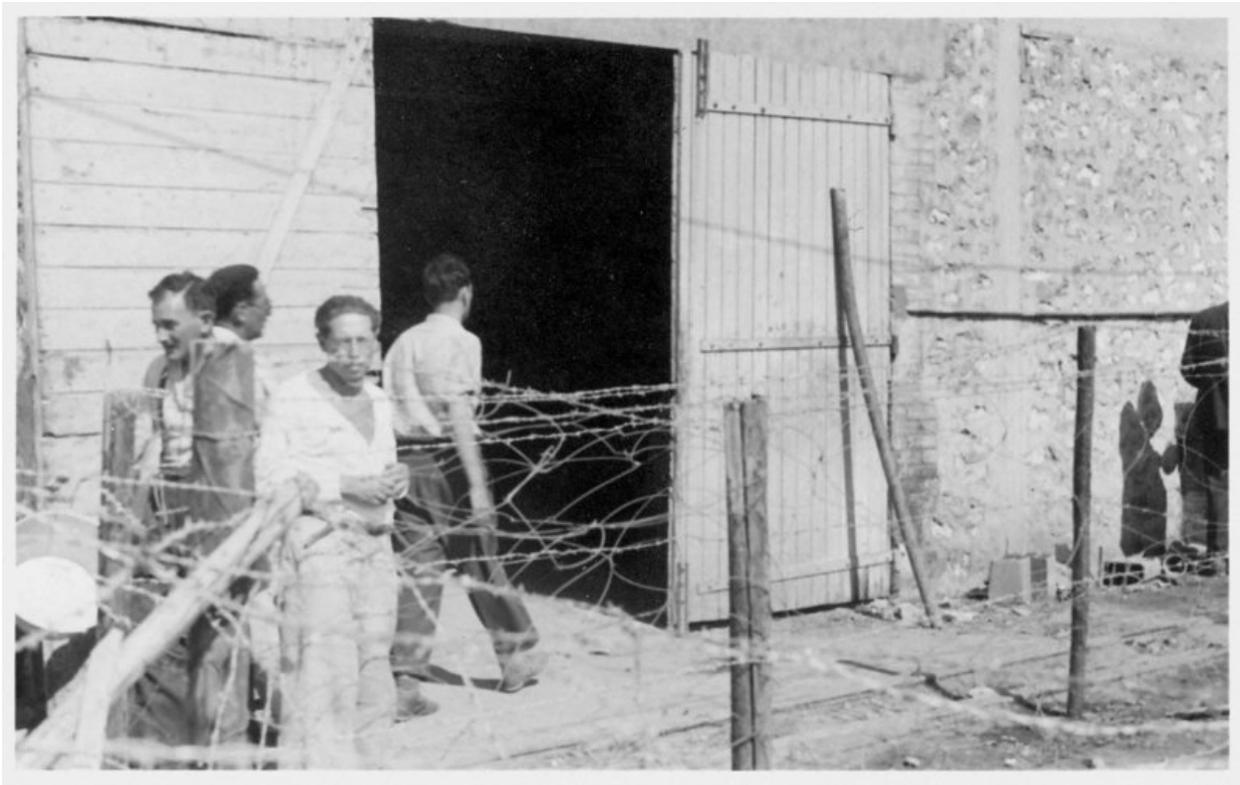


Studies in the Twentieth Century: Modernism and the Minor

ENGL 539B-002 1W2020

"After Modernism is canonized, however, by the post-war settlement and its accompanying, complicit academic endorsements, there is then the presumption that since Modernism is *here* in this specific phase or period, there is nothing beyond it. The [once] marginal or rejected artists become classics of organized teaching and of travelling exhibitions in the great galleries of the metropolitan cities. 'Modernism' is confined to this highly selective field and denied to everything else in an act of pure ideology, whose first, unconscious irony is that, absurdly, it stops history dead.... [W]e must search out and counterpose an alternative tradition taken from the neglected works left in the wide margins of the century."

--Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism* (1989: 34–35)



Lion Feuchtwanger (1884–1958), German-Jewish novelist, playwright, essayist, during his internment in the Les Milles camp. Les Milles, France, 1940. *Feuchtwanger Memorial Library, Archival Research Center University of Southern California* (more info on the camp: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/les-milles-camp>)

PLEASE KINDLY READ THE SYLLABUS. Under the present COVID-19 emergency, various accommodations are being made to enhance the online course experience and make it more flexible for folks learning from home in different time zones. Please take note of the explanatory material contained here, so that you understand what we will be doing and why.

