Literary Modernism:
The Struggle for Modern History
Professor Jeffrey M. Perl
Jeffrey Perl was born in 1952 and received his A. B., summa cum laude, from Stanford University in 1974. He did postgraduate work at Oxford University in 1976 and received his M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from Princeton University in 1979 and 1980.

From 1980 to 1989 Professor Perl taught Comparative Literature at Columbia University. He is now a professor of the humanities at the University of Texas (Dallas). He has been a Guggenheim Fellow, a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow in the Humanities, a visiting fellow at Mansfield College at Oxford, an Associate Senior Fellow at Columbia University, and a Whiting Fellow. Professor Perl is the author of numerous books, articles, reviews, monographs, and anthologies. His most recent books are *Skepticism and Modern Enmity: Before and After Eliot* (1989) and *The Tradition of Return: The Implicit History of Modern Literature* (1984). His current research is on the manuscript “The Other Tradition: Ambivalence in Modern Literary Culture.” He is the founder and editor of *Common Knowledge: A Journal of Intellectual History and Cultural Studies*. 
# Table of Contents

**Course Title**

- **Professor Biography** ......................................................... 1
- **Course Scope** ......................................................................... 3
- **Lecture One:** Introduction: Modernity and Modernism .................. 4
- **Lecture Two:** Transition .......................................................... 6
- **Lecture Three:** Against Theory ............................................... 7
- **Lecture Four:** Waste Lands ..................................................... 8
- **Lecture Five:** The Complete Consort ....................................... 9
- **Lecture Six:** Modernist Theater ............................................. 11
- **Lecture Seven:** Apocalypse ................................................... 12
- **Lecture Eight:** Postwar, Postmodern, Postculture .................... 14
- **Glossary** ................................................................................ 16
- **Biographical Notes** ................................................................. 17
- **Bibliography** ........................................................................... 18
Literary Modernism: The Struggle for Modern History

Scope:

In these eight lectures we examine modernism and its two primary divisions, paleomodernism and neomodernism. Through the works of T.S. Eliot, William Carlos Williams, Henry James, Ezra Pound, and others we discover the conflicts that have kept alive debates throughout the twentieth century.

Lecture One contrasts two poems possessing completely different styles but nearly identical conclusions. William Carlos Williams’ “The Red Wheelbarrow” and T.S. Eliot’s “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service” are examples of neomodernist and paleomodernist poetry, respectively. We learn that the two schools of modernism developed at the same time and that enthusiasts of one school mistrusted those of the other.

In Lecture Two we follow T.S. Eliot from philosophy student to poet. Eliot had little patience for the philosophical debates of the early twentieth century. We learn that Eliot felt that philosophers had mistakenly moved away from the study of fictions at work and toward a quest to find an ultimate reality. Eliot rejected the practice of philosophy and became a poet.

Chapter Three traces the shifting styles of W.B. Yeats and Henry James. Yeats began his career as a romantic poet but later shifted to realism and then to paleomodernism. James started out as a realist, as exemplified in his book, Portrait of a Lady. He later became a symbolist.

Lecture Four describes the impact of World War Two on the modernists. We learn Eliot’s motivations for writing “The Waste Land” and for his conversion to Christianity following his evident disenchantment with the secular world. D.H. Lawrence was famous for his paganism but he too was disenchanted with society and seemed to endorse a restoration of Christianity.

James Joyce’s book Ulysses is a prime example of paleomodernism, and we spend Lecture Five studying several of the book’s chapters. Chapter 15, “Circe” is rich with characters and chaos, something inspired by Freud’s dream work.

While modernist literature has thrived, modernist theater has failed. Henry James lamented that “I may have been meant for the drama but certainly not for the theater.” Modernists believed that realist drama belonged to the bourgeoisie and there was great resentment of middle class taste. Yeats attempted to make drama the battleground against what he viewed as the middle class monopoly on art. In Lecture Six we examine several of Yeats’ plays and learn how Eliot handled commercial theater.

