**3rd Year Literature Syllabus 2024-2025**

***Semester 5: American Modernism***

**Introduction: Overview of Modernism**

**1- Poetry: *-The Snow Man*** by Wallace Stevens

***-In a Station of the Metro*** by Ezra Pound

**2- Drama: *The Crucible*** by Arthur Miller

**3- Short Story:*A Rose for Emily*** by William Faulkner

**4- Novel: *The Great Gatsby*** by F. Scott Fitzgerald

1. **General Introduction to modernism 1900-1940:** (sometimes called the Age of Decadence)

- Modernism, as a whole, was a movement that attempted to radically break from the past traditions of nineteenth-century literature (including literary theory & criticism) in terms of form, content, expression, and the past traditions in painting, sculpture, and the arts in general.

- Modernism generated many smaller movements: [Dada](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-term.html?term=dada)ism, [Futurism](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-term.html?term=futurism), [Imagism](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-term.html?term=Imagism), [Objectivism](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-term.html?term=objectivism), Expressionism, Symbolism, Absurdism, [Surrealism](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/glossary-term.html?term=surrealism)...

- Became dominant more precisely between the two World Wars, reflecting an experience of loss, and a re-examination of existence.

**Emergence of Modernism:**

Various **factors** led to the emergence of Modernism:

* Industrial Revolution & growth of cities,
* Increased consumerism,
* New technologies and inventions (auto, airplane, telephone, camera),
* After effect of WWI: post-war disillusionment due to destruction and waste,
* Developments in science (**Einstein**),
* New theories in ***psychology*** (**Freud**): complexity of human psyche, functioning of mind,
* New ***philosophy*** ideas (**Nietzsche**): “God is dead”; loss of faith, spiritual alienation, existential crisis,
* “The Jazz Age” (1918-1929), decadence and freedom in the post-World War I generation,
* “The Lost Generation” of American writers (coined by Gertrude Stein) despair and loneliness
* Artists’ dissatisfaction with Naturalism & Realism.

**Main Features/ Characteristics of Modernism:**

***Formal characteristics***

* Open form (for all genres):
* Free verse ( poetry)
* Non-linear/chronological plots for narratives
* Stream-of-consciousness (or “interior monologue”)
* Discontinuous narrative
* Juxtaposition
* Intertextuality
* Classical allusions
* Borrowings from other cultures and languages
* Fragmentation
* Multiple narrative points of view (resulting in complexity and ambiguity of texts)
* Symbolism  
    
    
    
  ***Thematic characteristics***
* Breakdown of social norms
* Questioning of moral/ religious values
* Dislocation of meaning and sense from its normal context
* Valorization of the despairing individual
* Disillusionment
* Complex modern urban life
* Overwhelming technological changes of the 20th Century
* Nihilism
* Alienation/ Isolation
* Meaninglessness/ Despair

**Famous Modernist Authors:**

Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, William Faulkner, Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, John Dos Passos, E.E. Cummings, T. S. Eliot, [William Butler Yeats](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/william-butler-yeats), Hart Crane, [Henry](http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems-and-poets/poets/detail/w-h-auden) James, etc...