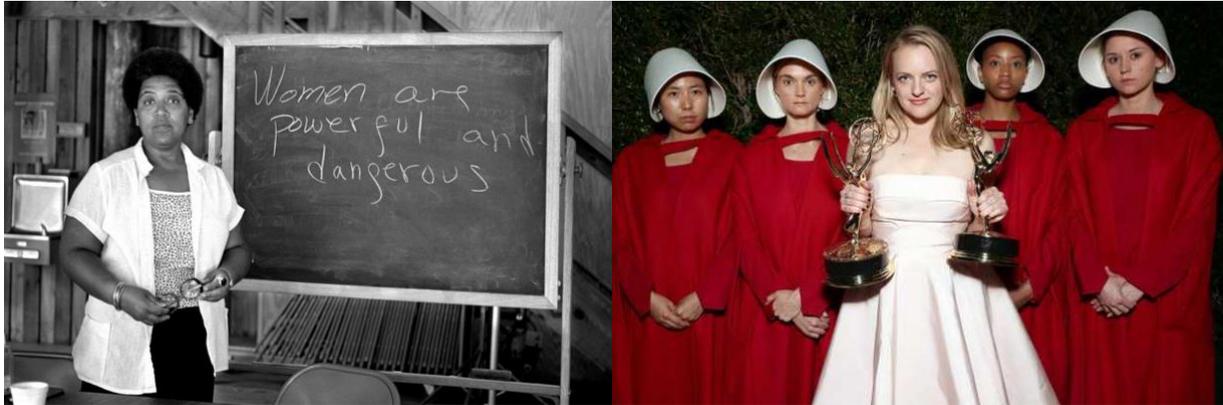


# Modern Women Writers: Love, Agony, Friendship

## English 1XX

Elizabeth Phillips [she/her/hers]  
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Fall 2019  
Tu/Th 0:00-0:00  
Course location  
TF: information



### COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to be, or feel as, a woman? This course will survey thirteen major female authors from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries who ask these questions in their novels, plays, and essays. In our lectures, we will move through literary explorations of womanhood in Modernism, to Expressionism, the Feminist movements, and on to contemporary questions of trauma, reproductive rights, and the future of feeling like and as a woman.

The course is organized around three central modes of feeling. Our questions will spring from literary description, but be applied to wider concerns of culture and society. During our first unit, "Love," we will focus on what it means to be a woman in love, asking about the role of love in activism; different forms of sexuality and gender identity, sexual awakening, coming out, and loving men and loving women; censorship, privacy, and vulgarity; racial bias and loving women of another race. The second unit, "Agony," will interrogate female oppression, pain, sexual exploitation and abuse, and apocalyptic future projections of the female experience of suffering. In our third unit, "Friendship," we will analyze female camaraderie, platonic love, unity and support, "tend and befriend" instincts, markets and economics of "women's" entertainment, comedy, humor, and why women are funny.

The objectives of this course are to train you in the reading and analysis of literary texts, and to begin to apply the critical thinking earned by reading literature to other forms of intellectual and artistic practices. Accordingly, you will write two English papers and devise one substantial final project, due or presented before or during reading period, as detailed below.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

The below texts are available at the COOP, but may also be purchased inexpensively online. When selecting your copy, please take note of the publisher and edition so that we will all be (literally) on the same page. TV shows and soundtracks and recordings of plays will be on reserve at Lamont throughout the semester. Additional readings will be available as searchable PDFs on Canvas.

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985) (ISBN 978-0385490818)  
Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (1936) (ISBN 978-0811216715)  
Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006) (ISBN 978-0544709041)  
Alice Birch, *Revolt, She Said, Revolt Again* (2016) (ISBN 978-1783197637)  
Alice Childress, *Wedding Band: A Love-Hate Story in Black and White* (1966) (ISBN 978-0573617690)  
Elena Ferrante, *My Brilliant Friend* (2012) (ISBN 978-1609450786)  
Audre Lorde, *Zami, A New Spelling of My Name* (1982) (ISBN 978-0895941220)  
Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970) (ISBN 978-0307278449)  
Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) (ISBN 978-1616202415)  
Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie, "We Should All Be Feminists" (2015) (ISBN 978-1101911761)  
Sally Rooney, *Conversations with Friends* (2018) (ISBN 978-0451499066)  
Virginia Woolf, "A Room of One's Own" (1929) (ISBN 978-0156030410)  
Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (1928) (ISBN 978-0156031516)

#### ASSIGNMENTS

In this course, you will write two substantial papers, one involving analysis of a single work, and the other employing a small set of secondary sources to analyze one or two course texts. For the final assignment, you will create an artistic work, experience, experiment, manifesto, etc. of your own design, relying on your own point of view and skills in other disciplines to engage the questions we ask in the course from a new perspective. The logic, scope, and design of your project will be approved by the instructor in a prospectus stage, and you will spend the last third of the course working on it. You may design your own final project or work in pairs.

