

COLI 481: Methods and Masterpieces
Modernity, Modernism, Internationalism
Spring 2008
TR 2:50-4:15; FA 247

Professor Erturk
Comparative Literature
erturk(at)binghamton(dot)edu
Office Hours: T 8:30-10:30; R 4:30-6:00; LT 1509A

You can view this syllabus online on Blackboard.

1 Course description

This year, the Comparative Literature capstone seminar examines late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century imaginations of the international in the writings of Karl Marx, Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Ezra Pound, Thomas Mann, Sigmund Freud, Carl Schmitt, W. E. B. Du Bois, Claude McKay, and Mohammed Iqbal, among others. Crucial questions to be considered here include: How does each of these writers imagine a shared world beyond national differences? What are some of the convergences (and divergences) of various imaginations of the international (socialist, pan-Islamic, pan-Africanist, Europeanist)? How does modernist literary experimentation mediate these visions of the international? Finally: how can we describe the language politics of these internationalisms? Topics to be discussed include cosmopolitanism and anti-nationalism; supra- or international political formations and their relation to nation-state and empire; international auxiliary language movements, translation and multilingualism.

2 Required texts

These titles are available at the University Bookstore:

Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (Oxford)
Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Norton)
Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Norton)
Mann, *The Magic Mountain* (Vintage)
Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Penguin)
McKay, *Banjo* (Harvest)
Pound, *Selected Cantos* (New Directions)
Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (The University of Chicago Press)
Woolf, *Three Guineas* (Harcourt)

Iqbal's *Javid Nama*, a required reading, is available online at <http://www.allamaiqbal.com>. (Click on Poet-Philosopher/Poetical Works/Persian Works/Javidnama, and finally on Translation.) The book is also available from Bartle Library Reserves.

All required articles and book chapters are available as e-reserves on Blackboard.

There will also be two in-class film screenings.

Note that all required books are available from Bartle Library Reserves. Also on reserves is Carroll Terrell's *A Companion to the Cantos of Ezra Pound*, which you will need to consult for the Pound reading.

Please bring a copy of each of the required texts to every class meeting for which the readings are assigned.

3 Course requirements

3.1 Attendance and class participation

At the beginning of each class period, I will circulate an attendance sheet. You must sign this sheet and remain in class for the entire period in order to be counted present. If you arrive to class late, you will sign a separate sheet for late arrivals, available at the end of class. If you sign neither of these sheets, you may be counted absent.

You are allowed three “free” absences during the course of the semester, which you are urged to save for religious observance, illness, or personal tragedy. If you exceed your allowed number of absences, your final grade will be lowered by one-third of a grade for each subsequent absence. For example, a final grade of a B would be lowered to a B- on the fourth absence, to a C+ on the fifth absence, and so on.

You are allowed a maximum of three late arrivals during the course of the semester, after which your final grade will be reduced by one-third of a grade for each subsequent late arrival, in accordance with the schema above.

This course is a seminar, and your participation is extremely important. I will keep an ongoing record of your general level of participation. All contributions are valuable; do not hold back for fear of being “wrong” or seeming unintelligent.

3.2 Presentation

Each of you will give **one in-class presentation** together with a classmate on an assigned reading. The class schedule indicates the slots as well as the topics for which you may sign up.

Each presentation must (1) last at least ten, at most fifteen minutes; (2) direct us to at least two specific passages in the readings; and (3) end with a question for your classmates.

You are expected to turn in the paper copy of your presentation at the end of your presentation.

3.3 Writing assignments

You are expected to submit **six 300-word writing assignments** during the semester. Three of these will take the form of brief explication papers; the other three will be summaries. The class schedule indicates readings for which you must write explication papers or summaries. These writing assignments will not be individually graded, but points will be deducted from your final course grade for failure to complete them (or to complete them on time). (See “Grading,” below.)

Writing assignments must be word-processed and printed on paper. I will accept them only (1) at the end of the class period on the date due; (2) if you are absent from class, in my Comparative Literature department mailbox in LT 1503 by 4:30 pm on the date due. Please note that you are also required to send an electronic copy of your assignments to my Blackboard digital drop box on the date due. Name your documents as follows: Your Last Name-Summary1.doc or Your Last Name-Explication1.doc. Example: Erturk-Summary1.doc or Erturk-Explication2.doc.

A successful explication paper (1) identifies an important passage in the reading (of your own choice), (2) analyzes its literary attributes, and (3) explains its significance in relation to the main argument of the text.

A successful summary is your *paraphrase* of the primary text’s entire argument, following its key turns.

A separate handout will provide guidelines for summaries and explication papers.

3.4 In-class midterm examination

There will be one in-class midterm examination on Thursday, March 13. It will cover everything we have read up to that point. You will be asked to identify and contextualize particular passages from the readings. You will also be asked to respond to short essay questions. Please note that missed exams may not be made up. Exceptions will be made only for *documented* serious illness, personal tragedy, extracurricular activities, or religious observance.

3.5 Final paper

You will write **one final paper** (7-10 pages) for this class. Note that this is not a research paper, but rather a critical reading of one or more of the assigned texts. The final paper is due in class on Thursday, May 8. Paper questions will be distributed with an evaluation rubric two weeks before the due date.

