



Photograph: Pictorial Press Ltd / Alamy

**ENGL 491D-004: New Masses: Modernism and the Crowd  
2 Winter 2016  
SYLLABUS**

Dr. Judith Paltin  
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BuTo 623 Office hours: M 10-11:50, and by appointment  
Office phone: 604-822-4080 (email preferred)

Course meets M 12-2 pm in [IBLC-156](#)

**Course Rationale:**

In this course, we will explore critiques of political theory, literatures of democracy, socialism, and dystopic collectives, technologies for the persuasion and control of crowds, and philosophies of bare life and biopolitics. It seems an appropriate moment to rethink the collective and some of the standard stories about its history, when global migrations, evolving democracies, virtual-digital crowds, and crowd-based political movements around the world are receiving wide attention. We will draw on the literary as a productive archive for this critique, and modernism in particular as the historical moment which begins to transform the nineteenth-century citizen-crowd into the contemporary global multitude. As we proceed, we will build a theory of the performativity of the crowd.

**Required Texts**

Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*

E.F. Forster, *A Passage to India*  
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*  
James Joyce, *Ulysses*  
Jean Rhys, *Good Morning, Midnight*  
Sean O'Casey, *Three Dublin Plays*  
Texts made available on Connect

### **Requirements and Grading**

40% -- a holistic participation grade which includes 1) attending class meetings and making contributions to the seminar conversation that are informed by the assigned readings, 2) making one oral presentation which analyzes important features of an assigned reading and places it within a "field" or pertinent academic debate, and 3) submitting 4 critical interventions of 500-1000 words in double-spaced pages in response to material you will select from that week's assigned and suggested readings. The writing of these entries need not be polished, but please attend to the basic organization and expression of your ideas. These are intended to serve as a ground for some of your best seminar discussion contributions.

60% -- research/critical paper of 3000-4000 words (10-15 pp) due on April 3.

I am available in office hours or by appointment for individual conferences about your assignments or other course-related matters as you may wish.

Please submit your writing assignments by uploading them as a Word document (no pdfs) to the appropriate assignment page in Connect (which also gives a timestamp to your submission). Enclose a word count in brackets at the end of the main body of your writing. Assignments should appear in a normal black twelve-point font. Use MLA or Chicago style for citations. *Late* papers will be penalized one half-grade (e.g. B becomes B-) per day of lateness. I may relax this penalty at my own judgment in cases of urgency; in such a case, it is helpful for you to bring some documentation of the excuse for lateness, such as a non-specific doctor's note which is dated.

The course adheres to the university's strict rule against plagiarism. *If you represent the words, productions or ideas of anyone else as your own, you become subject to the disciplinary processes of the university concerning plagiarism, and may fail the course or be expelled from the university.* If you have any questions about what counts as plagiarism, please ask me (**before** you submit the assignment).

### **COURSE SCHEDULE:**

**Week 1. NO CLASS: TERM NOT YET IN SESSION. For Week 2, please read** Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*.

Edgar Allan Poe, "The Man of the Crowd."

Suggested: John Plotz, "The Return of the Blob: Or How Sociology Decided to Stop Worrying and Love the Crowd."

Suggested: King Vidor, dir. *The Crowd* (film, 1928), available at Koerner Library course reserves.

**Week 2. Jan 9 – Introduction, “The Age of the Crowd”**

Charles Baudelaire, “Les Foules.” Discuss Poe and Conrad.

**Week 3. Jan 16 – Authority, Discipline and Deviance**

Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*.

Sigmund Freud, “The Herd Instinct,” from *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*

Suggested: Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*.

(<http://socserv2.socsci.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/lebon/Crowds.pdf>)

Background: Serge Moscovici, *The age of the crowd: a historical treatise on mass psychology*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985.

**Week 4. Jan 23 – The Modern Sensorium**

James Joyce, *Ulysses*, “Episodes 3, 4: Proteus, Calypso.” The first 60-odd lines of “Episode 11: Sirens.”

Georg Simmel, “Metropolis and Mental Life.”

Suggested: Sara Danius, *The Senses of Modernism*, Ch. 4 “The Aesthetics of Immediacy: *Ulysses* and the Autonomy of the Eye and the Ear.”

Background: Robert Michael Brain. *The Pulse of Modernism: Physiological Aesthetics in Fin-de-Siècle Europe*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2015

**Week 5. Jan 30 – Crowds and Affect**

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Suggested: Teresa Brennan, *The Transmission of Affect*, Ch. 3, “Transmission in Groups.”

Background: “Emotion,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotion/>

**Week 6. Feb 6 – Mass Intoxication**

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

From Modris Eksteins, *Rites of Spring*.

Suggested: Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*

Background: Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*

**Week 7. Feb 13 – NO CLASS: FAMILY DAY**

**Feb 20 -- NO CLASS: READING WEEK**

**Week 8. Feb 27 – Crowd Aesthetics**

E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

Sigfried Kracauer, “The Mass Ornament.”

