate version of the novel)

*N.B. The books will be studied in the order indicated above. **Students are requested to come to the first lesson with their copy of 1919 and, of course, to have finished reading the book.***

#### British Modernism

- \* MANSFIELD, Katherine : 'The Daughters of the Late Colonel' (1921)
- \* JOYCE, James : *chapter 'Calypso' in Ulysses* (1922)
- \* WOOLF, Virginia: *section 'Time passes' in To the Lighthouse* (1927)
- \* LAWRENCE, David Herbert: 'Things' (1928)

NB : The syllabus consists of a two short-stories and two chapters from two great modernist novels (*Ulysses* and *To the Lighthouse*). It is deliberately slim so that we can devote the greatest part of the seminars to close readings of the texts under study. The students are expected to have read the two short-stories, chapter 4 from *Ulysses* as well as *the whole* of V. Woolf's novel before the first seminar. If they find the courage to, they can also plunge into Joyce's novel (a difficult but life-changing book, and, of course, a must-read for anyone interested in literary Modernism). No specific edition is required but the students must come to class with a *printed version* of the texts on the syllabus.



Further texts and references will be posted on the ecampus course.

## *Secondary Sources*

- \* Bradbury, Malcolm & James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism. A Guide to European Literature (1890-1930)*. London: Penguin, 1991.
- \* Faulkner, Peter. *Modernism*. London: Routledge, 1993.
- \* Kenner, Hugh. *A Homemade World. The American Modernist Writers*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989.
- \* Levenson, Michael, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005
- \* Nicholls, Peter. *Modernisms. A Literary Guide*. Berkeley: U California P, 1995.
- \* Waugh, Patricia. *Practising Postmodernism: Reading Modernism*. London: Hodder Arnold, 1992.
- \* Wilson, Leigh. *Modernism*. London: Continuum, 2007.