

English 606.1
Hi/Middle/Low in the 1920s
Fall 2010; Mondays 12:50-3:40

Professor: Celia Marshik
Office Hours: Wednesdays from 11-12:30 and 2-3:30 & by appt
Office: Humanities 1106
Telephone: 632-7356
E-Mail: celia.marshik@sunysb.edu

Course Description:

Early definitions of so-called “high” modernism emphasized its exclusivity, reliance on a cohort of elite readers, and disdain for so-called middle and low brow cultural and intellectual pursuits. Recent work in literary modernism has, however, challenged these assumptions on two fronts: by demonstrating that figures previously regarded as mandarins were deeply invested in mass culture, a position reflected in their works, and by assessing the import of “middlebrow” writers to the development of modernism more generally. This course will examine the relationships among high, middle, and low literary cultures in the 1920s to assess both how writers in the period understood the claims of each label and whether reconsidering them might create a better understanding of modernism.

Required Texts (available at Stony Books):

E. M. Delafield *Diary of a Provincial Lady* (Academy Chicago, 0897330536)
T. S. Eliot, *The Waste Land and Other Writings* (Modern Library, 0375759344)
E. M. Hull, *The Sheik* (Book Jungle, 1604245182)
Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* (Indiana UP, 0253203996)
James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Vintage, 0679722769) [*Please get this particular edition*]
Sax Rohmer, *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* [*Not at Stony Books; please buy on-line*]
Dorothy Sayers, *Whose Body?* (Harper, 0061043575)
Dornford Yates, *Berry and Co* (Tutis Digital, 8184562527)

Additional readings are available on-line through Blackboard and the Library website (under “Databases & E-Journals”).

Course Requirements

In addition to regular participation in seminar discussions, you will give one research-based class presentation, a twenty-minute presentation based on reading above and beyond that assigned to all students on the syllabus. You should read at least two or three scholarly articles in your preparation for this presentation, which may focus on the popularity/reception of your chosen author; that author’s take on the relationship between high/middle/low; or some aspect of literary culture(s) within the work itself. The presentation should not focus on biography although you may include a brief biographical overview. Please consult me in advance of your presentation date for reading recommendations. You will also prepare one twenty-page paper; an annotated bibliography and abstract for this paper will be due no later than Monday, November 22. Students who intend to apply this course toward the WaGSs Certificate must write a seminar paper relevant to that program. During our final class session, all students will present shorter versions of their paper in a class conference.

Course Calendar

Items marked with one asterisk can be found on Blackboard
Items marked with two asterisks are available on-line through the Library
(though the e-journals section of the website)

- August 30** Introduction to the course
- September 6** No class (Labor Day)
- September 13** Huyssen, *After the Great Divide*
Adorno and Horkheimer, "The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception." *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. Edmund Jephcott. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2002. 94-136.*
- September 20** Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922) ["Telemachus," "Nestor" and "Proteus"]
Eliot, "Ulysses, Order and Myth." *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode. New York: Harcourt, 1975. 175-178.*
Greenberg, "Avant-Garde and Kitsch." *Art and Culture: Critical Essays*. Boston: Beacon P, 1961. 3-21.*
- September 27** Joyce, *Ulysses* ["Calypso," "Lotus-Eaters," "Hades" and "Aeolus"]
Wicke, "Modernity Must Advertise: Aura, Desire and Decolonialization in Joyce." *James Joyce Quarterly* 30 (1993): 583-613.*
Scholes, "Exploring the Great Divide: High and Low, Left and Right." *Narrative* 11 (October 2003): 245-269.**
- October 4** Joyce, *Ulysses* ["Lestrygonians," "Scylla," "Wandering Rocks" & "Sirens"]
Dettmar, "Selling *Ulysses*." *James Joyce Quarterly* 30 (1993): 795-812.*
Woolf, "Middlebrow." *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1942. 180-184*
- October 11** Joyce, *Ulysses* ["Cyclops," "Nausicaa," "Oxen," "Circe"]
Leonard, "Women on the Market: Commodity Culture, Femininity, and 'Those Lovely Seaside Girls' in *Ulysses*." *Joyce Studies Annual* 2 (1991): 27-68*
Kershner, "The Culture of *Ulysses*." *Joycean Cultures/Culturing Joyces*. Newark: U of Delaware P, 1998. 149-162.*
- October 18** Joyce, *Ulysses* ["Eumaeus," "Ithaca," "Penelope"]
Wicke, "'Who's She When She's At Home?': Molly Bloom and the Work of Consumption." *James Joyce Quarterly* 28 (1991) 748-64. *

- October 25** Eliot, "Portrait of a Lady" (1917), *The Waste Land* (1922) and "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921)
Chinitz, "T.S. Eliot & the Cultural Divide." *PMLA* 110 (1995): 236-47.**
North, "Across the Great Divide." *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999. 140-172.*
- November 1** Rohmer, *The Insidious Dr. Fu-Manchu* (1913)
Seshagiri, "Modernity's (Yellow) Perils: Dr. Fu-Manchu and English Race Paranoia." *Cultural Critique* 62 (2006): 162-94.**
- November 8** Hull, *The Sheik* (1919)
Trotter, "A Horse is Being Beaten: Modernism and Popular Fiction." *Rereading the New: A Backward Glance at Modernism*, ed. Kevin Dettmar. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992. 191-219*
- **November 15** Yates, *Berry and Co* (1920)
Scholes, "Iridescent Mediocrity: Dornford Yates and Others." *Paradox of Modernism*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2006. 182-194.*
- November 22** Sayers, *Whose Body?* (1923)
Latham, "Deadly Pretensions: Dorothy Sayers and the Ends of Culture." "Am I a Snob?" *Modernism and the Novel*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2003. 169-213*
- November 29** Delafield, *Diary of a Provincial Lady* (1931)
Hammill, "'Wildest Hopes Exceeded'": E. M. Delafield's *Diary of a Provincial Lady*." *Women, Celebrity and Literary Culture Between the Wars*. Austin: U of Texas P, 2007. 179-206.*
- December 6** **Class Conference**

Monday, December 13
Final Paper due in my mailbox by 4 pm

**Possible reschedule