Examples of a final project might include:

- Design your own Kilroys List.
- Write a series of epistles between Orlando and Sasha.
- Score additional numbers for the musical version of *Fun Home*, and write the lyrics. What was left out, and why?
- Stage a formal debate on a women's rights issue, complete with opening and closing statements, and invite an audience of your peers.
- Record and stream three episodes of a podcast in the style of *2 Dope Queens*.
- Update the Bechdel Test, analyze a broad set of texts according to it, and write an article about it.
- Stage a protest, performance act, or happening based on the words and philosophy of Audre Lorde.
- Construct a psychological battery to survey a type of misandrist thought.
- Write a long essay about *The Handmaid's Tale* and the Alabama abortion bans and submit it for publication in *The Crimson* or a national publication.
- Write a folio of poems from the point of view of a woman living in the world of *Far Away* and submit it for publication in a Harvard or national journal.

- Host a Paris Salon in style of Stein and Barnes the common room of your dorm and record it or take detailed minutes.
- Choreograph a *pas de deux* based on the friendship of Lila and Lenu or Bobbi and Frances and perform it in Farkas.

Paper 1 (5-6pp.)	20%
Paper 2 (8-10pp.)	25%
Project Prospectus (2-4pp. speculative plan)	10%
Final Project	25%
Participation (including attendance, presentations, short assignments)	20%

## COURSE POLICIES

*Formatting your assignments.* Please tailor your paper to length requirements *before* you finish it, and use a sensible 12-point font (such as Times New Roman or Garamond), an editable file format (.docx), and 1" margins. Editing your paper so that you can meet the required formatting will ultimately lessen the frustration of marking and grading your paper... and isn't that something you want?

*Submitting assignments.* Assignments must be submitted to your instructor via email, attached as .docx files, by 11:59pm the day that they are due. Late assignments will be docked one third of a letter grade per day, beginning the next day (so at 12:00AM after the deadline, an A- paper will become a B+ paper). Files that cannot be opened or are corrupted do not count as "on time," so consider pasting the text of your paper into your email.

*Absences and extensions.* You are required to prepare for each class meeting by completing the readings, and required to attend and participate in each section. Reading is not a substitute for discussing, and discussing is not a substitute for reading. Things happen: you will be allowed one excused absence throughout the semester, given 24 hours notice by email. Further absences or late assignments will require a note from your dean, proctor, or HUHS. Unexcused, undeclared, undocumented absences, late assignments, or poor preparation will be reflected in your grade.

*Attention and behavior.* I allow the use of laptops in class—live research and looking things up can be useful and exciting! But I strongly encourage longhand note-taking for the purposes of memory and synthesis (you learn more when you take selective notes! It's science!). Dilly-dallying on laptops and phones (social media, shopping) is sad and psychically expensive for everyone involved, and if you're doing it, you will be asked to leave, and this will be reflected in your participation grade.

*Disability accommodation.* Students with disabilities are encouraged to request accommodation, as soon as is convenient, through Harvard's [Accessible Education Office](#): "Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term."

*Citations.* Preferred citation styles are MLA (8th ed.) and Chicago (17th ed.). Guides for these styles are available at <https://style.mla.org/>—and [chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/home.html](http://chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/home.html). Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) has a quick guide to both: <https://>

owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\_owl.html. Patterns of errors in citation will be marked; continued poor citation practices over the semester will be penalized.

*Academic honesty and collaboration.* Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or writing without giving them proper credit. Consequences of plagiarism can range from failing grades on assignments to dismissal from the course or even more serious actions. Here's [The Harvard College Honor Code](#):

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity—that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

If you have questions about what constitutes proper collaboration, or about how to cite lectures, sections, conversations with peers, and other fleeting inspiration, ask me.

