

# 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](#)