Suggested: Andrew Uroskie, “Far Above the Madding Crowd.”

Background: Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity At Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*. 1996. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

**Week 9. Mar 6 – Social Drama/ Social Trauma**

Jean Rhys, *Good Morning, Midnight*

Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception.”

Suggested: Anke Gleber, “Female Flanerie and the *Symphony of the City*.” From *The Art of Taking a Walk: Flanerie, Literature, and Film in Weimar Culture*.

Background: Suzette Henke, *Shattered Subjects: Trauma and Testimony in Women's Life-Writing*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998. Palgrave/Macmillan Press; Revised and corrected paperback publication, 2000.

### **Week 10. Mar 13 – Mass Bodies**

James Joyce, *Ulysses*, “Episode 10: Wandering Rocks.”

Suggested: Walter Benjamin, “The Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”

Background: Hugh Kenner, *Ulysses*.

### **Week 11. Mar 20 – Bare Life and Biopolitics**

James Joyce, *Ulysses*, “Episode 12: Cyclops.”

Hannah Arendt. “The Perplexities of the Rights of Man.”

Suggested: Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*.

Background: Foucault, Michel, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*.

### **Week 12. Mar 27 – Expansive Identities**

Sean O’Casey, *Three Dublin Plays*

Suggested: Walter Ruttmann, *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (film, 1927) – available on youtube at time of writing

Background: Anthony Elliott, *Concepts of the Self*

### **Week 13. Apr 3 – The Virtuoso Multitude**

Sean O’Casey, *Three Dublin Plays*

Paolo Virno, from *Grammar of the Multitude*

Suggested and Background: Hardt and Negri, *Empire and Multitude*.

## **General Writing Rubric:**

Your writing is expected to be an analytical treatment of an interpretive problem or idea specific to the assigned topic that is lucid, proofread, grammatically competent, and supported by appropriate evidence. State your main point in a clear and straightforward way. Cite details and quote relevant phrases from course-assigned texts that support the soundness of your argument, and explain how they do so. Make strong logical connections. Express your arguments without bloat; that is, count your available pages as a valuable resource to make your voice persuasive and engaging to other lively and intelligent thinkers, not as a wasteland to be filled with jetsam. Make written acknowledgment of any person who gave you ideas, figures or language appearing in your writing.

A: A clear, distinctive, stimulating thesis precisely on topic, with organized, tightly focused, well-expressed and sufficient supporting arguments. An interesting presentation with no problematic ambiguities or major language errors, and a graceful conclusion.

B: Thesis is clearly discernible, relevant and supported by fairly good arguments. Unintentional ambiguities or sentence-level errors may exist, but do not interfere greatly with understanding. The paper has an organizational structure which makes sense upon the first reading. Format/style is generally correct; conclusion is satisfactory.

C: Thesis is not clear or well-supported, but the germ of an idea exists, hearty attempts are made to support it, and the grammar and syntax are readable, albeit with some major errors or ambiguities. The structure does not appear to be well thought out, and there may be format/style errors, but major assignment requirements are met.

D: No idea stands out as a palpable main claim, and what claims there are (if any) are poorly supported. The paper's logic is hard to follow. Sentence-level errors are numerous and decidedly interfere with comprehension. Sources may be cited poorly or unclearly, and quotations may be extensive but are not fully utilized in argument.

F: A failing grade may be awarded to papers, even well-written, that do not meet assignment topic or length requirements or that violate the stricture against plagiarism. A very late paper may also fail (see lateness penalty, above).

### **Please also know:**

Readings, discussions, and lecture materials may reference mature themes, violence, sexuality, or conflictual subject matter. If you feel you do not wish to read one of the assigned texts because it may significantly distress you, please see me well in advance of the assigned reading's due date to request a substitute reading assignment; if we cannot agree on an appropriate substitution, you may be obliged to follow the original schedule of readings to complete the course.

Anyone with a documented disability is gently encouraged to contact the Access and Diversity Office in Brock Hall, 1203- 1874 East Mall (tel. 604.822.5844) for accommodations and support services. Other helpful programs are the academic services described at <http://students.ubc.ca/success>, and UBC Counselling Services tel. 604.822.3811 or, after hours, for anyone in distress, the Vancouver Crisis Line, tel. 800.784.2433.

I am a resource person with UBC's Positive Space Campaign. As its website announces, "the Positive Space Campaign is an initiative intended to help make UBC more receptive to and welcoming of its lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\* (transgender, transsexual, trans-identified), two-spirit, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (LGBT\*TQIA+) communities, individuals and issues of sexual and gender diversity on campus." If you would like more information about this campaign, or to be put in touch with campus resources, please feel free to talk to me, or to contact the Equity and Inclusion Office in Brock Hall, tel. 604.822.6353.