## Schedule of Course Meetings

### Unit I: Love

Loving as quintessential feminist action. What is a feminist alliance? What is intersectionality? Feminist tools for strategizing against oppression. Celebrity and the Paris salon. The lesbian lyric. Trans- and non-binary womanhood. What is the Kilroys List? Voyeurism, vulgarity, lesbianism and interracial queer relationships. Family myth, closeted queerness, biomythography. Queer female identity and fathers and mothers. What is the Bechdel Test?

#### Week 1.

Tuesday: Introduction

Thursday: Audre Lorde, *Zami, A New Spelling of My Name* (1982)

#### Week 2.

Tuesday: *Zami* continued  
begin Djuna Barnes, *Nightwood* (1936)

Thursday: *Nightwood* continued  
Shari Benstock, *Women of the Left Bank*, Ch. 7, "Djuna Barnes, Rue St.-Romain," pp. 230-68. [Canvas]

#### Week 3.

Tuesday: *Nightwood* continued

Thursday: C.A. Johnson, *All the Natalie Portmans* (2019) [Canvas]

#### Week 4.

Tuesday: Virginia Woolf, from "A Room of One's Own" (1929)  
*Orlando: A Biography* (1928)

Thursday: *Orlando* continued

#### Week 5.

Tuesday: Alison Bechdel, *Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic* (2006)

Thursday: *Fun Home* continued (listen to soundtrack)

PAPER I DUE

## Unit II: Agony

Justice and victimhood, sexual assault and exploitation, Hollywood feminism, trigger warnings, sexual revolution, The Women's March and burnout. Women's roles in families; social expectations of comportment, behavior, and beauty. Reproductive rights.

Week 6.

Tuesday: Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* (1970)  
Juda Bennett, *Toni Morrison and the Queer Pleasure of Ghosts*, Chapter 9, "Mutable Bodies: *The Bluest Eye* Haunts Home," pp. 141-158. [Canvas]

Thursday: *The Bluest Eye* continued

Week 7.

Tuesday: Susan Glaspell, *Trifles* (1916) [Canvas]  
Caryl Churchill, *Far Away* (2000) [Canvas]

Thursday: Alice Birch, *Revolt, She Said, Revolt Again* (2016)

Week 8.

Tuesday: Chimimanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus* (2003)

Thursday: *Purple Hibiscus* continued  
Ngozi Adichie, "We Should All Be Feminists" (2015)

Week 9.

Tuesday: Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1985)

Thursday: *The Handmaid's Tale* continued

## PAPER II DUE

## Unit III: Friendship

Kinship gestures and nation-building, friendships between white women and black women, sexism and the Black Arts Movement. Jealousy and obsession. Homosociality versus homosexuality, theories of correlation. Co-working and collaboration. Why women are funny. Black Girl Magic.

Week 10.

Tuesday: Alice Childress, *Wedding Band: A Love-Hate Story in Black and White* (1966)

## FINAL PROJECT PROSPECTUS DUE

Thursday: *Wedding Band* continued  
Selections from Toni Cade Bambara, *The Black Woman* (1970) [Canvas]

Week 11.

Tuesday: Elena Ferrante, *My Brilliant Friend* (2012)

Thursday: *My Brilliant Friend* continued  
Beth C. Rosenberg, "Virginia Woolf, Elena Ferrante, and the Angry Modern/ist Woman" (M/m Print Plus 2018) [Canvas]

Week 12.

Tuesday: *My Brilliant Friend* continued

Thursday: Sally Rooney, *Conversations with Friends* (2018)

Week 13.

Tuesday: Ilana Glazer and Abbi Jacobson, *Broad City* S2E5, "Hashtag FOMO"  
Phoebe Robinson and Jessica Williams, *2 Dope Queens* S1E4, "Black Nerds (Blerds)"

Thursday: Presentation of live final projects (e.g. performances, debates) – location TBD.

FINAL PROJECTS DUE

# Modernist Representations

## English 1XX

Elizabeth Phillips [she/her/hers]  
Office: One Bow Street 337  
Office Hours: TBD  
[ephillips@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:ephillips@fas.harvard.edu)

Fall/Spring 2019-2020  
Tu/Th 0:00-0:00  
Course location  
TF information



### COURSE DESCRIPTION

In the twentieth century, novelists and dramatists, calling themselves the “moderns,” pressed away from realistic depictions of life, and exploded literature into a prismatic, multi-sided understanding and representation of the world. Modernism is a term under which scholars nest many of these attempts to represent human experience—with its kaleidoscope of ideas, people, places, and things—with a fresh eye.