The final lectures, Lectures Seven and Eight, cover the modernists during and after the Second World War. Literary politics and their impact are studied in these two discussions. We learn about the politics of the left and right and how the modernists were divided in support of the Axis and Allied powers. We also study the failed efforts to make art for the working class and how Ezra Pound attempted to recreate society through his support for Mussolini. Finally, we look at the modernists’ postwar consensus through the works of Eliot, Evelyn Waugh, and Samuel Beckett.
Lecture One
Introduction: Modernity and Moderation

Scope: This lecture discusses the two kinds of modernism: paleomodernism and neomodernism. A poem by William Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow” is presented as the neomodernist response to the paleomodernism of T.S. Eliot and others. The lecture then begins the examination of the characteristics that differentiate the two schools.

Outline

I. The subjects of the first two lectures are two words: modernity and modernism.
   A. This first lecture will examine the word modernism.
   B. The ambition “is to make those words so complicated, so difficult, and so ramified, that you will never want to use either of them again.”

II. Modernist literature cannot be understood without understanding how modernism became a word.
   A. There is no such thing as modernism.
   B. There are only modernisms.

III. The British critic Frank Kermode distinguishes between two kinds of modernism:
   A. Paleomodernism, which is original modernism.
   B. Neomodernism, which is new modernism.

IV. Two modernist poems provide illustration of these types of modernism.
   A. William Carlos Williams’ “The Red Wheelbarrow” is a poem meant to be read, not spoken.
      1. The poem is to be read as an exclamation.
      2. Williams has selected a very difficult syntax.
      3. The poem is intensely ideological and constitutes an assault on T.S. Eliot through the use of simplicity.
   B. “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service” by T.S. Eliot is also modernist, but it is radically different from “The Red Wheelbarrow.”
      1. The final stanza of Eliot’s poem brings the reader to approximately the same place as Williams’ poem.
      2. The final sentence undermines all the learnedness of the rest of the poem.
   C. These two poems bring to light the enhancement of everyday life, but one is neomodernist while the other is paleomodernist.
      1. Williams asks: why should we put up with the complexity of Eliot’s poem?
      2. Neomodernism is the modernism of William Carlos Williams, Gertrude Stein, the Dada movement, and the surrealist movement.

V. There are few similarities between paleomodernism and neomodernism.
   A. These two schools make up diametrically opposed but mutually dependent philosophies of history.
      1. They represent two definitions of the word “modern.”
      2. We are taught that the modern period began with the Renaissance.
   B. The Renaissance was invented in France by intellectuals as a tool for social change, through a rebirth of classical antiquity.

VI. Fredrich Nietzsche called upon people to look back on an old view of humanity.
   A. Nietzsche did not see his views as radical or revolutionary, but rather as reactionary.
   B. Nietzsche said the early Greeks knew that the will to reproduce and the will to power are holy.
      1. Instinct is always good and the suppression of instinct is always bad.
      2. Ambivalence, Nietzsche said, is productive.
C. Nietzsche’s views were heresy to the rationalists.

VII. “The Mind of Europe” was Nietzsche’s metaphor that established a psychological culture of Europe.
   A. Paul Valery, T.S. Eliot, and Freud all accepted the metaphor.
   B. The paleomodernists believed that there should be a reevaluation of the present by associating it with the past.

VIII. The paleomodern claim is that modernism is the climax of everything that is modern.
   A. James Joyce’s rewrite of Homer’s poem is the classic example.
   B. Professional readers and writers have become less impressed with paleomodernism over time.

IX. Neomodernism and paleomodernism begin at roughly the same time, with paleomodernism dominating prior to the Second World War, and neomodernism coming to the fore after the war.
   A. The precursor modernist poetry is that of Walt Whitman.
      1. His “Song of Myself” makes light of classic gravity and rambles purposefully.
      2. Coherence is forced and immoral, Whitman claims.
   B. The “Lost Generation” of Gertrude Stein made up its own rules for art.

