

**COLT 348: Modernist Fiction (22028R)****John Carlos Rowe ([johnrowe@usc.edu](mailto:johnrowe@usc.edu))****T/Th 12:30-1:50; Office Hours: T/Th, 11:00-12:15, THH 402 E****VKC 101****Spring 2020****Texts (in course sequence):**

Georg Lukács, “The Ideology of Modernism.” 1962. PDF available on Blackboard.

Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, Norton Critical Edition. 1898.

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Norton Critical Edition. 1899.

Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s ‘Heart of Darkness’” (1961/1975). PDF available on Blackboard.

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Viking Critical Edition. 1916.

Franz Kafka, *The Trial*, Schocken Books. 1914/15 (pub. 1925).

Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Harper and Row (pub. 1937). ISBN: 0-06-091650-8.

William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* Vintage. 1936.

Albert Camus, *The Stranger*. Vintage. 1942.

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*. Doubleday Anchor. 1958.

**Course Description:**

This course looks at representative works in the international movement of “literary modernism,” and it treats these works in two ways. First, in terms of what their avant-garde authors intended to be challenging representations of modern social, economic, and psychological conditions in roughly the first half of the twentieth century. How should we live with new industrial, technological, social, and political forces? Second, we will examine how these avant-garde literary works criticize and in some cases contribute to the European colonialism on which these new modern forces depended for their raw materials, inexpensive labor, and myths of “premodern” people and “uncivilized” regions. The thesis of the course is that Euroamerican modernist literature necessitated the postcolonial critique of both modernity and its avant-garde aesthetics.

**Course Requirements:**

**Midterm:** There will be an in-class midterm on **March 5, Th** (Week 8). The midterm will consist of two essay questions, one designed to be answered in about 30 minutes and focusing on a single author and the other designed to be answered in 45 minutes and comparing and contrasting two authors. Although only two questions will be offered, each question will involve internal choices regarding the authors/ texts you may choose to answer the question. **Open book, but you cannot bring your class notes. The exam will be completed in class and submitted to me by email as an attached file at the end of the class period.**

**Term Paper:** A term paper of approximately 10-12 double-spaced pages will be due on the last class meeting of the last week of classes: **April 30, Th**. A proposal for the term paper will be due in class on **February 18, T** (Week 6). The term paper should develop a coherent thesis (or argument) and support that thesis with evidence from primary texts (usually works assigned in the course) and secondary scholarship (at least three and usually more scholarly sources should be used). Sources should be cited according to the Modern Language Association's system of works cited. **The proposal** should consist of a 1-2 page description of the planned thesis for the essay and a preliminary list of scholarly sources (at least 5) – books, chapters, journal articles, web sites, et al. – the student plans to use. The proposal is due early in the semester (Week 6), so students interested in later authors, texts, and periods should plan to read ahead and consult with me about their plans before drafting their proposals. **Both the proposal and the term paper should be submitted digitally to: [johnrowe@usc.edu](mailto:johnrowe@usc.edu) . Formats should be either Word, PDF, or compatible with either.**

**Final:** There will be a take-home final examination, **due digitally to me by 5 PM on May 13 (W) during exam week**. Questions for the final examination will be posted to Blackboard and discussed in class on **April 30 (Th)**. The examination will consist of two essay questions, each requiring an essay of 3-4 pages and each asking for evidence from 2-3 different authors/ texts. One question will focus on works studied since the midterm examination (that is, from Faulkner, Camus, and Achebe); one question will focus on the full range of the course. Once again, two questions will be offered, and each question will involve internal choices about the authors/ texts you may use to answer the question.

### **Grading:**

**Midterm: 20 % of the final grade**

**Term Paper: 40 % (including proposal)**

**Final: 30 %**

**Attendance/**

**Participation 10 % (3 unexcused absences will result in a grade reduction of one full letter grade of the grade the student would have received in this category)**

Late papers will not be accepted and make-up examinations not administered, unless there is a documented personal/ family emergency (usually medical) or religious holiday that conflicts with one of the due dates.

**Legal statements for USC syllabi**

**Student Behavior** that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

**Students with Disabilities** requesting academic accommodations based on a disability are required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

**Academic Integrity.** USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. SCampus, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section 11.00, while the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:

<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>.

Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:

<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.

## Syllabus

### Week 1

**1/14:** Introduction to the course. Discussion of the course requirements and definition of basic terms in the course, as well as overview of the issues.

**1/16:** Read: Lukács, "The Ideology of Modernism" (1962), PDF available on Blackboard for the course.

### Week 2

**1/21:** Read: Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw* (at least the frame tale and part of the novella)

**1/23:** Read: *The Turn of the Screw* (the rest of the text).

### Week 3

**1/28:** Discussion: *The Turn of the Screw* (and critical essays chosen by the class); **discussion in class of term paper ideas (on Blackboard) and proposal (due Week 6).**

**1/30:** Read: Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (about half of the novella)

### Week 4

**2/4:** Read: *Heart of Darkness* (the rest of the novella)

**2/6:** Discussion: *Heart of Darkness* and Chinua Achebe's "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's 'Heart of Darkness'" (1961/1975), essay available on Blackboard.

### Week 5

**2/11:** Read: James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (chapters 1-2).

**2/13:** Read: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (chapters 3-4).

### Week 6

**2/18:** Read: *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (chapter 5). **Due: Term paper proposal due in class.**

**2/20:** Discussion of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (essays chosen by class).

### Week 7

**2/25:** Read: Franz Kafka, *The Trial* (about one-third)

**2/27:** Read: *The Trial* (next third). **Study Questions for Midterm on Blackboard.**

### Week 8

**3/3:** Read: *The Trial* (finish the book). **Review for Midterm; discussion of study questions on Blackboard.**

**3/5: Midterm examination in class. Open book, not open notes. Submit completed examination at end of examination period to: [johnrowe@usc.edu](mailto:johnrowe@usc.edu)**

### Week 9

**3/10:** Read: Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (one half).

**3/12:** Read: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* (second half).

**3/15 (Sat) – 3/22 (Su): Spring Break.**

### **Week 10**

**3/24:** Read: William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (about 75 pages)

**3/26:** Read: *Absalom, Absalom!* (another 75 pages)

### **Week 11**

**3/31:** Read: *Absalom, Absalom!* (another 100 pages)

**4/2:** Read: *Absalom, Absalom!* (finish the novel)

### **Week 12**

**4/7:** Discussion of *Absalom, Absalom!*

**4/9:** Read: Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (about one half)

### **Week 13**

**4/14:** Read: *The Stranger* (another half)

**4/16:** Discussion of *The Stranger*

### **Week 14**

**4/21:** Read: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (about one half)

**4/23:** Read: *Things Fall Apart* (another half)

### **Week 15**

**4/28:** Discussion of *Things Fall Apart*. **Take-Home Final Questions available on Blackboard.**

**4/30: How to Prepare for and Complete the Take-Home Final. Term Essays Due in Class (digital format, not hardcopy).**

**5/13, Wednesday, 5 PM, Take-Home Final Examination due digitally to:**  
[johnrowe@usc.edu](mailto:johnrowe@usc.edu)