This course serves as an introduction to Modernist novels and drama from Britain and America. We will survey antecedent literary styles (late Victorian and Naturalist), consider definitions and formulations of “modern” drama and the twentieth-century novel, and extend our study into high Modernist and early Postmodern literatures.

During our period of study, developments in technology and industry, changing social mores, the recognition and inclusion of new voices for publication, and two World Wars radically pushed novels and plays into new frontiers. We will consider the following issues, reading criticism in which Modernist literary forms were formulated and defined:

- empire and colonialism;

- narrative style, including stream of consciousness and new social understandings of psychology and inward life;
- gender, early queer writing, sexual liberation, and indecency;
- race, blackness, and “ethnic modernism”;
- paranoia and anti-establishmentarianism;
- theater of the absurd and existentialism.

Together, these readings introduce several important “-isms” within and adjacent to Modernism: Symbolism, Expressionism, Imagism, Cubism, Futurism, Absurdism, and Anarchism.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS

The below texts are available at the COOP, but may also be purchased inexpensively online. When selecting your copy, please take note of the publisher and edition so that we will all be (literally) on the same page. Most of our short readings are available in the excellent anthology *Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents*, edited by Kolocotroni, Goldman, Taxidou. This is an especially great book to buy if you are considering further study in Romance Languages, History and Literature, Comparative Literature, etc., as it contains many theories from non-English speaking authors. That said, all additional readings will be available as searchable PDFs on Canvas, so you do not need to buy the anthology.

Samuel Beckett	<i>Waiting for Godot</i> (1952)	Grove 2011: 080214442X
Joseph Conrad	<i>Heart of Darkness</i> (1902)	Penguin 2007: 9780141441672
William Faulkner	<i>Absalom, Absalom!</i> (1936)	Vintage 1990: 0679732187
D.H. Lawrence	<i>Lady Chatterley’s Lover</i> (1928)	Penguin 2006: 9780141441498
Eugene O’Neill	<i>The Hairy Ape</i> (1922)	<i>Three Great Plays</i> , Dover Thrift 2007: 0486112500
George Orwell	<i>1984</i> (1949)	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2017: 9781328869333
Dorothy Richardson	<i>Pointed Roofs</i> (1915)	Broadview 2014: 9781551117997
Gertrude Stein	<i>Tender Buttons</i> (1914)	Dover 1997: 9780486298979
Jean Toomer	<i>Cane</i> (1923)	Liveright 2011: 9780871402103
Sophie Treadwell	<i>Machinal</i> (1928)	TCG 1995: 9781854592118
Virginia Woolf	<i>The Waves</i> (1935)	Houghton Mifflin Harcourt 2006: 9780156031578
Richard Wright	<i>Native Son</i> (1940)	Harper Perennial 2008: 9780061148507
Ed. Kolocotroni, Goldman, Taxidou	<i>Modernism: An Anthology of Sources and Documents</i>	University of Chicago Press 1999: 9780226450742

#### ASSIGNMENTS

You will write three short papers, all of which will involve your original ideas about the novels and plays we read, and two of which will invoke Modernist theories of representation. Twice during the semester, you will also take two brief (half-hour) exams of equal weight, each testing on only half of the course material. These exams serve as quick ways to monitor your completion and synthesis of course readings, rather than occasions to display original thinking. Your course grade will be weighted as follows:

Paper 1 (3-5pp.)	15%
Paper 2 (6-8pp.)	20%
Paper 3 (7-10pp.)	25%

Mini-exams (30 minutes each)	15%
Participation (including attendance, timely submission of assignments, and completion of homework)	25%

## COURSE POLICIES

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*Submitting assignments.* Assignments must be submitted to your instructor via email, attached as .docx files, by 11:59pm the day that they are due. Late assignments will be docked one third of a letter grade per day, beginning the next day (so at 12:00AM after the deadline, an A- paper will become a B+ paper). Files that cannot be opened or are corrupted do not count as “on time,” so consider pasting the text of your paper into your email.

