What is “modernity”? What is “modernism”? In this course we will discuss these elusive terms and how they apply to world literature of the first half of the twentieth century. In the first half of the course, we will focus on literary techniques and thematic concerns of well-known individual works, and in the second half we will survey the various “-isms” of the avant-garde and speculate on their interrelations. We will discuss the works in relation to one another and to the broad concepts of “modernity” and “modernism.” In this process, students will acquire a solid knowledge of modern classics and improve their close-reading and interpretative skills. We will examine these literary texts within their cultural and historical contexts, relating them to the other arts (e.g., the fine arts, ballet, and film) and to influential philosophical and scientific trends (e.g., Friedrich Nietzsche, Henri Bergson, Sigmund Freud, and Albert Einstein). We will discuss diverse genres, including the novel, the novella, the short story, poetry, and drama, by both Western and non-Western writers, endeavoring both to define their differences and identify their common concerns. All readings are in translation.

Prerequisite: Six hours of English beyond 1123 or the consent of the chair.

Aug. 22 Introduction
24 Last day to add/drop classes without the dean’s permission

Imperialism, Power, and the Unconscious

24, 26, 29 Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (Poland/England, 1899)
Aug. 31, Sept. 2 André Gide, The Immoralist (France, 1902)

Sept. 5 no class
7 The Immoralist, continued
9 Rabindranath Tagore, “The Wife’s Letter” (India, 1914)

Narrating the Modern: Language and Narrative

12 Hugo von Hofmannsthal, “The Lord Chandos Letter” (Austria, 1902)

Close Reading Assignment Due
14 Arthur Schnitzler, Lieutenant Gustl (Austria, 1901)
16 Leonid Andreyev, The Red Laugh (Russia, 1905)
19 Thomas Mann, Death in Venice (Germany, 1912)
21 Franz Kafka, Metamorphosis (Bohemia/Austria, 1915)
23 Robert Walser, The Walk (Switzerland, 1917)
26 Ryunosuke Akutagawa, “Rashomon” and “In a Bamboo Grove” (1915, 1921)
28 Junichiro Tanizaki, “The Thief” and “Aguri” (Japan, 1921, 1922)
30 Yasunari Kawabata, selections (Japan, 1923-50)
Alienation in the Modern World

Oct.
3 James Joyce, “The Dead” (Ireland, 1914)
5 Rainer Maria Rilke, poems (Bohemia/Austria, 1902-23)
7 Lu Xun, “Diary of a Madman” (China, 1918)
12 Virginia Woolf, “Lappin and Lappinova” and “The Legacy” (England, 1939, 1940)
14, 17 Albert Camus, The Stranger (Algeria/France, 1942)
17 Last day for “W”

The Avant-Garde

19 Symbolism
Stefan George, Alexander Blok, and Rubén Darío, poetry (Germany, Russia, and Nicaragua/Spain, 1901-7)
Manifesto, 24-25, 56-70

Take-Home Midterm Exam Due

21 Decadence
Valery Briusov, “The Coming Huns” and “The Last Martyrs” (Russia, 1905, 1907)

24 Acmeism
Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelshtam, poetry (Russia, 1909-12)
Manifesto, 220-23

26 Imagism
Richard Aldington, H.D., John Gould Fletcher, F.S. Flint, Amy Lowell, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, and e.e. cummings, poetry (U.S. and England, 1913-23)
Manifesto, 350, 352-53, 356-59

28 Primitivism and Fauvism
Hanns Heinz Ewers, “Mamaloi” (Germany, 1907) and Velimir Khlebnikov, poetry (Russia, 1908-10)
Manifesto, 98-99

31 Expressionism
Georg Heym and Georg Trakl, poetry and short prose (Austria, 1906-14); Anton Schnack, poetry (Germany, 1920)
Manifesto, 248-50, 270, 273-77

Nov.
2 Cubism
Guillaume Apollinaire, “Zone” (France, 1912)
Manifesto, 114, 120-32

4 Futurism
Italian Futurism
F. T. Marinetti, Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature and poetry (1912-39); Umberto Boccioni, Carlo Carrà, Bruno Corra, and Volt, poetry (1913-16)
Manifesto, 168-71, 178-90, 201-11

