



Cultural Modernisms and Postmodernisms

Summer Session I (June 1-July 2, 2026)
HUMN 2043/4043 X30

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This interdisciplinary course will introduce students to the cultures of Europe, the U.S., Mexico, and elsewhere from the mid-nineteenth century to the present. The emphasis will be on Western cultures, especially the major movements in the arts and literature that are broadly designated as Modernist and Postmodernist. We will look at all aspects of culture, including history, art, literature, philosophy, and music. Students will thus acquire an understanding of various cultures and how they have developed during this time period; encounter different ways of viewing the world; learn to analyze, interpret, and think critically about diverse works of art, literature, and music; experiment with interdisciplinary approaches to the material; and learn to identify, describe, and discuss major themes, works, movements, and historical events. They will also develop critical thinking skills in short responses, evaluating individual works and synthesizing the knowledge they have gained. In exploring these different cultures, students will hopefully wish to continue to learn about them after the end of the semester, and even visit some of the countries we will discuss.

THECB Core Course Objectives and Assessments for Language, Philosophy, and Culture

- Critical Thinking Skills
 - All assignments will assess critical thinking skills. The Humanities Essay Rubric will be applied to the final essay exam for assessment purposes.
- Communication Skills
 - To assess written communication skills, the Humanities Essay Rubric will be applied to the final essay exam to evaluate readability, clarity, and the ability to support an argument with specific and accurate examples and details as evidence.
- Personal and Social Responsibility
 - To assess personal and social responsibility in critical thinking, the Humanities Essay Rubric will be applied to the final essay exam to evaluate the ability to support an argument with specific and

accurate examples and details as evidence and to evaluate different ways of viewing the world.

Course Goals

- Study primary texts in literature, philosophy, and other disciplines, as well as the historical and cultural contexts for the primary texts
- Think critically about primary works in context and in comparison with one another
- Learn interdisciplinary approaches to the study of cultures
- Learn how to discuss other cultural artefacts, including art, architecture, and music
- Gain a sense of historical chronology and the interconnectedness of various cultural movements, including the ways in which they respond to one another, as relevant
- Gain a detailed knowledge of the well-known works covered in class
- Practice expressing and supporting ideas both orally and in writing
- Engage in research on particular artworks to share with the class through blog posts

Textbook: Sayre, Henry M. *The Humanities: Culture, Continuity & Change*, Vol. II, 4th ed. on Pearson's Revel Digital Learning Platform, available through D2L.

Please note: There are two levels in this course, the lower level (2043) and the upper level (4043). If you are taking the course to fulfill core requirements, you should be in the lower level. Please check which level you are enrolled for and email me IMMEDIATELY if you need to change your level. Note also that the Gradebook displays grades weighted for the lower level. Upper-level grades will be calculated manually at the end of the semester. This is why upper-level students will not see presentation and final paper grades in Gradebook.

Course Requirements

1. Pearson Course Materials. Students in both 2043 and 4043 will work through the reading and online assignments provided by Pearson.

2. Research Paper (Draft 5%, Final 10%). Upper-level students ONLY will write a 3-4 page research paper on a topic of their choice. The paper should use at least three reliable sources and be in MLA or APA format, including in-text citations. Neither the cover sheet (if you have one) nor the Works Cited list counts toward the page minimum. Please submit a brief paper proposal to me by email by **June 16** and a draft through the D2L Dropbox by **June 22**, and I will provide feedback for revision. The paper is due by **June 30**. You should watch the video on how to write a research paper under Content for guidance.

Course Policies

Individual Assistance: I will be more than happy to meet with you by Zoom or in person to discuss anything at all. Please email me to set up an appointment.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is the use of someone else's thoughts, words, ideas, or lines of argument in your own work without appropriate documentation (a parenthetical

citation at the end and a listing on the Works Cited page), whether you use that material in a quote, paraphrase, or summary.