*Absences and extensions.* You are required to prepare for each class meeting by completing the readings, and required to attend and participate in each section. Reading is not a substitute for discussing, and discussing is not a substitute for reading. Things happen: you will be allowed one excused absence throughout the semester, given 24 hours notice by email. Further absences or late assignments will require a note from your dean, proctor, or HUHS. Unexcused, undeclared, undocumented absences, late assignments, or poor preparation will be reflected in your grade.

*Attention and behavior.* I allow the use of laptops in class—live research and looking things up can be useful and exciting! But I strongly encourage longhand note-taking for the purposes of memory and synthesis (you learn more when you take selective notes! It's science!). Dilly-dallying on laptops and phones (social media, shopping) is sad and psychically expensive for everyone involved, and if you're doing it, you will be asked to leave, and this will be reflected in your participation grade.

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If you have questions about what constitutes proper collaboration, or about how to cite lectures, sections, conversations with peers, and other fleeting inspiration, ask me.

## SCHEDULE OF COURSE MEETINGS

### Week 1

Victorianism and Naturalism. Comedy of errors, decorum, propriety in self-representation. Modernism as initial unmooring from these points. Duty and freedom of the Modernist to represent others outside the self. “Tyrannical” realism vs. “authentic” representation of reality.

Tuesday: Introduction: Two Parties

Oscar Wilde, scene from *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) [Canvas]  
Harold Pinter, scene from *The Birthday Party* (1957) [Canvas]

Thursday: Henry James, from “The Art of Fiction” (1894) [Canvas]  
Eric Auerbach, from “Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature” “The Brown Stocking” (1946) [Canvas]

### Week 2

What is Symbolism? Symbolic representation. “Kernels” of meaning. Exploratory style as radical political (or anti-bureaucratic) act; race and imperialism. Enforced Reality and colonialism; parodying Victorianism, horror of Victorianism.

Tuesday: Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

Thursday: *Heart of Darkness* continued  
Caryl Churchill, Act One of *Cloud 9* [Canvas]

### Week 3

“Overture” to Modernism proper. New methods of representing self and thought. New narrative styles: origins in free indirect discourse and transition into stream of consciousness. Representations of sleep, dream, and waking; involuntary memory in fiction and sense memory in theater. New skepticism of Materialism, Realism, Victorianism, religion; new fictional selfhood and autobiographical endeavors. Dilation of clock time.

Tuesday: *Heart of Darkness* continued  
Virginia Woolf, “Modern Fiction” (1919) [Canvas]

Thursday: Dorothy Richardson, *Pointed Roofs* (1915)  
May Sinclair’s review of *Pilgrimage* in *The Egoist* (1918)

### Week 4

New representations of the everyday and of time; glorification of banality, of the “new” body. Painterly ways of seeing the day, glorification of “achieving nothing,” diminution of “Work Ethic.”

Tuesday: *Pointed Roofs* continued

H.D., from “Notes on Thought and Vision” (1919) [Canvas]

Thursday: *Pointed Roofs* continued  
T.S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919) [Canvas]

### Paper I Due

#### Week 5

Polyvocal narration; shifting and unstable structure for the novel. The death of the author and suppressed historiography. New considerations of class based around increased urbanization and industrialization. Androgyny and what happens to masculinity under Modernism?

Tuesday: William Faulkner, *Absalom, Absalom!* (1936)

Thursday: *Absalom, Absalom!* continued

#### Week 6

Edwardian nostalgia, the “economic project of modernity,” flat and round characters, repetition and variation, influence of music on the novel.

Tuesday: *Absalom, Absalom!* continued

Thursday: E.M. Forster, “Aspects of the Novel:” “Plot,” “Pattern and Rhythm” (1927)

#### Week 7

Freud and the primacy of the Unconscious. Synesthetics, the new lyric. Unsolid things, flowing consciousness. Difficulty of expression and insufficiency and surfeit of language. Discovery of meaning during or by the act of writing. “Fundamental divisions” central to author biography. Gender expressions and ambiguity.

Tuesday: Virginia Woolf, *The Waves* (1935)  
William Empson, “Seven Types of Ambiguity” (1930) [Canvas]

Thursday: *The Waves* continued

### Section: Mini-exam I

#### Week 8

Sexuality and gender: lack of resolution of consummation (ending of *Sons and Lovers*)—last sentence of *Finnegan’s Wake* hooks to the first, so that the reading begins over again; automatic writing. Indecency and censorship. What is the Lost Generation?