X. Anticlassism was admired by the neomodernists, as were iconoclasm and regionalism.
   A. Gertrude Stein and William Carlos Williams were the leading critics of classical modernists.
   B. Mistrust of the paleomodernists also was a symptom of the neomodernists’ mistrust of Europe.

**Recommended Reading:**
Eliot, T.S. “Mr. Eliot’s Sunday Morning Service”
Williams, Carlos Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow”.
Whitman, Walt, “Song of Myself”

**Supplemental Reading:**
Kermode, Frank. “The Modern”

**Questions to Consider:**
1. What are the principle defining characteristics of paleomodernism and neomodernism?
2. Why were the neomodernists attracted to iconoclasm?
Lecture Two

Transition

Scope: The neomodernist view is examined at the beginning of this lecture. We learn that T.S. Eliot’s work was influenced by his early study of philosophy and that he disagreed with the direction taken by philosophers. Therefore, Eliot chose the discourse of poetry over that of philosophy.

Outline

I. Eliot was, for Williams, the embodiment of a bad idea.
   A. Williams called Eliot’s work Hellenic, or classical.
   B. Eliot’s dislike of new ideas gave urgency to Williams’ sense that a new idea should be born

II. The terms have been made backward.
   A. Classic modernist poets and aesthetics are one logical endpoint of a radical, uncompromising relativity.
   B. Neomodernism may, in fact, derive from a variety of philosophical absolutism.
   C. Neomodernists believe the Platonic view that things exist independently.
   D. Eliot descends from every type of absolutism or objectivity.
   E. For Eliot, culture is human nature, and reality is its product.

III. Eliot developed as a philosopher first, then as a poet.
   A. Eliot’s unpublished notebooks form a strong critique of philosophy.
   B. Eliot has been termed a post-philosopher who believed that the chief problem of philosophy was its language
   C. He felt that philosophers had moved away from the study of “fictions at work” to the quest to find an ultimate reality, which Eliot regarded as a mistake.
   D. Eliot said that philosophy was a conversation, not a science.
   E. Eliot finished his critique of philosophy in 1916, and then he left the discipline and took up poetry.

IV. Paleomodernists assert that meaning is a matter of context.
   A. Eliot said the neomodernists were arbitrary.
   B. On the other hand, the neomodernists felt their preference for the objective statement is a return to pure theory

Recommended Reading:

Supplemental Reading:
Geertz, Clifford, “Blurred Genres” *American Scholar*.

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did Eliot and Williams differ on the importance of new ideas?
2. Why did Eliot say that philosophy should be a conversation and not a science?
Lecture Three
Against Theory

Scope: We review the career of W.B. Yeats and trace his shift from symbolist to realist. Conversely, Henry James’ career is examined because it moves from realist to symbolist. At the end of the lecture we hear T.S. Eliot’s assertion that romanticism and neoclassicism are personalities that were once joined.

Outline

I. The paleomodernists had a strong resistance to ideas.
   A. Eliot said ideas are implicit in the experience of everyday, but when ideas are extended they become separated from reality.
   B. Nietzsche argued that history is circular and that there would be a reunification of culture.
   C. Modernism became a fusion of opposed poetics.

II. W.B. Yeats moved from symbolist to realist.
   A. Yeats was born to a Romantic household.
   B. His early works were like those of Keats and Shelly, but later he switched from romantic poetry to symbolist poetry.
   C. Around 1912, Yeats began to move his poetry toward realism, yet even then, his essays continued to attack realism.
   D. Yeats moved to a fourth stage in the 1920s when he became a classic paleomodernist.

III. To the degree that the transcendent and reality are indistinguishable, they are irreconcilable.
    A. Yeats had reached the same conclusion that Eliot had.
    B. Others who shared this view (e.g., Henry James, Leo Tolstoy) were from areas outside Western power.

IV. Henry James moved from realist to idealist.
    A. Portrait of a Lady is a realist novel.
    B. James had concerns about consciousness as the origins of perception.

V. Neomodernists disliked and feared the absorption of the paleomodernists.
   A. The paleomodernists pursued wholeness.
   B. H.G. Wells and other neomodernists believed that art should be realistic.

