ENGLISH 105A
20TH-CENTURY IN ENGLISH, 1900-1945
SPRING, 1997

A) PARTICULARS:

Instructor: Cameron Reid
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Office Hours: Wednesday 5-7 p.m. (or by appointment)
Meeting Time: Wednesday 7-10 p.m.

B) REQUIRED TEXTS:

F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Scribner)
Ernest Hemingway, In Our Time (Distican)
D.H. Lawrence, The Rainbow (Penguin)
Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God (Harper)
Aldous Huxley, Brave New World (Flamingo)
*Ellman & O'Clair, Modern Poems: A Norton Introduction

*NOTE: You must use the 2nd edition of the poetry but other editions of the novels are fine; check out the USED BOOK STORE(s) for copies of these books.

C) COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1.) "Summary Cards" (see below for details): 40%
2.) Participation and Group work: 10%
3.) End of Term Test (July 30, in class): 20%
4.) Paper Proposal (Wednesday, July 14): 10% (1-2 pages)
5.) Final Research Paper (Monday, August 11): 20% (4-5 pages)

D) COURSE MANDATE:

Our course, "20th-century English Literature, 1900-1945," contends with a very eclectic period in English literary and social history. We, as a reading audience, cannot begin to think about the great 'puzzle' of early 20th-century literature without developing a background in the sorts of historical influences in/against which this literature takes shape. That is, we need to recognize that the literature both reflects and speaks to its time, but also that it gets situated, gets grounded or implicated within much larger social, geo-political, psychological, artistic, and historical forces at work in the minds of most (if not all) the "great" literary figures in the first-half of this century.

So again, during this period, a wide variety of cultural and intellectual contexts underscore the construction of what is typically called "Modern" literature. Consider, for instance, the growing intellectual influence of Marx, Freud, and Darwin; the oppressive weight of the scientific mind; the rapid
shifts and growth in technologies: the rise of new media such as film and radio; and the spirit of rationalism looming over the cultural 'zeitgeist' of early 20th-century Europe. One also must recognize the inevitable disillusionment and alienation of a "Lost Generation" of writers who came of age during a time of World Wars, the "Great Depression," the rise of Fascism in Europe, the growing presence of weapons of Mass-destruction, and so on.

So I propose that we organize our readings by way of a series of themes or contexts, literary and cultural "access points" that might help to better orient us to this complicated period. In other words, the many and varied literary texts that we engage will become our makeshift 'guides,' if you will, to this particular time and place.

E) WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF CLASSES (Note: in the 4 weeks we do poetry we may not get to every poem listed; certain poems will only emphasize all the more, themes and issues that we talk about in the class. You are responsible for all the poems listed, but I will select certain works for our in-class discussions and work-shops):

May 7 A short introduction to Modernism; discussion of course requirements; the use of theoretical models; "Summary Cards."

May 14 Conceptions of Modern poetry and The Modern Lyric: "Modern Poetry in English: A Brief History" (in your Norton, 882-896); Wallace Stevens: "Anecdote of the Jar" (157), "Of Modern Poetry" (164), "A Quiet Normal Life" (165); Marianne Moore: "Poetry" (258); Auden: "As I walked Out One Evening" (412); T.S. Eliot: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" (272); Biographical and Psychological Models.


May 28 Love and War poetry: e.e. cummings: "somewhere i have never travelled,gladly beyond" (handout); Edna St. Vincent Millay: "[Love is not all: it is not meat nor drink]" (309), "[Oh, sleep forever in the Latmian cave]"; Auden: "Our Hunting Fathers" (412), "Lullaby" (414), "A Lullaby" (426); William Butler Yeats: "The Second Coming" (83), "Easter 1916" (81); Wilfred Owen: "Anthem for Doomed Youth" (312), "Dulce et Decorum Est" (312); Political Models.

June 4 Disillusionment and The Modern Man: In Our Time: Ernest Hemingway "Summary Card" due; Sociological Models.


June 25 Poetic experiment, Imagism and Dialect poetry; e.e. cummings: "[plato told]" (324), "[Maggie and milly and molly and may]" (325), "[anyone lived in a pretty how town]" (handout); Marianne Moore: "The Fish" (258), "The Pangolin" (261); H.D.: "Sea Rose" (236), "Oread" (236), "Helen" (237); William Carlos Williams: "The Red Wheelbarrow"; all Langston Hughes selections from Norton (360-364).
July 2 Harlem Renaissance: There Eyes Were Watching God: Countee Cullen: "Yet do I Marvel" (370), "Heritage" (371); Zora Neale Hurston "Summary Card" due.