7 Russian Futurism
Aleksei Kruchenykh, Declaration of the Word as Such (1913); Velimir Khlebnikov and Vladimir Mayakovsky, poetry (1909-15)
Manifesto, 230, 235-37
9 Dadaism
Hugo Ball, *Dada Manifesto* and “Caravan” (Switzerland, 1916); Kurt Schwitters, “Sonate” (Germany, 1923); Theo van Doesburg [I. K. Bonset], “A Letterklangbeeldern Poem” (Holland, 1920); Pierre Albert-Birot, “Poème à crier et à danser” (France, 1917) *Manifesto*, 288-91, 297-304, 310-19, 335

11, 14 Surrealism
André Breton and Robert Desnos, poetry (France, 1926-34); Aimé Césaire, “The Automatic Crystal” (Martinique/France, 1946); Vitezslav Nezval, poetry (Czechoslovakia, 1927-36) *Manifesto*, 448-51, 484-92

16, 18 Sadeq Hedayat, *The Blind Owl* (Iran, 1937)

21 The Absurd
Edogawa Rampo, “The Human Chair” and “The Caterpillar” (Japan, 1925, 1929)

23, 25 no class

28 Daniil Kharms, selections (Russia, 1930s)


Dec. 2 Ultraism and Magic Realism
Jorge Luis Borges, “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote” and “The Secret Miracle” (Argentina, 1939, 1943) *Manifesto*, 380-82

5 Final Exam 8-10 a.m.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and Punctuality (15%): It is essential that you come to class and participate in discussion to help you grapple with and reach an understanding of the texts we will be reading. Absences will be excused on the basis of a note from a doctor, dean, or coach, or for religious holidays, if you inform me in advance. Exceptions may be made under certain circumstances if you explain your situation to me. It is your responsibility to explain your absence to me; if you do not do so, it will not be excused. Repeated lateness will be counted as an absence. If you are absent, you are still responsible for all material covered in class and posted on Blackboard.

2. Participation (10%): You will get the most out of class and improve the verbal formulation of your thoughts if you participate in the discussions. Please bring your book to class, as we will be looking closely at particular passages. I encourage you to speak with all of your classmates and respond to one another’s ideas during discussion, rather than addressing your thoughts only to me.

3. Journal Responses (15%): For each class meeting, I will post one question on the reading on Blackboard under Journals. You should briefly respond to that question and pose one discussion question of your own by 10 p.m. on the evening before the class. Your question should not be a yes/no or a factual question, but rather one that you believe will stimulate discussion. If you would like, you may post additional questions, including factual questions, for me to respond to individually. Only I will see your Journal responses and questions. I will respond to all Journal assignments and send you your HW grade (\(\pm\), \(\sqrt{\pm}\), \(\sqrt[4]{\pm}\)) within one week. No late journal responses will be accepted after the beginning of the relevant class, unless you have an excused absence. If you will not have regular Internet access, please see me.

4. Wikispace Postings (10%): We will have a course wikispace, where we will be posting images and other media related to our readings. You must post something that has not already
been posted on the wikispace; this means that you will have to look at everyone else’s posts before adding your own. You will receive a $\sqrt{+}$ if you provide all of the requested information (in the case of pictures, artist and date) and do the assignment on time. If some of the information is lacking and/or the assignment is late, you will receive a $\sqrt{0}$ or $\sqrt{-}$. You will get no credit for posting a duplicate. I can tell who posted first! Choose the most interesting media you can find, because at the end of the semester we will vote for the best posts, and the winners will receive extra credit, which may raise their final grade. The main purposes of this assignment are to help you understand the literary works in their cultural context, to bring out the relations among the various arts, and to provide examples of the influence of the works we cover.

5. **Opening Discussion (5%)**: At the beginning of the semester you will sign up to open discussion on one day. You will be expected to briefly discuss something that interests you in the assignment and raise a topic to initiate class discussion on that day. You should briefly explain the topic, say why you think it is significant, offer a few of your own thoughts on it, and then ask the class what they think (2-3 minutes).

6. **Close Reading (2-3 pages, not counting the cited text; 10%)**: We will be doing a lot of close reading in class, and this paper will help you to develop this skill on your own, analyzing a passage I will give to you. Late papers will be marked down one third of a letter grade per day (i.e., A > A-), unless you have a good reason for lateness and have spoken to me about it beforehand.

7. **Take-Home Midterm (3-4 pp., 15%)**: The midterm will include a brief passage for close reading and an essay topic. You will have one week to complete the assignment.

8. **Final Exam (20%)**: The final will cover only the second half of the course. Graduate students may write a paper (8-10 pp.) instead of taking the final exam.