VI. Eliot felt that the while of modern literary theory and practice is united in the pursuit of the reconstitution of classic, authentic tradition.
    A. Romanticism and neoclassicism were personalities that had once been joined.
    B. Eliot could be considered a post-Romantic, admiring the classics but preferring the clarity of the Romantics.

Recommended Reading:
Eliot, T.S., “In Memory of Henry James”
Wells, H.G., “Of Art, of Literature, of Mr. Henry James”
Friedrich Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy.

Supplemental Reading:
Pound, Ezra, “A Retrospect”

Questions to Consider:
1. Do the transitions of Yeats and James indicate that the lines separating the modernists were artificial?
2. Why did H.G. Wells and others believe that art should be realistic?
Lecture Four
Waste Lands

Scope: The effects of the Depression and the Second World War were profound, and the modernists reflected their concern in art. T.S. Eliot, D.H. Lawrence, and others viewed their role to be therapists to the world. Eliot’s “The Waste Land” and works by Lawrence called for a new religion to lead to the rebirth of society.

Outline

I. The modernists viewed the Depression and the World Wars as the effects of a worldwide nervous breakdown.
   A. Modernists viewed themselves as therapists to the world.
   B. Eliot decided in 1920 to write “The Waste Land” to respond to the world situation.

II. Eliot’s poem cannot be viewed as a reflection of the author’s malaise.
   A. Charles Dickens influences Eliot, and the reader of the poem is Ebenezer Scrooge.
   B. The poem echoes the modernist theory of the death of Europe.

III. Eliot was shunned by modernists after his Christian conversion.
   A. The visions of conservative and radical modernists were similar, yet admirers of D.H. Lawrence were forbidden to read Eliot.
   B. Eliot did not make matters better when he called modernists, “modern heretics.”

IV. Eliot and Lawrence shared a view of a paralyzed society with its citizens mired in frivolity.
   A. Eliot concludes that most people are only very little alive.
   B. Lawrence, in St. Mawr and the Man who Died, concludes that” hardly anybody in the world really lives, and hardly anyone really dies.
   C. Lawrence and Eliot are especially critical of the church and its failure to tend to the people.

V. Lawrence believed that myths were essential to human life.
   A. Famous for his paganism, Lawrence reassessed his hatred of Christianity.
   B. In 1928 he wrote The Man Who Died, a novel bout Christ’s resurrection.
   C. Some form of Christianity, Lawrence believed, was Europe’s last hope.

Recommended Reading:

Supplemental Reading:
Macquarrie, John, The Scope of De-Mythologizing.

Questions to Consider:
1. From Lawrence and Eliot’s points of view, what is necessary to reawaken Europe and bring its citizenry back to life?
Lecture Five
The Complete Consort

Scope: James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is presented as the ultimate paleomodernist novel. Joyce was trying to capture the full circle of history and the novel’s structure uses chaos and opposing themes to create one phenomenon. Even postmodernists admire the work because of the use of chaos.

Outline

I. The lecture begins with a summary of the previous lecture on paleomodernism.
   A. James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is the summary statement of high modernism.
   B. It is published the same year as “The Wasteland” and Ezra Pound’s early cantos.
   C. *Ulysses* blended all modernist themes.

II. Joyce’s selection of the title was bold and shocking.
   A. The title signifies Joyce’s descent to, in Hegel’s definition, “the bourgeoisie epic in prose.”
   B. The title indicates the belief that the twentieth century was the Ithaca of history, where history had come full circle.

III. The structure of the novel is set out with the first sentence.
   A. The first sentence begins, “stately, plump.”
   B. Joyce is using two opposite terms to create a phenomenon.

IV. A return to pagan classicism is rejected in the novel.
   A. Joyce offers instead a kind of classicism where Greece and Zion are united.
   B. Joyce is asserting that the Hebrew Bible is authentic but the New Testament is not.

