Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Emily Johansen
Course: 350
Title: Twentieth Century Literature, pre-WWII

Description: This course surveys British literature from (roughly) the first half of the twentieth century—a period typically characterized as Modernism. In particular, we will be examining texts (novels, poetry, plays, essays, and film) that consider the alienating effects of early 20th century life in Great Britain (with a couple of detours to Germany, the U.S., and the Caribbean). We will consider the way these texts introduce alienation as a way of addressing a variety of concerns: imperialism, gender, sexuality, race, technology, and class. Modernism—frequently because of its focus on alienation—is often accused of being elitist and apolitical; this course will interrogate this question and the complicated realities of alienation. We will be especially concerned with the gradations of alienation that these texts imagine—suggesting the way that alienation is altered and limited by one’s various subject positions.

Proposed Readings: Required Texts:
Samuel Beckett—Waiting for Godot
Joseph Conrad—The Secret Agent
Samuel Selvon—The Lonely Londoners (available second hand and electronically)
Jean Rhys—Wide Sargasso Sea
Virginia Woolf—To the Lighthouse