

Modernism and the Political Novel

ENGL 464A-001: TWENTIETH-CENTURY STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA | Term 1 Winter 2017-2018



Man in the High Castle filming at UBC on Main Mall

Contact Info

Prof. Judith Paltin

Email: Judith.Paltin@ubc.ca

Office: Buchanan Tower 623

Vital Info

- Course meets: MWF from 11-11:50 in MATH-104
- My office hours: M 3-4, W 12-1 and by appointment

Course Description

This course concentrates in literary analysis and social and cultural theory to understand the role of the political novel in twentieth-century literary and public culture. When Eloise Knapp Hay discusses T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a poem of "radical doubt and negation," she argues that its city made no "convincing allusions... to St. Augustine's vision of interpenetration between the City of God and the City of Man in *this* world." That vision of divine interpenetration was the unconscious of political fiction for many centuries, the eternalized Platonic Form of utopia. But toward what does political fiction point after the City of God becomes unavailable? Modernism and its scions carried out a lengthy thought-experiment through much of the twentieth century, devising new political fictions without the support of a divine guarantee of goodness. We will read a set of books whose politics are overt and whose aesthetic prowess is distinctive, but not straightforward.

Book List

1. Robert Tressell, *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*
2. Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
3. Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*
4. Lewis Sinclair, *It Can't Happen Here*
5. George Orwell, *Animal Farm*
6. Phillip Dick, *The Man in the High Castle*
7. Ursula Le Guin, *The Dispossessed*

What You Will Do

In this course, you will read and analyze a range of writing which will give you the opportunity to identify, compare, explain and discuss various aspects and issues of literary criticism, political theory, and social history. Requirements consist of class participation, a midterm exam, a critical essay paper, and a final exam. We will follow the Department of English attendance policy, which you may read at: <http://english.ubc.ca/resources/resources-for-students/#attendance>.

10% Participation

20% Midterm exam

40% Critical essay (5% for preliminary work, 35% final draft)

30% Final examination, concentrating in essay writing, passage identification and analysis

All of the major assignments are required, i.e., in order to pass the course, you must submit work in each of these categories. Your assignments will be available on Canvas, and will include a detailed rubric so that you know in advance how they will be marked. I will be available in office hours or by appointment for individual conferences about your assignments or other course-related matters as you may wish.

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

Sep 6 – Course Introduction. Yeats, “Easter 1916.”

Sep 8 – *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*

Sep 11 – *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists*

Sep 13 – *Heart of Darkness*.

Sep 15 – *Heart of Darkness*

Sep 18 – *Heart of Darkness*

Sep 20 – *Heart of Darkness*. Conrad, “Autocracy and War.”

Sep 22 – Virginia Woolf, “The Leaning Tower.”

Sep 25 – *Brave New World*

Sep 27 – *Brave New World*

Sep 29 – *Brave New World*

Oct 2 – *Brave New World*

Oct 4 – *Brave New World*. Wyndham Lewis, “Blast Manifesto.”

Oct 6 – Walter Benjamin: “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproducibility.”

Oct 9 – **No class: Thanksgiving**

Oct 11 – *It Can’t Happen Here*

Oct 13 – *It Can’t Happen Here*

Oct 16 – *It Can’t Happen Here*

Oct 18 – *It Can’t Happen Here*

Oct 20 – *It Can’t Happen Here*. Andre Breton, “Manifesto: Towards a Free Revolutionary Art.”

Oct 23 – *Animal Farm*

Oct 25 – *Animal Farm*

Oct 27 – *Animal Farm*

Oct 30 – George Orwell, “Inside the Whale.”

Nov 1 – *The Man in the High Castle*

Nov 3 – *The Man in the High Castle*

Nov 6 – *The Man in the High Castle*

Nov 8 – *The Man in the High Castle*

Nov 10 – **Instructor away at conference**

Nov 13 – **No class: Stat Holiday for Remembrance Day**

Nov 15 – World War One poems [handout]

Nov 17 – Herbert Read, “What Is Revolutionary Art?”

Nov 20 – *The Dispossessed*

Draft paper due, if you would like feedback before final draft submission (partial draft ok)

Nov 22 – *The Dispossessed*

Nov 24 – *The Dispossessed*

Nov 27 – *The Dispossessed*

Nov 29 – *The Dispossessed*

Final paper due

Dec 1 – Course wrap-up.

Exam period Dec 5-20-- **Final examination, TBA**

Please Also Know

Our classroom space is intended to be welcoming and respectful while we carry on with our intellectual engagements, and I request that you self-monitor your own contributions for benevolence (including off-topic phone or computer use). 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. There is a student Writing Centre with coaches available in the Chapman Learning Commons in Barber: please see <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/writing/> for more information.

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.