V. Realism and symbolism in Joyce.
   A. *Ulysses* dissolves artificial distinctions as Eliot does in his philosophical work.
   B. The novel blends realism and symbolism, along with elements of fiction and poetry, as does Yeats’ work.
   C. Based upon Homer’s novel of return, *Ulysses* participates in a Nietzschean expectation that history must come full circle, making the novel a prime example of paleomodernism.

VI. And yet, post-modernists are among the novel’s admirers.
   A. The critics appreciate Joyce’s feel for chaos.
   B. Post-modernists simply ignore the structure of the novel.

VII. Chapter 15 ("Circe") is a dramatic chapter starring every character and every inanimate object in the book.
   A. “Yes and no” is the paradox running through the novel.
   B. Joyce draws on Aristotle’s word “entelechy,” where phenomena do not exist except in process.
   C. Chaos is rigidly structured in this chapter.
   D. The chapter is set in Nighttown, and only the laws of dreaming apply.
   E. Joyce is paraphrasing Freud’s “dream work.”

VIII. In Chapter 18, “Penelope”, Molly Bloom recreates the world.
   A. Her soliloquy rewrites the entire novel.
   B. Joyce’s novel is a theodicy redefined as a defense of the universal order.

Essential Reading:
Joyce, James, *Ulysses*.
Freud, Sigmund, *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*
Aristotle, “The Metaphysics”
Supplementary Reading:
Senn, Fritz, *Joyce’s Dislocations*

Questions to Consider:
1. Why are opposing themes important to the structure of Joyce’s book?
2. How is chaos “structured” in *Ulysses*?
Lecture Six
Modernist Theater

Scope: While modernist literature thrived, we learn from this lecture that modernist drama failed to win popular support. Some poets such as Yeats decided to do battle with the middle class through drama. By the 1940s, T.S. Eliot had decided that art should respond to the public and he was able to find commercial success.

Outline

I. Modernism exists in many genres but not always successfully.

II. The modernistic novel is a success.
   A. Drama is failed by modernism
   B. Henry Joyce ceded that “I may have been meant for the drama but certainly not for the theater.”

III. Realist prose drama belongs to the middle class.
   A. The middle class had imposed its taste on the arts.
   B. Yeats chose drama as the battleground against the middle class monopoly.

IV. Yeats’ views of society and social tension are expounded in his dramas.
   A. Yeats felt that drama was overly theatrical, and his response was the creation of a theater where as much as possible was made artificial.
   B. In the “Four Plays for Dancers,” the characters wear masks, and all expression and the masks convey character.
   C. In “The Words Upon the Window Pane,” Yeats brings realist prose drama into direct conflict with modernist spirit drama by placing a modernist play within a realist frame play.
   D. “The Land of Heart’s Desire” and “On Baile’s Strand” contrast family life with freedom.
   E. “Purgatory” is the penultimate play to fuse stylization and realism.

V. The basic ordering myth of “Purgatory,” as with totalitarian movements, is the myth of annual renewal.
   A. The play portrays the struggle between generations.
   B. “Purgatory looks forward to the Cold War and the coming work of Samuel Beckett.

VI. T.S. Eliot’s incursion in the 1940s and 1950s commercial theater was modernist and successful.
   A. Eliot, unlike others, said that art should respond to the public.
   B. Eliot sought to make his unlikely material a modernist and poetic version of ancient ritual tragedy.
   C. Eliot sought to unite modernity with its greatest enemy, modernism.

Essential Reading:
Yeats, W.B., Collected Plays

Supplementary Reading:
Notle, F.O., The Early Middle Class Drama.

Questions to Consider:
1. Was T.S. Eliot abandoning modernism with his plays of the 1940s and 1950s?
2. How did Yeats seek to transform theater?
Scope: The Depression and the Second World War altered the focus of the modernists. Most modernists were involved in politics but the movement was represented on both the right and left. The Spanish Civil War had a tremendous impact on the writers. The politics of Ezra Pound are examined at the end of the lecture.