Course description: This graduate-level seminar course juxtaposes the category of the minor with modernism in order to sieve modernism's rebellion from the major out from the institutions that have

supported modernism itself *as* major, important, canonical, generative, and influential. Since Deleuze and Guattari wrote about Kafka as a writer of a minor literature, the keyword has been applied broadly across critical and aesthetic theories. Shu-Mei Shih and Françoise Lionnet, in a volume of collected essays titled *Minor Transnationalisms* (2005), argue against allowing the major to always mediate the minor, and propose a horizontal set of relations produced among minority subjects. In *Languages of the Night: Minor Languages and the Literary Imagination in 20th-century Ireland and Europe* (2015), Barry McCrea “argues that the sudden linguistic homogenization of the European countryside was a key impulse in the development of literary modernism”; as vernacular rural dialects declined, they became available for subversive use by modernist writers such as Joyce and Proust. The minor may designate subjects’ identities, aesthetic categories or processes, languages and literatures, the marginal or disprivileged industry or occupation, locales, nations, or collectives. I myself see modernisms as in many respects produced in the context of the failure of major attachments in the early twentieth century, such as attachments to nation, empire, religion, kinship, established gender and class identities, and region.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

UBC’s Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, occupied, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) people. I acknowledge and recognize the land rights of the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

COURSE INFORMATION

Official Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value
Studies in the Twentieth Century	ENGL 539B 002	3 credits

PREREQUISITES

Eligibility for graduate-level English courses.

CONTACT INFO

Course Instructor(s)	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Prof. Judith Paltin	judith.paltin@ubc.ca	BUTO 502	TR 3:30-4:30 pm and by appointment. We will meet by video chat in the Collaborate Ultra Course Room on Canvas.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

My preferred pronouns are she/her or they/them. I earned my PhD in English in 2013 from the University of California, Santa Barbara, and at UBC I supervise research and teach courses in modern Anglophone literature, modernist studies and critical and cultural theory, with special interests in theories of democracy, literature and mind, ecocriticism, gender and sexuality studies, and literature

and music. I am passionate about teaching courses that are meaningful and truly interesting to you, that give you questions to ponder, methods of thinking, and ideas to carry forward into your next endeavors. The quickest way to reach me is by email, and I will try to respond within 48 hours. If you haven't heard from me by then, please kindly let me know I somehow missed your communication.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND VITAL INFORMATION

This course meets Tuesdays from 5-7:45 pm Pacific Time (Vancouver's timezone) online in the Collaborate Ultra Course Room. This is accessed from the Canvas course website. The attendance policy is suspended during this term. Supporting materials will be available to supplement class meetings, but do not comprehensively substitute for class attendance, and because seminars by design are heavily weighted toward mutual discussion, I encourage you to attend the synchronous meetings as much as possible. If you cannot, please participate that week in the online discussion forum in a more or less equivalent manner, speaking broadly.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

The principal and required readings are those listed first, before the separate section called "Background and theory." The latter readings are not required, and would be impossible to accomplish, in many cases, in the time we have available. Perhaps I should have called them "further critical reflections, if this area of thought interests you." They are usually well-known works, which may have been field-opening, or are ones that I felt shed more or a different light on the subject than the required readings do. I expect most of you will find one or two of these to spend extended time with over the course of the term, in addition to the required readings, especially if you think they will contribute to your seminar paper. Just as a head's up, I am also likely to introduce reference materials/music or artworks/short readings *not* on the syllabus which I hope you will enjoy and find useful in the context of our discussions.

Please have the required texts available for reference during seminar discussions.

September 8 (Tuesday): Course Introduction. Deleuze and Guattari, "What Is a Minor Literature?"; James Baldwin's "Notes of a Native Son" (essay, not book); André Schwarz-Bart's *The Last of the Just* [excerpt]

A/voiding the Canonical

September 15 (Tuesday): Wole Soyinka, *The King's Horseman*. Jahan Ramazani, "Modernist Bricolage, Postcolonial Hybridity"; Naoki Sakai, "On Translation." Background and theory: Shih and Lionnet, *Minor Transnationalisms*

Lives that Matter

September 22 (Tuesday): Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*. Tadeusz Borowski, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen." (Short story, not the entire volume of stories with the same title.) Dipesh Chakrabarty, Ch. 4 of *Provincializing Europe: "Minority Histories, Subaltern Pasts."*

Background and theory: Abdul JanMohamed and David Lloyd, *The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse*

Agonistic Origins of Minority

September 29 (Tuesday): Joseph Conrad, *The N of the Narcissus*. Amardeep Singh, "The Lifting and the Lifted." Background and theory: Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks; The Wretched of the Earth*

Deviation

October 6 (Tuesday): Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*. Teresa De Lauretis, "Nightwood and the 'Terror of Uncertain Signs.'" Background and theory: Luce Irigaray, *This Sex which Is not One*; De Lauretis, *Freud's Drive*; Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*

Home, Exile, Belonging, Isolation

October 13 (Tuesday): Nella Larsen, *Passing*. Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic* Ch. 5 and excerpt from conclusion [Canvas]. Daniel Zalewski, "Vagabonds." Said, "A Mind of Winter." Background and theory: Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*

Come the Revolution

October 20 (Tuesday): James Joyce, "Cyclops," "Circe." Lu Xun, "The True Story of Ah-Q." Perry Anderson, "Modernity and Revolution." Stanford Friedman, "Periodizing Modernism." Background and theory: Jameson, *A Singular Modernity*.