Tuesday: Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons* (1914)  
Gertrude Stein, from “Composition as Explanation” (1926) [Canvas]

from Mina Loy, "Feminist Manifesto" (1914) [Canvas]

Thursday: D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928)

### Week 9

Newly naming homosexuality. Expressionism. Industrialism and industriousness, new attention to female experience in the workplace. Overturning Protestant and bourgeois values. Authenticity through detachment, detachment as a mode of authentic representation. Technology and the body as technique; biomechanics. Sexuality as instrumental, as commodity.

Tuesday: *Lady Chatterley's Lover* continued

Thursday: Sophie Treadwell, *Machinal* (1928)  
Walter Benjamin, from "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936) [Canvas]

## Paper II Due

### Week 10

Artist as spectator. Role of allegory in American racial history. Ethnic Modernism, Imagism; defiance of genre boundaries. New practices of treating African Americans as capital. Representing new social visions within art, and the related dialectic of expression and repression of authentic black experience. The new American chorus.

Tuesday: Jean Toomer, *Cane* (1923)

Thursday: Eugene O'Neill, *The Hairy Ape* (1922)

### Week 11

Prejudice, xenophobia, racial bias, and conservatism in defining "Modernism." Representing the psychological auto-analytic, the fragmented self. The "project(ion) of blackness," and of representing justice and equality, representing and canonizing subalterity, otherness, marginalization.

Tuesday: Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940)

Thursday: *Native Son* continued  
Langston Hughes, from "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain" [Canvas]

### Week 12

Absurdity, Existentialism, Dread, Apocalypse and post-apocalyptic modernity; Anarchism; Literary creation as anti-establishment. Representing timelessness, eternity, and the future.

Tuesday: Albert Camus, "The Myth of Sisyphus" (1942) [Canvas]

Jean Paul Sartre, passage from *Nausea* (1938) [Canvas]  
George Orwell, *1984* (1949)

Thursday: *1984* continued

**Section: Mini-exam II**

**Week 13**

Theater of the Absurd; When does Postmodernism begin and what does it mean? Minimalism, destitution, representations of placelessness and obscurity, of states of mind.

Tuesday: Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (1952)

Thursday: *Waiting for Godot* continued

**(Reading Week) Paper III Due**

# Time in Chekhov and Beckett

## English 90X/1XX

Elizabeth Phillips [she/her/hers]  
Office: One Bow Street 337  
Office Hours: TBD  
[ephillips@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:ephillips@fas.harvard.edu)

2019-2020  
M/W 0:00-0:00  
Course location  
TF information



### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar will put into conversation the radically influential literatures of Anton Chekhov and Samuel Beckett, with particular reference to their phenomenological understandings of time. Given the chronological distance between their careers, Chekhov and Beckett show the felt experience of time in remarkably similar ways, and drew upon many of the same philosophical influences, from Leopardi to Schopenhauer to Nietzsche. They both were attuned to the ways in which a reader and audience member experience time differently, the prisoner and free person, women and men. In their work, they grappled with slowness and quickness, boredom and excitement. They thought about the end of time, and how an awareness of time—its finitude, or the feeling of proximity to death it can cause—can break the reader or viewer through to personal, artistic, and political revolutions. Through our readings, we will survey how each figure understands time, and the relevance of that portrayal within its particular historical and artistic context. For Chekhov, we will show the depiction of time as Chekhov's confronting the influence of Russian Realist and Naturalist literature, borrowing from the influence of his long travels and research in Siberia, his readings in French novels and drama, medical education and practice, experience with tuberculosis, experimentation at the Moscow Art Theater, and his prognostications and influence anteceding Russian Avant Gardism and the Revolutions of 1905 and 1917. For Beckett, we will study his literary dilation and distortion of time as a response to Marcel Proust, James Joyce, the Second World War and his work in the French Resistance, Absurdism and Existentialism, Postmodernism, and film and television.

In this seminar, we will have the pleasure of taking time with Chekhov and Beckett, as well as asking after our own experience of time. Through our readings in prose and drama, as well as essays and related philosophical literatures, such as selections from Bergson and Heidegger, we will compose original, research-based arguments, culminating in a substantial paper.

