ENG 290: Human Values in Literature
(The artist, the thinker, the community)
Spring 2018
Wednesdays | 2:00-4:30 p.m.
Dr. Mena Mitrano
Email: mmitrano@luc.edu
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Description
The subtitle of the course in Human Values in Literature this semester is "The artist, the thinker, the community." The course explores the transformations of the figure of the artist in recent and contemporary modernity using as a blueprint the creative and critical output of one of the most representative modernist artists: T. S. Eliot. The ways in which Eliot navigated the often opposing demands of art and faith, mechanization and technology, on the one hand, and spirituality, on the other, the sensuous shocks of material goods and media stimuli, on the one hand, and the quest for universal values, on the other, make him, within English-speaking culture, into an ideal candidate for the study of what German philosopher Walter Benjamin, writing about French poet Charles Baudelaire, called "the sensation of modernity."

This course tracks the pre-history of the sensation of modernity, discovering the set of desires gravitating around it, its costs and, importantly, the fascination and power that it exerts on our present. Eliot’s production, together with the issues it raises around the figure of the modern artist and its influence on the formation of thinkers, critics and philosophers, will provide the necessary tools to begin to raise the question of the artist in a contemporary world profoundly marked by the crisis of the notion of community. We will read Eliot back to back with philosopher Roberto Esposito, one of the foremost international thinkers of community. The course has an interdisciplinary slant and students will be introduced to an exciting segment of intellectual and cultural history, learning to revitalize the past in order to better understand the present.

REQUIRED TEXTS:
Esposito, Roberto, Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community (Stanford: Stanford UP, 2010)
 Assigned readings from the online edition of The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot (marked online)
Other readings from a course packet (marked CP) made available by the Professor in electronic format on Sakai
RECOMMENDED BOOKS:

Eliot, T. S. Letters of T. S. Eliot. (On reserve)

Brooker, Jewel Spears. Mastery and Escape: T. S. Eliot and the Dialectic of Modernism. (Loyola Libraries, online)


COURSE OBJECTIVES/LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. To read major poems, selected plays, and representative criticism by T. S. Eliot, one of the most significant artists/thinkers in English and American literature.

2. To improve one's understanding of recent cultural and intellectual history, and of Modernism in particular. To engage in critical debates and develop one’s own position.

3. To improve one's ability to read poetry and criticism with pleasure and discernment and to write with intelligence about poetry and civilization.

4. To improve oral skills (reading poetry aloud, engaging in discussion and debate), to carry out an individual research project, and to produce an interesting research paper

REQUIREMENTS (WRITING):

2 Short papers (300; increase to 500 words): 1 close reading of a passage from a poem by Eliot; 1 response to literary criticism (an essay)

A Midterm

1 Formal essay (1500 words)--Incorporate discussion of one poem by Eliot and of relevant criticism (drawing on 2 outside critical sources). MLA Stylesheet. Print version; typed; spacing: 1,5. Ideas for topics should arise from discussion and assigned reading.

ORAL REQUIREMENTS:

Participation in class: discussion informed by reading and reflection

Recitation: by the end of class and for the final meeting, at least 25 lines from Eliot's poems or plays

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

In accordance with the JFRC mission to promote a higher level of academic rigor, all courses adhere to the following absence policy:

- For all classes meeting once a week, students cannot incur more than one unexcused absence.
• For all classes meeting twice a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.
• For all classes meeting three times a week, students cannot incur more than two unexcused absences.

This course meets once a week, thus a total of one unexcused absence will be permitted. Unexcused absences beyond these will result in a lowering of your final grade.

EVALUATION:
• Participation 20 %
• Midterm Exam 20 %
• Short responses 20 %
• Final Project 40 %

GRADING:
94-100: A
90-93: A-
87-89: B+
84-86: B
80-83: B-
77-79: C+
74-76: C
70-73: C-
67-69: D+
60-66: D
59 or lower: F

Late work: minus one grade.

ACADEMIC HONESTY:
Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are unacceptable at the JFRC and will be dealt with in accordance with Loyola University Chicago’s guidelines. Please familiarize yourself with Loyola’s standards here: http://www.luc.edu/academics/catalog/undergrad/reg_academicintegrity.shtml. You are responsible for understanding what constitutes plagiarism according to the LUC Student Handbook.

DISABILITIES:
Students with documented disabilities who wish to discuss academic accommodations should contact me the first week of class, as well as the Senior Academic Services Advisor.

PROPOSED SCHEDULE:

Date Topic Assigned readings for following class
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Other Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 17</td>
<td>Week One</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>T. S. Eliot, &quot;Baudelaire&quot; (Collected Prose online), &quot;Preludes,&quot; &quot;Humouresque (after J. Lagorgue), &quot;Spleen,&quot; &quot;The Death of Saint Narcissus&quot;</td>
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<td>Jan 24</td>
<td>Week Two</td>
<td>Constellations: Baudelaire, Benjamin, Eliot</td>
<td>Walter Benjamin, &quot;Some Motifs in Baudelaire&quot; (CP)</td>
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<td>Feb. 7</td>
<td>Week Four</td>
<td>Eliot and popular culture</td>
<td>Eliot, &quot;Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats&quot;</td>
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<td>Feb. 14</td>
<td>Week Five</td>
<td>Pre-Midterm review and Screening of the musical Cats</td>
<td>Prepare for Midterm</td>
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<td>Feb. 21</td>
<td>Week Six</td>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>Eliot, &quot;The Waste Land&quot;</td>
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<td>Feb 28</td>
<td>Week Seven</td>
<td>Reading The Waste Land</td>
<td>Eliot, &quot;The Cocktail Party&quot;</td>
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<td>March 7</td>
<td>Week Eight</td>
<td>Spring Break--no class</td>
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<td>March 14</td>
<td>Week Nine</td>
<td>The artist, the thinker, the community I</td>
<td>Esposito, Communitas, pp. 86-111</td>
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<td>March 21</td>
<td>Week Ten</td>
<td>The artist, the thinker, the community II</td>
<td>Work on your final paper</td>
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<td>Week Eleven</td>
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<td>April 1</td>
<td>Easter Recess—No class</td>
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<td>Week Twelve</td>
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<td>April 8</td>
<td>Final papers returned.</td>
<td>Eliot, &quot;The Family Reunion.&quot;</td>
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<td>Week Thirteen</td>
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<td>April 15</td>
<td>Concluding remarks and recitation.</td>
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<td>Week Fourteen</td>
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