Papers must be word-processed in a 12-point font (such as Times), double-spaced, with one-inch margins and stapled. Citations should follow MLA format. Please note that you are also required to send an electronic copy of your assignments to my Blackboard digital drop box on the date due. Name your documents as follows: Your Last Name-Paper.doc. Example: Erturk-Paper.doc.

Also, be aware that late papers will lose a third of a letter grade (e.g., B+ to B, B to B-, etc.) per day late. Exceptions will only be made for *documented* serious illness, personal tragedy, extracurricular activities, or religious observance.

4 Academic integrity

Plagiarism is passing off another writer's words or ideas as one's own. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism entails. See me if you have any questions.

Plagiarized midterm or final papers will receive a grade of 0. Plagiarism in explication papers or summaries will carry penalties for your final grade. (See "Grading," below.) Acts of plagiarism will also be reported to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

5 Grading

Scale: A = 94; A- = 90; B+ = 87; B = 83; B- = 80; C+ = 75; C = 70; C- = 65; D = 60; F = 50

Class participation	15%
Presentation	10%
In-class midterm exam	35%
Final paper	40%

Your final grade for the course will be lowered for any excess of the allowed three absences or three late arrivals, in accordance with the schema outlined above.

Other modifications to your final course grade

Points are deducted from your final course grade as follows:

- 5 Each missing (or plagiarized) explication paper or summary
- 2 Each late explication paper or summary

6 Class Schedule

The instructor reserves the right to revise this schedule to respond to unforeseen circumstances.

Part 1 — Historical-theoretical genealogies of internationalism

Week 1: Kantian cosmopolitanism

01/29: Course introduction

01/31: Kant, “Idea for a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Point of View”
“To Perpetual Peace”

Week 2: Socialist internationalism

02/05: Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (191-258)
Summary due

02/07: Lenin, “The Socialist Revolution and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination”
“Preliminary Draft Theses on the National and the Colonial Questions”
Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question”

Presentation topic: How does socialist internationalism deal with the question of nationalism?

Part 2 – Anglo-American cosmopolitanism

Week 3: National politics in an international world

02/12: Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (Chs. 1-8)
Explication paper due

02/14: Conrad discussion continued (Chs. 9-13)

Presentation topic: Discuss Conrad's attitude towards internationalist projects.

Week 4: Colonial Ireland and Joycean anti-nationalism

02/19: Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (Chs. 1-3)
Explication paper due

02/21: Joyce discussion continued (Chs. 4-5)

Week 5: Overcoming translation?

02/26: Pound, *Selected Cantos* (1- 58)
Pound, “Provincialism the Enemy”

02/28: Dr. Esperanto, “An Attempt Towards An International Language”
Forster, “The Background of the Esperanto Movement”
Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator”

Presentation topic: What is the goal of translation for Benjamin?

Part 3 — Internationalism “between the acts”

Week 6: Europe and war

03/04: Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, Sections 1, 2, & 3

03/06: Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, Section 4 and conclusion

Presentation topic: How does Mann represent the Great War?

Week 7: On the friend and the enemy

03/11: Freud, “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death”

Presentation topic: How does literature represent death, according to Freud? Can we extend his critique to the visualized representation of violence and death today?

03/13: In-class midterm

Week 8: Critique of internationalism

03/18: Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political*
Summary due

03/20: Arendt, “The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man”

Presentation topic: Discuss Arendt's critique of the discourse of rights.

Week 9: SPRING RECESS (Mar 21-30)

Week 10: The Society of Outsiders: Women without a country

04/01: Woolf, *Three Guineas*, Letters 1 & 2 (3-84)
Summary due

04/03: Woolf, *Three Guineas*, Letter 3 (85-144)

Presentation topic: What kind of a public sphere does Woolf's “Society of Outsiders” constitute?

Part IV—Anti-colonial internationalisms

Black internationalisms

Week 11: “The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line.”

04/08: Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Chs. 1-6, 9, 11, 14)

04/10: Du Bois, “The Negro Mind Reaches Out”

Presentation topic: What, according to Du Bois, are the challenges faced by black internationalists?

Week 12: Vagabond internationalism

04/15: McKay, *Banjo* (Chs. 1-13)
Explication paper due

04/17: Bataille, “The Use Value of D. A. F. de Sade”
McKay discussion continued (Chs. 14-25)
Final paper topics handed out

Presentation topic: In what ways is Bataille useful and limiting as an interpretive framework for McKay's *Banjo*?

Week 13: Negritude

04/22: Senghor, “Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century”
Fanon, “On National Culture”

Presentation topic: Assess Fanon's critique of negritude.

04/24: In-class writing

Pan-Islam

Week 14: Religion and/or nation?

04/29: Iqbal, *Javid Nama*

05/01: Iqbal discussion continued

Presentation topic: Is *Javid Nama* modernist or traditionalist? Why?

Part V— Towards a new ethics and politics of planetarity

Week 15: Internationalism revisited today

05/06: Spivak, selection from *Imperatives to Re-Imagine the Planet*
Assignment sheet due

05/08: Film screening
Jacques Perrin, *Winged Migration*
Final papers due