## REQUIRED TEXTS

The below texts are available at the COOP on reserve at Harvard Libraries (you can access them through the “Library Reserves” link on Canvas), but they may also be purchased inexpensively online. When selecting your copy, please take note of the publisher, translator, and edition so that we will all be (literally) on the same page. We will work with two translations of Chekhov’s major plays in order to compare them. If you read Russian, by all means, read Chekhov in the original!—but our discussions and written work in this course will be conducted in English. All supplemental and secondary materials will be available on Canvas.

Samuel Beckett

*Proust* (Grove Press 1994, ISBN 978-0802150257)

*Triology* (Knopf Everyman’s Library 1997, ISBN 978-1857152364)

*Complete Dramatic Works* (Faber & Faber 2006, ISBN 978-0571229154)

Anton Chekhov

*Plays* (Trans. Carson, Penguin 2002, ISBN 9780140447330)

*Plays* (Trans. Schmidt, HarperCollins 1998, ISBN 0060928751)

*The Steppe and Other Stories* (Trans. Wilks, Penguin 2005, ISBN 9780141915708)

*Selected Stories* (Trans. Pevear, Modern Library 2000, ISBN 9780553381009)

*Sakhalin Island* (Trans. Reeve, Alma Classics 2019, ISBN 1847497861)

## ASSIGNMENTS

In this course, undergraduates will write two shorter papers and one more substantial paper due during reading week. Graduate students will write a short (2-3pp.) theoretical precis for the first three assignments, and an article-length (20-25pp.) seminar paper due during reading week. There is no exam. I am happy to provide writing prompts for the first two paper assignments for undergraduates, or you may write on a topic of your choice. Final paper topics for both undergraduates and graduate students will be chosen in consultation with and approved by me. Your course grade will be weighted as follows:

Paper 1 (3-5pp.)	15%
Paper 2 (5-7pp.)	20%
Prospectus for Final Paper	5%
Final Paper (12-14pp.)	30%
Participation (including attendance, timely submission of assignments, and completion of homework)	30%

## COURSE POLICIES

*Formatting your assignments.* Please tailor your paper to length requirements *before* you finish it, and use a sensible 12-point font (such as Times New Roman or Garamond), an editable file format (.docx), and 1” margins. Editing your paper so that you can meet the required formatting will ultimately lessen the frustration of marking and grading your paper... and isn't that something you want?

*Submitting assignments.* Assignments must be submitted to your instructor via email, attached as .docx files, by 11:59pm the day that they are due. Late assignments will be docked one third of a letter grade per day, beginning the next day (so at 12:00AM after the deadline, an A- paper will become a B+ paper). Files that cannot be opened or are corrupted do not count as “on time,” so consider pasting the text of your paper into your email.

*Absences and extensions.* You are required to prepare for each class meeting by completing the readings, and required to attend and participate in each section. Reading is not a substitute for discussing, and discussing is not a substitute for reading. Things happen: you will be allowed one excused absence throughout the semester, given 24 hours notice by email. Further absences or late assignments will require a note from your dean, proctor, or HUHS. Unexcused, undeclared, undocumented absences, late assignments, or poor preparation will be reflected in your grade.

*Attention and behavior.* I allow the use of laptops in class—live research and looking things up can be useful and exciting! But I strongly encourage longhand note-taking for the purposes of memory and synthesis (you learn more when you take selective notes! It's science!). Dilly-dallying on laptops and phones (social media, shopping) is sad and psychically expensive for everyone involved, and if you're doing it, you will be asked to leave, and this will be reflected in your participation grade.

*Disability accommodation.* Students with disabilities are encouraged to request accommodation, as soon as is convenient, through Harvard's [Accessible Education Office](#): “Students needing academic adjustments or accommodations because of a documented disability must present their Faculty Letter from the Accessible Education Office (AEO) and speak with the professor by the end of the second week of the term.”

*Citations.* Preferred citation styles are MLA (8th ed.) and Chicago (17th ed.). Guides for these styles are available at <https://style.mla.org/>—and [chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/home.html](http://chicagomanualofstyle.org.ezp-prod1.hul.harvard.edu/home.html). Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) has a quick guide to both: [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html). Patterns of errors in citation will be marked; continued poor citation practices over the semester will be penalized.