**Other Important Information:**

**Film Screenings**: I will screen films related to our readings in the course of the semester. You will receive extra credit for attending the screenings. If you are unable to attend one or more screenings and wish to watch the films on your own and hand in a written assignment, please see me. I consider these film screenings important for several reasons: some films are directly related to or inspired by a certain literary work or movement, and it is important to note the continuing influence of the work or movement; some filmmakers have collaborated with the authors we are covering; some films are original avant-garde works in their own right; and some films address significant issues raised by the literary works. In addition, all of the films should stimulate new ways of considering the literary texts we cover. Unless otherwise indicated, all films will be shown on Fridays at 1:30 in the Shawnee Theater, 138 Clark Student Center. See below for the screening schedule.

**PowerPoint Presentations and Film Clips**: All presentations and clips shown in class will subsequently be posted on Blackboard so that you may review them. Additional recommended and required materials will occasionally also be posted on Blackboard.

**Secondary Sources**: Please see me if you would like me to recommend secondary sources on any topic that may interest you.

**Office Hours**: My office hours are given above, and I am always happy to help you with any questions you may have, whether they are about the texts we are reading, assignments, exams,
absences, or anything else—or you may just come by to talk. If you can’t make my office hours, we can make an appointment.

**Academic Accommodations:** If you require special accommodations, please contact Disability Support Service, 168 Clark Student Center, 397-4140, at the beginning of the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made. Arrangements cannot be applied retroactively.

**Course Policies:**

**Food:** You may bring beverages to class, but please do not eat while class is in session.

**Computers:** You may bring your computer to class to take notes if you wish, but you may access the Internet only with my consent, e.g. to look up something related to our discussion. You may not check email during class.

**Cell Phones:** You may not use your cell phone in class or at the final exam. If you use your cell phone during the final exam, you will get an “F” on the test.

**Attention:** I know this class is very early, but please be alert and do not lay your head down on your desk during class.

**Class Dismissal:** Please do not start to pack up your things or leave until I have dismissed the class. If you believe I have gone over the allotted time, please raise your hand and let me know.

**Email Communication:** The only way I can communicate with you outside of class is through email. You are responsible for checking your MWSU or “preferred” email daily for any assignments, clarifications, reminders, or other communications from me.

**Books:** You must bring your book to class, as we will be looking closely at selected passages. It is highly recommended that you purchase the editions listed on this syllabus. Ebook versions of these editions are acceptable if you feel you can read the book just as effectively on an electronic device as you would in print, and you bring the text to class.

**Safe Zone Statement:** This classroom is a “safe zone” in which all students will be treated and will treat one another equally, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, political beliefs, age, or ability. Diversity of thought is encouraged.

*Repeated or serious violations of course policies may be grounds for lowering your grade.*

**Film Screenings:**

**Sept.**  
09 Santyajit Ray, *The World of Apu* (India, 1959)  
30 Akira Kurosawa, *Rashomon* (Japan, 1950)

**Oct.**  
28 Les Ballets Russes, *Afternoon of a Faun* and *The Rite of Spring* (Russia/France, 1912, 1913)  
31 (Mon.) Robert Wiene, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Germany, 1919)

**Nov.**  
04 Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler, *Manhatta* (U.S., 1921) and Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera* (Russia, 1929)


(Mon.) Koji Wakamatsu, Caterpillar (2010, if available)

(Wed.) Michael Lindsay-Hogg, Waiting for Godot (2001)

Required Texts (available at the College Bookstore):


You will also be required to purchase a coursepack directly from me.

From the Student Handbook:

Academic Dishonesty: Cheating, collusion, and plagiarism (the act of using source material of other persons, either published or unpublished, without following the accepted techniques of crediting, or the submission for credit of work not the individual’s to whom credit is given). Additional guidelines on procedures in these matters may be found in the Dean of Students office.

- The term “cheating” includes, but is not limited to: (1) use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations; (2) dependence upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; or (3) the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff.

- The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

- The term “collusion” means collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit of that collaboration is not authorized by the faculty member in charge.”

- You are responsible for understanding how to use sources appropriately. If you have questions about using and documenting sources, please consult the MLA handbook or ask me.
- You may not turn in assignments submitted for credit in other courses.
- Submission of a plagiarized paper or cheating on a test will result in an “F” in the course and commencement of disciplinary proceedings.