Syllabus—English 105A
Literature in English from 1900-1945

Instructor: Jason Haslam
Office: PAS 1060
Office Hours: TTH 2-3, or by appointment
extension: 2685

The period from 1900 to 1945 was one of immense social, philosophical, and literary fluctuations. World War I, the Great Depression, the Russian Revolution, World War II and the Holocaust all occurred during this time. Philosophically, Karl Marx, among others, was arguing that human behavior was based on economic factors, and that Western society was split “into antagonistic classes” (Baym 942) because of the economic situation of capitalism. In psychology, Sigmund Freud was writing that individual behavior was controlled by the unconscious, something which no one could control or understand. And, in Germany a few years earlier, Friedrich Nietzsche, through his character Zarathustra, proclaimed that “God is dead” (41).

The literary movement known as “Modernism” was a response to all of these events and ideas. “At the heart of the modernist aesthetic lay the conviction that the previously sustaining structures of human life, whether social, political, religious, or artistic, had been either destroyed or shown up as falsehoods or fantasies” (Baym 944). In this course, we will discuss how, in terms of both form and content, Modernist literature addresses this new lack of meaning and rationality. We will also look at how literature and theories of literature emerge from and affect this new world view.

The course will be based on lectures by the instructor, group work and class discussion.

Works Cited

Required Texts:
Hemingway, Ernest. In Our Time.
Joyce, James. Dubliners.
Woolf, Virginia. The Waves.

Course Requirements:
Short Essay (1000-1250 words [approx. 4 pages], due Tuesday, January 29th): 15%
Midterm (February 24th): 15%
Research Essay (1750-2100 words [approx. 7 pages], due March 24th): 25%
Exam: 35%
Attendance and Participation: 10%

Please note, if counting the number of words in your essays with a word-processor counting program, subtract 10% from the total.

Both essays must use MLA style -- this will be described in class, and handbooks suggested.

LATE POLICY: A full grade level (e.g. from A to B) will be deducted every 24 hours after the due dates (e.g. a paper due at 12:00pm will drop one grade at 12:01 that day, two grades at 12:00 the next day, etc.). Extensions will not be granted without a doctor's note.

Also, please note that plagiarism will be dealt with in the most extreme manner allowed by the University, possibly resulting in expulsion.
Tentative Reading Schedule

Jan.
06--introduction
08--Henry James, "The Beast in the Jungle" (reading packet)
13--James, cont.
15--Sarah Grand, "The Undefinable: A Fantasia" (r.p.)
20--W. E. B. DuBois, Selections from The Souls of Black Folk (r.p.)
22--James Joyce, Dubliners FIRST ESSAY DUE
27--Dubliners cont.
29--Dubliners cont.

Feb.
03--T. S. Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock." (r.p.)
05--Eliot, cont. Ezra Pound, "In a Station of the Metro" and other poems (r.p.)
10--Zora Neale Hurston, "Sweat" (r.p.)
12--MIDTERM
17--BREAK
19--BREAK
24--Earnest Hemingway, In Our Time
26--In Our Time cont.

Mar.
03--In Our Time cont.
05--W. B. Yeats, "Leda and the Swan," E. E. Cummings, "In Just" and other poems,
William Carlos Williams, "This is Just to Say" (r.p.)
10--Dorothy Richardson, "Death" (r.p.)
12--William Faulkner, "Barn Burning" (r.p.)
17--Richard Wright, "The Man Who Was Almost a Man" (r.p.)
19--Virginia Woolf, The Waves
24--The Waves cont. FINAL ESSAY DUE
26--The Waves cont.
31--F. Scott Fitzgerald, "Babylon Revisited" (r.p.)
02--Allen Ginsberg, "Sunflower Sutra" (r.p.)
07--conclusions and review