Outline

I. The final two lectures will discuss the Second World War, literary politics, and the impact of the war on literary politics.
   A. In this lecture we will talk about the “party line,” with the neomodernists tending to be on the political left in support of the Allies.
   B. Those who were paleomodernist (or classic or high modernists) tended to be right-wing and support the Axis powers.
   C. The final lecture will reject this “party line.”

II. The “30s Generation” is the key neomodernist group in England and is comprised of political leftists including Cecil Day Lewis, George Orwell, Christopher Isherwood, W.H. Auden, and others.
   A. By leftist we do not mean a commitment to liberalism or socialism.
   B. Most writers who supported the left or right did so not in spite of the violence, but, rather, because of it.
   C. Even the moderates began as extremists in the 1930s. T.S. Eliot began as a monarchist and Franco supporter.

III. The 30s Generation grew up reading Eliot’s poems but became disillusioned by his religious conversion.
   A. They turned to everything that Eliot did not represent—notably, simplicity and appeal to the working class.
   B. Auden and the other leaders of the 30s Generation sought to create mass art untainted by commercialism, but the effort failed.
   C. The 1930s poets were often called the “schoolboy poets,” for they had come from the upper class and were trying in vain to hide their privileged backgrounds.
   D. The Depression and the war in Spain shaped the generation.
      1. Auden wrote his poem, “Spain,” about the conscious acceptance of guilt in the “necessary murder”, meaning murder for a just cause.
      2. This remark brought the wrath of George Orwell, who called it “written by a poet to whom murder is at most a word.”

IV. Ezra Pound represented the political far right.
   A. Pound moved from Paris to Italy in 1924. In 1941 he broadcast over Roman radio at the invitation of Mussolini.
   B. In 1943, Pound was indicted in absentia for treason.
   C. He was arrested by American troops in 1944, found not guilty of treason by reason of insanity, and sent to St. Elizabeth’s mental hospital in Washington, D.C.
   D. Pound was not released until 1958, whereupon he left for Spain.
   E. In the 1960s Pound fell silent, apparently as an act of penance.

V. To explain Pound, it helps to return to the beginning of the lecture series and the idea of the Renaissance.
   A. Jacob Burckhardt argues in The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy that the rebirth of ancient culture in the fifteenth century would not have occurred if there had not been a rebirth of political order.
   B. Burckhardt calls this order “the state as a work of art,” with cultural aspirations.
C. Interest in the Renaissance is nowhere more apparent than in the writing of Ezra Pound.
D. Pound’s cantos exist to provide a blueprint for a renaissance with art creating a healthy society.
E. Pound felt that he was the “Mind of Europe” and could influence Mussolini.
F. Pound’s tragedy was that he realized too late that human life might be impervious to perfection.

**Essential Reading:**
Pound, Ezra, “America: Chances and Remedies”, *The Cantos, Guide to Kulchur, Jefferson and/or Mussolini, Social Credit: An Impact*

**Supplementary Reading:**
Burckhardt, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*
Redman, Tim, *Ezra Pound and Italian Fascism*

**Questions to Consider:**
1. Did the Renaissance play a role in convincing Pound that he could bring about a new society through art?
2. Why were many modernists drawn to political violence?
Scope: This final lecture takes us from Evelyn Waugh, who presented us with a “Hollywood metaphysics” in which the fake world is ideal, to Samuel Beckett, who unites the themes of modernism and thus helps define modernism’s end. The modernists are no longer against the bourgeoisie and are trying to find ways to understand and influence the middle class.

Outline

I. Modernism after World War II.
   A. T.S. Eliot in 1939 said that he feared that the hostilities would continue to be fought in literature.
   B. Sartre feared that the hostilities would stop after the war.
   C. Both viewed the war as something complex that battles could not solve.

II. By 1948 Eliot had declared himself an adversary of Sartre.
   A. In “The Cocktail Party,” Eliot tells Sartre that other people constitute our salvation and not our hell, as Sartre said.
   B. Whatever the appearance of dispute, this lecture will assert that there has been a postwar consensus.
   C. Postwar consensus can be examined in the work of T.S. Eliot, Evelyn Waugh, and Samuel Beckett.

