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* involves ‘Technology Enhanced Learning’ and offers an odyssey through one of the great achievements of European culture.

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Core text


Assessment

Students will be assessed by:

A) 35% – 3,500 word essay (due in on the 1st of March)

The essay must cover two episodes and involve original research.

The essay should also include a coherent argument supported by close reading of the text. All paragraphs should be related to a central theme and adhere to a sound structure.

Claims/readings/arguments should be properly developed and supported by relevant quotations from the text.

Relevant critical sources must be utilized and correctly cited.

B) 50%–2 1/2 hour exam

Students will be required to sit a 2 1/2 hour closed-book exam which will consist of a text identification component and an essay component.

The essay will test the students’ knowledge and understanding of the texts/themes of the course and their ability to construct arguments and critical positions relating to the course concepts.

C) 15%–Class participation

Students participation in seminars – including attendance, engagement with seminar activities and discussions – will be assessed.
Suggested 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.