July 23 From Modernism to Postmodernism in poetry: Allen Ginsberg: a selection from "Howl" (646); Sylvia Plath: "Ariel" (744), "Daddy" (744); Imamu Amiri Baraka: "Political Poem" (754), "Legacy" (755); John Ashbery: "The Instruction Manual" (670).

July 30 Term Test, in class.

F) Summary Cards:

1.) You are asked to compose a one-page "Summary Card" for 4 of the 5 books that we examine throughout the semester.

2.) Respectively, each "Summary Card" will be worth 10% of your FINAL grade.

3.) The "Summary Cards" are due, in class, on the DAY that we, as a class, deal with the work. PLEASE HAND IN TWO COPIES OF YOUR "SUMMARY CARDS". ONE FOR MY FILES AND ONE TO BE RETURNED TO YOU WITH ANY COMMENTS I HAVE. THAT IS, IF YOU WANT COMMENTS AND NEED THE SUMMARY CARDS BACK (you will for reasons outlined below) HAND IN TWO COPIES.

4.) The "Summary Cards" will be typed, single or double-spaced (depending on how much you have to say), and FULLY complete.

5.) The "Summary Cards" will be composed of THREE separate sections:

   FIRST, I want a one or two paragraph summary of the primary events within the book. to show me that you have read it (I'm not expecting a fully realized composition but will expect more than just "there was a family. they had lots of adventures"; though they might have had 'lots of adventures.' I want a little DETAIL that shows me that you know what is going on in the story).

   SECOND, I want a one-paragraph 'discussion point' that shows your critical engagement with the book (we will practice this activity in our second class when we first talk about the poetry). How does the book suggest the time and place in which it was written? Comment on its use of settings in that regard. How does the book relate to your evolving understanding of the period? How does the author use language? What literary style or genre does the author use? And how is the author's use of language and/or style different from (or similar to) other books that we have read (or other books that you might have read from this same period)? Do you detect some sort of experiment in the author's construction of his/her characters or plot? and so on. Of course, I offer these various points
of engagement with the books as suggestions only; you CHOOSE how you wish to proceed. Also, you should always try and show me evidence from the text of what you are saying.

THIRD, I want you to ask yourself two critical questions about the book (again, we will be practising this activity in our second class). Usually, the questions should be different from the 'discussion point'; they may relate to (or build upon) whatever issue you have proposed in the second section, as long as you seem to extend the discussion a little further, in a slightly enhanced or even different direction. So, using the above stated criteria -- that is, pertaining to the authors sense (or construction of) the "Modern" period, to your sense of the period, to the book's writing style, to its use of characters, to its themes, to its relationships with other works that we have studied, or whatever -- using such criteria, ask questions THAT YOU THINK YOU CAN ANSWER about the book.

6.) So again, type up a one-page "Summary Card" and hand it on the day of the class that we are dealing with the given book. (The first "Summary Card" will be due on Wednesday May, 21 at the beginning of the class on The Great Gatsby; from there, consult your "weekly breakdown of classes" to know exactly when each card is due.)

7.) I will not accept hand-written, "slipshod" pieces of work that appear as if they were slapped together in a few minutes before class. You MUST complete the assignment, as requested, and give it the time it needs to do it properly (not alot of time, but some time).

8.) For each day late, you will lose 2 marks (up to 5 days). If you hand it in 2 days late, you will lose 4 marks; 4 days late, 8 marks ... etc.

9.) After 5 days you will not receive marks for the assignment but still must hand in the "Summary Card." For, the "Summary Cards" are the center-piece of this course, both in terms of class discussion and in terms of individual development. I see these cards as preliminary exercises that take each of us towards the writing of the term test, the paper proposal, and the final paper: in other words, to not hand them in tells me that you are not ready to write the final paper. If you do not hand in any of the 4 "Summary Cards," I will not mark your final paper. Also, the "question" portion of the "Summary Card" will be the basis for the largest part of your exam. That is, I will select 2 or 3 of the best questions that you have individually asked on your "Summary Cards" throughout the semester and use them on your own personal exam (every student will therefore write a different exam). So again, to not hand in any or all of the "Summary Cards" means that you will not write an exam for there will be insufficient questions (compared with your other classmates) from which to choose. Clearly, it is to your advantage that "Summary Cards" be handed in, and handed in on time. Even still, you must submit "Summary Cards" for 4 books before you can proceed in our course to the final assignments.

10.) While you can workshop these issues with other students, you cannot reproduce other peoples work on these "Summary Cards"; I reserve the right, in this instance, to give a "0" to all students involved -- with still a necessary re-write of the "Summary Card" expected -- if the work is plagiarized.