III. From the 1940s on, Eliot’s works are war prose.
   A. Eliot felt he was now in agreement with his old adversaries—Shakespeare, Milton, Kipling, and others—but he said that his work was a failed variation of theirs.
   B. His assumption was that all perspectives were somehow valid and indispensable.
   C. He saw that modernism was coming to an end and called for a new simplicity.
   D. This signaled a conversion to mediocrity and a shift to the neomodernists’ project of resisting high culture.

IV. The premise of postwar consensus is illustrated by Evelyn Waugh’s work.
   A. Waugh’s fiction reflects an obsession with the Second World War as a revelation of the meaning of culture.
   B. The Loved One, ostensibly about a pet mortuary, is the study of what Waugh called the Anglo-American cultural impasse.
   C. Waugh gives us Hollywood metaphysics in which a fake world is the artist’s homeland.
   D. At the end of The Loved One, Waugh takes on the art world, arguing that modern artists were the first to fall in love with death.
   E. Waugh then moved toward iconoclasm, toward William Carlos Williams and recoiling from complexity and contradiction.

V. In Waiting for Godot, Samuel Beckett heralded the end of modernism.
   A. The play lacks all development, has no character, and reflects a resistance to standard Western assumptions.
   B. Later, Beckett returns to high modernist aesthetics with his plays of the 1970s and 1980s.
   C. The shadow war of modernism and postmodernism was no longer relevant.
   D. The 1972 play “Not I” has a plot and a sense of closure.
   E. Beckett faced the atrocity of what this century has been and responded to it by evoking pity from his audience.
Essential Reading:
Beckett, Samuel, *Endgame, Waiting for Godot, Ends and Odds*
Eliot, T.S., *The Cocktail Party, Four Quartets*
Sartre, Jean-Paul, *No Exit and Other Plays*
Waugh, Evelyn, *The Loved One: An Anglo-American Tragedy*

Supplementary Reading:
Waugh, Evelyn, *The Letters of Evelyn Waugh*

Questions to Consider:
1. Why did T.S. Eliot call for a new simplicity?
2. How did the war alter the artists’ perspective on their work?
Glossary

**Dada Movement**: An artistic and literary movement that rose in Zurich and New York. Its headquarters were in Paris and the emphasis was on expression free from restraints. The photographer Man Ray was a member of the group. The movement lasted until the mid-1920s.

**Neomodernism**: The movement to recreate art and literature by throwing out all structure and meaning. The poet William Carlos Williams is an example of a neomodernist.

**Modernism**: A term used since the early 20th century. The meaning has developed and changed but is generally defined as the international movement of literature, drama, art and music that dominated the first four decades of this century.

**Paleomodernism**: The modernists who sought to adapt classical style are referred to by this category, notably T.S. Eliot and James Joyce.

**Realism**: Its characteristics include factual description and narration. Realism is viewed as literature in opposition to sentimentalism.

**Surrealism**: The movement was a radical effort in art and beyond intended to bring about social and political reform. Art and literature was influenced by Freudian theories of dreams. In literature, the unconscious process was liberated from conscious censorship, allowing encounters between two otherwise unrelated elements and the melding of dream and reality.

**Symbolism**: Associated primarily with a school of French poets writing in the late 19th century. The work of Baudelaire was its inspiration and Paul Verlain is associated with the movement, as is Edgar Allen Poe. Symbolism developed from Romanticism but it was more intellectual. The Symbolists were of influence to T.S. Eliot and W.B. Yeats.
Biographical Notes

Auden, Wystan Hugh (1907-1973). English poet and dramatist who became a central figure in the 1930s group of left-wing intellectuals. He emigrated to the United States in 1939 and became an American citizen in 1946. His verse is full of references to social and international crises.

Beckett, Samuel (1906-1989). Irish dramatist and novelist. As an adult he lived chiefly in France. His work is known for its sparseness and ability to simplify material. His close friend and associate was James Joyce. He is known for his plays, including Waiting for Godot and Not I.

