COURSE DETAIL

REALISM, MODERNISM, POSTMODERNISM: AMERICAN PROSE LITERATURE IN THE 1960S

Country
Ireland

Host Institution
Trinity College Dublin

Program(s)
Trinity College Dublin

UCEAP Course Level
Upper Division

UCEAP Subject Area(s)
English American Studies

UCEAP Course Number
130

UCEAP Course Suffix

UCEAP Official Title
REALISM, MODERNISM, POSTMODERNISM: AMERICAN PROSE LITERATURE IN THE 1960S

UCEAP Transcript Title
AMER PROSE LIT 1960

UCEAP Quarter Units
5.00

UCEAP Semester Units
3.30

Course Description

This course examines how the 1960s saw enormous transformations in both the matter and the forms of American prose writing. It considers how writers and artists battled for new freedoms, and sex and sexuality began to be featured in books published by mainstream publishers for the first time. Accompanying the famous revolutionary political movements that marked the decade, and responding to many of the same cultural and political pressures, were various revolutions of the word. The 1960s saw a widespread reaction against a now-institutionalized modernism, and the first great statements of what would come to be thought of as literary postmodernism (Thomas Pynchon, John Barth). This course discusses how critics like Susan Sontag argued for the continued validity of the modernist project, and for the need to extend it; and novelists like Saul Bellow and Mary McCarthy sought to extend the traditions of realism and modernism in novels like Herzog (1964) and The Group (1963). American prose writing of the 1960s was also shaped and informed by the sexual revolutions that marked the decade, and writers such as Ursula Le Guin began to use the tools of imaginative writing to interrogate embedded cultural assumptions about gender, sexuality, patriarchy, and power. This course considers how in many ways, all of the key streams of 20th century American literature converged in the 1960s. The decade and its key texts explores issues central to American studies more broadly: American exceptionalism, the utopian promise underwriting the American experiment, the legacies of modernism, the meaning(s) of postmodernity, the political transformations of the postwar era, and the “hangover” of the early 1970s.

Language(s) of Instruction
English

Host Institution Course Number
ENU33015

Host Institution Course Title

REALISM, MODERNISM, POSTMODERNISM: AMERICAN PROSE LITERATURE IN THE 1960S

Host Institution Course Details
https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/english/pdfs/Realism,-Modernism,-Postmodernism-Ame...

Host Institution Campus

Host Institution Faculty

Host Institution Degree

Host Institution Department
English

Course Last Reviewed
2025-2026

Print