*Academic honesty and collaboration.* Plagiarism is the use of another person's ideas or writing without giving them proper credit. Consequences of plagiarism can range from failing grades on assignments to dismissal from the course or even more serious actions. Here's [The Harvard College Honor Code](#):

Members of the Harvard College community commit themselves to producing academic work of integrity—that is, work that adheres to the scholarly and intellectual standards of accurate attribution of sources, appropriate collection and use of data, and transparent acknowledgement of the contribution of others to their ideas, discoveries, interpretations, and conclusions. Cheating on exams or

problem sets, plagiarizing or misrepresenting the ideas or language of someone else as one's own, falsifying data, or any other instance of academic dishonesty violates the standards of our community, as well as the standards of the wider world of learning and affairs.

If you have questions about what constitutes proper collaboration, or about how to cite lectures, sections, conversations with peers, and other fleeting inspiration, ask me.

## SCHEDULE OF COURSE MEETINGS

Week 1	INTRODUCTION  Beckett, <i>Proust</i>  Chekhov, <i>Uncle Vanya</i> (Act I, handout, Act V)
Week 2	RATTLING ON  Beckett, <i>The Unnameable</i> Pt. I Earl Kim, “Exercises en Route”  Chekhov, contemplative stories: “Ward No. 6” “In a Corner,” “The Fidget”
Week 3	RATTLING ON  Beckett, <i>The Unnameable</i> Pt. II Mark Pedretti, “Late Modern Rigamarole: Boredom as Form in Beckett’s Trilogy”  Chekhov, “The Steppe”
Week 4	DOING TIME  Beckett, <i>Waiting for Godot</i> Lance Duerfahrd, “Waiting for Godot in San Quentin” [Canvas] Stuart Grassian, “The Psychopathology of Solitary Confinement” [Canvas]  <i>Waiting for Godot</i> continued Chekhov, <i>Sakhalin Island</i> (excerpts)
<div style="border: 1px solid black; background-color: #d9ead3; padding: 5px;"><i>Paper #1/Precis #1 Due</i></div>	
Week 5	COMEDIC TIMING  Beckett, <i>Krapp’s Last Tape</i> Laura Salibury, Ch. 2, “Gagging in the Trilogy” in <i>Samuel Beckett: Laughing Matters, Comic Timing</i> (Edinburgh UP 2012). [Canvas]  Beckett, <i>Ill Seen Ill Said</i> Chekhov, comedic stories: “On the Telephone,” “Overdoing It,” “Notes from the Journal of a Quick-Tempered Man,” “Foiled!”
Week 6	HOURGLASS FIGURES

Beckett, *Happy Days*

Chekhov, *Three Sisters*

Week 7

LIVENESS

Bert O. States, "The Dog on Stage: Theater as Phenomenon" [Canvas]  
Bachelard and The Dialectic of Duration

Sozita Goudouna, *Beckett's Breath* (2018), Chapter 3, "The Durational Turn:  
Absorption and the Specificity of Temporality" [Canvas]  
Introduction from Espen Hammer, *Philosophies of Temporality* [Canvas]

Week 8

TERMINUS/TELEOLOGY

Beckett, *Endgame*

Russell Smith, "Beckett's Endlessness: Rewriting Modernity and the Postmodern  
Sublime," *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui*, September 2004, Vol.14 (1), pp.405-  
420. [Canvas]

Paul Ardoin "Perception Sickness: Bergsonian Sensitivity and Modernist Paralysis"  
in S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison, *Understanding Bergson, Understanding  
Modernism* (New York: Continuum, 2012). [Canvas]

Week 9

TERMINUS/TELEOLOGY

Chekhov, *The Cherry Orchard*

Hillary Fink, *Bergson and Russian Modernism* (Northwestern UP 1999), Introduction,  
pp. 3-27. [Canvas]

*Paper #2/Precis #2 Due*

Week 10

MATHEMATIC TIME

Beckett, *Quad*

Vsevolod Meyerhold, "A Theory of Biomechanics" [Canvas]

Week 11

LANGUOROUS TIME

Chekhov, *The Seagull*

*Seagull* continued

Maurice Maeterlinck, "Time," "The Great Beyond" (essays) [Canvas]

*Prospectus for Final Paper Due; Precis #3 for Graduate Students*

Week 12

LANGUOROUS TIME

Beckett, *Rockaby*

Beckett, *Footfalls*

Week 13      REVOLUTION AND SPEED

Poetry of Mayakovsky  
Futurist Manifesto

Beckett, *Not I*

*Final Paper Due*