Burckhardt, Jacob (1818-1897). Swiss art historian and professor of history, whose The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy influenced thought on this period in history.

Eliot, Thomas Stearns (1888-1965). Born in St. Louis, Missouri, the poet, critic, and dramatist lived in England. The Waste Land, his most famous poem, came out the same year (1922) he established the Criterion, his influential literary review. He became a naturalized British citizen in 1927 and became a member of the Church of England that same year. Eliot is used in this lecture series as a prime example of paleomodernism.

James, Henry (1843-1916). New York-born novelist. He settled in Europe in 1875 and became a British citizen in 1915. His early work centers on the clash between European and American outlooks. He later experimented in drama and then returned to the theme of the contrast between American and European dramas.

Joyce, James (1882-1941). Irish novelist. Early in life he turned from his Catholic upbringing. Joyce’s novel, Ulysses, is widely admired and original. Joyce also published three volumes of poetry and wrote one play, Exiles.

Lawrence, David Herbert (1885-1930). English novelist, poet, and critic. His work is known for the use of natural surroundings and animals in a way that was both realistic and symbolic. Novels include Lady Chatterly’s Lover and St. Mawr.

Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm (1844-1900). German philosopher who rejected the accepted moral values. He argued that people were free to create their own values. His views on the relation between thought and language were a major influence on philosophy.

Orwell, George (1903-1950). Adopted name of Eric Arthur Blair. English author whose books include Animal Farm, Nineteen Eighty-Four. He served in the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War.

Pound, Ezra (1885-1972). American poet. He moved first to London and then Paris and later Italy. His poetry shared many techniques with T.S. Eliot. He was indicted for treason at the end of World War Two and was found not guilty by reason of insanity and committed to St. Elizabeth’s Hospital from 1948 to 1958.

Sartre, Jean-Paul (1905-1980). French writer who covered philosophy, the novel, drama, and literary criticism. He was the major exponent of atheistic existentialism in France.

Stein, Gertrude (1874-1946). An American writer who lived in Paris and who influenced many writers, including Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald with her conversational tone and absence of punctuation. She was a member of the “lost generation” of expatriate U.S. writers and modern artists.

Stravinsky, Igor (1882-1971). Russian composer who was naturalized both French and American. Known for his unorthodox rhythms and harmonies.

Waugh, Evelyn (1903-1966). English novelist. His technique included the extensive use of dialogue and rapid changes of scene. His work became more serious after World War II. His novels include Brideshead Revisited and The Loved One.

Williams, William Carlos (1883-1963). American poet. His spare images and language reflect everyday speech and are used in this lecture series as a prime example of neomodernism.
Bibliography

Lecture One: Introduction: Modernity and Modernism

Williams, William Carlos: "A1 Pound Stein" (1935) and "Prologue to Kora in Hell" (1920), *Selected Essays*, New York: New Directions, 1954

Lecture Two: Transition

__________. "New Philosophers," *New Statesman* 11 (July 1918)
Lecture Three: Against Theory


___________. “Ulysses, Order and Myth” *The Dial* 75:5, November 1923.


Lecture Four: Waste Lands


Lecture Five: The Complete Consort


©1991 The Teaching Company Limited Partnership

Lecture Six: Modernist Theater

________. "Ulysses, Order, and Myth," The Dial 75:5, November 1923, pp. 480-83.
Nolte, F.O. The Early Middle Class Drama, Lancaster, PA: Lancaster Press, 1935.
________. Pages from a Diary Written in Nineteen-Hundred and Thirty, Dublin: Cuala Press, 1944.
________. Plays and Controversies, London: Macmillan, 1923
________. "The Symbolism of Poetry," The Dome, April 1900.

Lecture Seven: Apocalypse

________. Jefferson and/or Mussolini London: Liverright, 1970.
________. “Murder by Capital” The Criterion 12:49 July 1933.
Lecture Eight: Postwar, Postmodern, Postculture

___________. "Last Words," *The Criterion* 18, January 1939.
Recommended Secondary Readings


