Meeting time and location: 6:30-9:20 pm, MHRA 3207

Description:
This course will cover the entirety of the long careers of the two most influential poets of the early twentieth-century. Students will read widely in their poetry, prose, and plays, focusing on questions related to influence, style, aesthetics, politics, and criticism. We will also focus on intersections of literature and the other arts, including the Russian ballet, the visual arts, music, and popular entertainment. Requirements will include one mid-term project, an oral presentation, and a final (15-20pp.) seminar paper.

I. Required Texts: The following texts are available at the UNCG bookstore.

W. B. Yeats, Collected Poems, ed. Finneran, 978-0684807317 (Scribner)
Terence Brown, The Life of W. B. Yeats, 9780631228516 (Wiley)
Ezra Pound, Early Writings, 978-0142180136 (Penguin)

There are a number of texts which will be available only as PDF files on the class’s blackboard site; it is strongly encouraged that students print these documents, make notes on them, and bring them to class in hard copy.

II. General and Particular Requirements:

1 oral presentation 10%
Participation, weekly response forum 10%
1 7-10 pp. mid-term essay 30%
1 15-20 pp. final essay 50%

Oral presentation (10%): The second half of each class period will usually begin with a 5-10 minute student presentation on a very specific topic decided upon by the instructor and the presenter. Instructions will be discussed and evaluation criteria distributed. Immediately following the presentation, I will typically ask at least one student to respond substantively (for no more than 2-3 minutes) by (1) paraphrasing its claim or a part thereof, (2) either extending the claim or challenging it with specific reference to the text.

Participation, weekly response forum (10%): Students are expected to participate verbally in a way that demonstrates their preparation for the class. In addition, each week students shall post a
response on Bb to the readings for the upcoming seminar by no later than midnight on the night before the seminar meets. Each response shall comprise two 150-200 comments or questions. The first comment or question must draw from the pertinent biographical reading and connect it, in some way, with one of the focus poems assigned for the day; please use parenthetical citations with page numbers for ease of reference. The second must draw from one of the author’s non-fiction essays and connect it with one of the focus poems assigned for that day. I will use these questions and comments to help guide our class discussion on the following day.

**Mid-term essay (30%)**: The 7-10 pp. midterm essay is an exercise in contextual research; it will focus and interpret a single poem by an author on our syllabus. With the author’s bibliography as your guide, you must choose a poem that first appeared in a periodical and indicate the original publication data at the beginning of the essay, directly beneath the title. To enrich and illuminate your discussion of the poem—which must include some account of its formal characteristics but is not limited to those—you must draw upon the following sources: (1) at least two essays or prose items written by the author within three years of the poem’s publication or composition date; (2) at least two letters written by the author within three years of the poem’s publication or composition date; (3) at least two other poems published by the author within three years of the poem’s publication or composition date; (4) at least one review of the author’s work published within 10 years of the poem’s publication or composition date; (5) at least one play (by any playwright, present or past) that the author may have plausibly seen performed within one year of the poem’s publication or composition date; (6) relevant material (verse or prose) from at least two other periodicals published in the same year by other authors (i.e., *Times Literary Supplement, The Sunday Times, The Little Review, Poetry*). Papers should conform strictly to either Chicago or MLA style format and should include bibliography or works cited.

**Final essay (50%)**: The 15-20 pp. final essay shall focus on a topic of your choosing and follow the standard practices and guidelines for graduate seminar research papers, which we will discuss further in class.

### III. Schedule of Readings

Please read and review materials to prepare for discussion on the day on which they are listed. Focus poems are included in parenthesis. Items marked with an asterisk(*) are available in PDF format via Blackboard.

1. **Aug 20**
   - Bradbury and McFarlane, “The Name and Nature of Modernism” (1976)*

2. **Aug 27**

3. **Sept 3**
T. E. Hulme, Romanticism and Classicism (lecture, 1911; published, 1924)*


4. Sept 10


5. Sept 17


6. Sept 24

Secondary: Brown, The Life of W. B. Yeats, pp. 126-207;

7. Oct 1
Pound, Early Writings (all); focus, poems: “Histrion,” “The Return,” “Exile’s Letter,” “In a Station of the Metro”; focus, essays: “Imagisme,” “A Retrospect,” “Vorticism,” “The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry”


8. Oct 8
Eliot, The Waste Land (1922); “The Hollow Men” (1925); essays: “The Metaphysical Poets” (1921),* “Ulysses, Order, and Myth” (1923).*


9. Oct 15

**DUE: Midterm essay**

10. Oct 22
Eliot, *Ash-Wednesday* (1930) “Marina” (1930); essays: *Dante* (1929)*, “Baudelaire” (1930).*


11. Oct 29


12. Nov 5


13. Nov 12

Secondary: Brown, *The Life of W. B. Yeats*, pp. 345-382; Article TBA

14. Nov 19
Eliot, *Four Quartets* (originally 1936-1942; 1943) Essays: “Yeats” (1940),* “The Three Voices of Poetry” (1953)*


Nov 26
No class, Thanksgiving holiday

Dec 2
Reading day
**Due: Final Essay**
IV. Expectations and Guidelines for graduate seminar work

1. Reading and note-taking, primary sources

Read all primary source material slowly, repeatedly, and with sustained and singular attention. If dealing with collections of poetry, I recommend reading individual volumes at a time, before returning to poems of particular interest. If collection is not separated by original volumes (as in some “selected” editions), take careful note of publication dates of poems and keep chronology in mind. Take note of continuities and discontinuities between poems and between volumes, including recurrent phrases, images, symbols, literary techniques and conventions. Make note of significant changes in style and theme between volumes and between sets of poems. When rereading individual poems, jot down paraphrases, salient phrases and tropes, and brief interpretative readings of the poem’s movements. Define and look up etymology for all unfamiliar or seldom used words and phrases.

2. Reading and note-taking, secondary sources

Read all secondary source material as thoroughly as necessary to reformulate the author’s central claim in your own language and to recall the most salient evidence that the author uses to support that claim. Take active, synthetic notes as opposed to passive, reproductive notes, which simply repeat phrases and ideas directly from the source. Active note-taking often means formulating categories to help you take standard, uniform notes on each essay—like author, date, central claim, primary evidence, theoretical underpinnings, presuppositions, possible shortcomings—so that they can be quickly compared and consulted during class discussion. Force yourself to keep these notes relatively brief and to keep your language simple and concise in recapitulating them. Do at least basic research on any significant names or concepts with which you are unfamiliar; “Literature Resource Center” on-line databases through UNCG’s library and reference books like the Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics and M. H. Abrams’s Glossary of Literary Terms are useful for this purpose.

3. Preparing for class discussion

Especially if you have read the material over the course of the preceding week, preparing adequately for class discussion means first reviewing all notes you’ve taken on the reading. Actively assemble and think about the networks of ideas and verbal associations as they form across the various texts. Be prepared to offer detailed readings of individual poems upon which we’ll focus and be ready to support your conclusions with evidence from other poems and prose under consideration that session. As time permits, I highly recommend pursuing additional secondary research into themes and persons of interest, especially given the ease with which such research can be performed via on-line scholarly resources. In reviewing, consider what each secondary source might contribute toward our grasp of each focus poem, even if that source does not address it directly.