Since writing, analytical, and critical thinking skills are part of the learning outcomes of this course, AI-generated submissions are not permitted and will be treated as academic dishonesty, the penalty for which is a zero on the assignment. However, you are permitted to use AI in an ethical manner, specifically:

- You may use Grammarly and/or other spelling and grammar checkers, including those on Google Docs, but you may not use them to “rewrite” your paper or change the “tone” (that is, to “make it sound more academic,” etc.);
- You may use AI to generate ideas. For example, you may put your topic into ChatGPT and ask for some ideas, and you may ask it follow-up questions.
- You must always cite any AI usage in MLA style.

Be aware, however, of the following drawbacks of AI:

- AI is often inaccurate. Check everything you find through AI with other sources;
- AI tends to “hallucinate” sources—that is, it is known to come up with sources that do not actually exist;
- AI tends to confirm what you already believe (“confirmation bias”);
- Grammarly may give you suggestions that actually change the meaning of what you wrote, so always check it carefully;
- Similarly, do not simply accept everything Grammarly suggests. You will not learn anything that way. Go over each suggested change and make sure you understand it and agree with it before you accept it;
- AI is NOT private. Do not put any personal information into AI chats.

Email Communication: I will communicate with you through D2L email. You should set up D2L so that D2L emails are delivered to your preferred email account. You are responsible for checking your email or D2L daily for any reminders, clarifications

Course Overview

Chapter 30: Global Confrontation and Modern Life

The Revolutions of 1848

Primary Texts: Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*

Paris in the 1850s and 1860s

Empire and the Colonial Aspirations of the West: The Opening of Japan

Chapter 31: The Promise of Renewal

French Impressionism

Russian Realism

Primary Text: Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*

Chapter 32: The Course of Empire

Walt Whitman's America

The American Abroad: Painters Abroad

Primary Texts: Whitman, "Song of Myself"; Dickinson, poems; Chopin, *The Awakening*

Chapter 33: The Fin de Siècle

The Fin de Siècle: From Naturalism to Symbolism

Primary Texts: Ibsen, *A Doll's House*; Mallarmé, "The Afternoon of a Faun"

Post-Impressionist Painting

Toward the Modern

Primary Text: Nietzsche, "The Madman"; *Beyond Good and Evil*

Africa and Empire

Primary Text: Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Chapter 34: The Era of Invention: Paris and the Modern World

Pablo Picasso's Paris

Primary Text: Marinetti, "Founding and Manifesto of Futurism"

The Expressionist Movement

The Origins of Cinema

Chapter 35: The Great War and Its Impact

Trench Warfare and the Literary Imagination: W. B. Yeats; T. S. Eliot

Primary Texts: Yeats, "The Second Coming"; Eliot, *The Waste Land*

Escape from Despair: Dada in the Capitals

Russia: Art and Revolution

Freud, Jung, and the Art of the Unconscious

Primary Text: Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

Experimentation and the Literary Life: The Stream-of-Consciousness Novel

Primary Texts: Joyce, *Ulysses*; Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *A Room of One's Own*

Chapter 36: New York, Skyscraper Culture, and the Jazz Age

The Harlem Renaissance

Making It New: The New American Poetry and the Machine Aesthetic (Cummings and Williams); *The New American Painting*

Primary Texts: Cullen, “Heritage”; Hughes, poems; Williams, “The Red Wheelbarrow” and “The Great Figure”; Cummings, “she being Brand”

Chapter 37: The Age of Anxiety

The Glitter and Angst of Berlin; The Rise of Fascism

Primary Texts: Brecht, “Theater for Pleasure and Theater for Imagination”; Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*

Revolution in Mexico

The Great Depression in America: Photography; World War II

Primary Text: Wiesel, *Night*

Chapter 38: After the War

Europe After the War: The Existential Quest

Primary Texts: Sartre, *No Exit*; Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*

America After the War: Triumph and Doubt

The Beat Generation: Ginsberg and “Howl”; *Pop Art*

Primary Text: Ginsberg, “Howl”

Minimalism in Art

Primary Text: Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

Chapter 39: Multiplicity and Diversity

Black Identity; The Vietnam War: Rebellion and the Arts; The Birth of the Feminist Era

Primary Texts: King, “Letter from Birmingham Jail”; Baraka, “Ka’Ba”; Scott-Heron, “The Revolution Will Not be Televised”; Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*; Sexton, “Her Kind”; Rich, “Diving Into the Wreck”; Plath, “Lady Lazarus”