HL4033

Major Author Study: James Joyce

Course co-ordinator: Dr Richard Barlow rbarlow@ntu.edu.sg
“I’ve put in so many enigmas and puzzles that it will keep the professors busy for centuries arguing over what I meant, and that’s the only way of insuring one’s immortality” (Joyce, qtd in Ellmann, 251)

“Where do you begin in this?” (Stephen Dedalus in Joyce, Ulysses, 25)

James Joyce is “the giant of modernism, the genius, the law unto himself” (Williams, 119) and his 1922 text Ulysses, set on one day (and night) in June 1904, is “the greatest novel of the [twentieth] century” (Burgess, n.p.). In addition to studying the entirety of Ulysses, Major Author Study: James Joyce covers Joyce’s masterpiece in the contexts of Irish history, European culture, and Literary Modernism. The course takes an episode by episode approach to Ulysses, examining the Homeric parallels and intertextual connections of the text, the individual styles of the work (such as ‘Gigantism’, ‘Hallucination’, and ‘Catechism’), the presentation of the workings of the human body and the city, the developments of the central characters, and the internal networks and structures of the work. Special emphasis is placed the ingenious textual tricks and techniques Joyce creates in order to meet the demands of the various sections. The course will look at the composition, publication and reception of Ulysses and at the main modes of interpretation (Marxist, Postcolonial, and Feminist among others) that have been applied to it.

Ulysses is a considerable challenge for the reader, a “chaffering allincluding mostfarraginous chronicle” (Joyce, Ulysses, 402), consisting of “enormous bulk and more than enormous complexity.” (Joyce, Letters, 146). However, it is also moving, profound, very funny, and extremely rewarding. For Stephen Dedalus, literature contains “the eternal affirmation of the spirit of man” (Joyce, Ulysses, 620). Major Author Study: James Joyce offers an odyssey through one of the great achievements of European culture.

References:
Seminar Schedule (subject to minor changes)

Week One
Joyce, Ireland, and Modernism

Week Two
Ulysses: ‘Telemachus’, ‘Nestor’, and ‘Proteus’

Week Three
Ulysses: ‘Calypso’, ‘Lotus Eaters’ and ‘Hades’

Week Four
Ulysses: ‘Aeolus’ and ‘Lestrygonians’

Week Five
Ulysses: ‘Scylla and Charybdis’

Week Six
Ulysses: ‘Wandering Rocks’ and ‘Sirens’

Week Seven
Ulysses: ‘Cyclops’ and ‘Nausicaa’

Week Eight
Ulysses: ‘Oxen of the Sun’

Week Nine
Ulysses: ‘Circe’

Week Ten
Ulysses: ‘Eumaeus’ and ‘Ithaca’

Week Eleven
Ulysses: ‘Penelope’, A brief introduction to Finnegans Wake, course revision
Core text


Assessment

Students will be assessed by:

a. Class participation: 15%

b. Essay (3500 words): 35%

c. Final 2.5-hour written examination (50%)

Further reading


McDonald, Michael Bruce. “Circe” and the Uncanny, or Joyce from Freud to Marx’ in *James Joyce Quarterly*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (Fall, 1995), pp. 49–68.