Avant-garde

October 27 (Tuesday): Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*. "Composition as Explanation." Mina Loy, "Gertrude Stein." Tristan Tzara, "Dada Manifesto 1918." Background and theory: Brivic, *Revolutionary Damnation*

Social Networks

November 3 (Tuesday): Sam Selvon, *Lonely Londoners*. David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity* Ch 5 and Epilogue. Arendt, "On Humanity in Dark Times." Background and theory: Adorno, *Minima Moralia*

Subcultural Press; Subcultural Lives

November 10 (Tuesday): Modernism's little magazines, and movements. Excerpts from manifestos and essays [Canvas LOCR]. Background and theory: Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*; Rebecca Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style*.

Intersecting Categories of Oppression and Struggle

November 17 (Tuesday): Yeats, selected poems listed on Canvas. Edward Said, "Yeats and Decolonization." Sylvia Wynter "Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom:

Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument” Background and theory: Lindgren and Ross (eds.), *The Modernist World*; Jessica Berman, *Modernist Commitments*

Minor Cosmopolitanisms, Trans- and Internationalisms

November 24 (Tuesday): Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World*. Mulk Raj Anand, excerpts from *Conversations in Bloomsbury*. Background and theory: Huyssen, “Geographies of Modernism”

Culture and Minor Language

December 1 (Tuesday): J. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*. Excerpts from *Finnegans Wake*. Background and theory: Achille Mbembe, “Necropolitics”; Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (and I suppose context/background to these is probably Giorgio Agamben’s *Homo Sacer* and Foucault on biopolitics)

COURSE MATERIALS

Wole Soyinka, *The King’s Horseman*

Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*

Joseph Conrad, *The N of the Narcissus*

J. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

Sam Selvon, *Lonely Londoners*

Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood*

Nella Larsen, *Passing*

Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons*

Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World*

Other course materials will be supplied at no charge on Canvas or via URL links online.

ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

- 10% — Present and lead one seminar discussion on an assigned reading. Your presentation should include a sharable handout which summarizes the issues of your presentation, lists key points, and offers one or two specific examples. You are welcome to introduce ideas, research, or cultural productions which we have not studied, but which will add to our discussions. If you are unable to present in a synchronous course meeting, then record a presentation and share to Canvas forum with handout (video or podcast are equally fine).
- 30% — Submit written critical reflections on two assigned readings of your choice to a common discussion forum on Canvas, and engage in discussion with others in the forum (10% each response, 10% holistic participation grade).

- 60% — Research/critical essay of 4000-5500 words (13-18 pp) due on December 15, 2020.

See the various assignment pages for more information. Please do participate enthusiastically in seminar conversations. Consider this a safe space to practice for all the situations in which we have to think and speak on our feet in academia. Talking, listening carefully to colleagues, and thoughtfully responding to new argumentative vectors are all important professional skills. I suggest that you prepare at least one interesting concept, argumentative point, or important question from one of the readings each meeting, and resolve to speak at least once in each seminar meeting.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The following statement is composed by and mandated to appear in the syllabus by the UBC Academic Senate in support of **Senate Policy V-130**.

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

OTHER COURSE POLICIES

Our classroom space, even when virtual, is intended to be warmly welcoming, enriching, and respectful in all its interactions. I request that you kindly self-monitor your own contributions for civility, including off-topic phone or computer use. Your thoughtful and engaged participation affects other people's experience and enhances your own impact and learning.

The following policy is adapted from writings and ideas by Prof. Koritha Mitchell, @ProfKori: This classroom will be free of hate speech regarding sexual orientation, gender expression, race, ethnicity, national origin, and socio-economic status or background. Students may suggest additions to this list which the class will discuss whether to adopt. This policy means that words that are slurs such as the N-word or F-word won't be used in this class by any person, even when it appears in our texts and we are quoting the passage. Instead we will substitute the name of the first letter of the word. Dr. Mitchell points out that we can be responsibly engaged with texts and materials which contain these slurs without "giving them life with our breath" in our learning space.

Readings, discussions, and class materials may reference mature themes, violence, sexual matters, offensive slurs, or conflictual ideas (this is a "content warning"). If you feel you do not wish to read one of the assigned texts because it may emotionally distress you, please see me 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.

The Department of English webpage (under “Resources for Students”) details the English department’s agreed-upon marking standards for your reference. 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 face a disciplinary process. If you have any questions about what counts as plagiarism, please ask me before you submit the assignment.

Students may record course materials for personal study purposes only, and may not share any portion of their recordings or lecture notes with any other person not currently enrolled in the course nor upload them to any online platform.

LEARNING ANALYTICS

This course will be using the following learning technologies: Canvas. This tool captures data about your activity and provides information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I may use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums
- Assess your participation in the course

LEARNING AND OTHER SUPPORT RESOURCES

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 Office of Equity and Inclusion in Brock Hall, tel. 604-822-6353.

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All original materials of this course (syllabus, course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, curation of course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the course Instructor. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

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