



**Boston University Study Abroad**  
London

**The Waste Land: Modern British and Irish Writing Since 1900**  
**CAS EN 310 (Elective A) Fall, Spring, Summer**

**Instructor Information**

A. Name	Julie Charalambides
B. Day and Time	[Weekdays], [times]
C. BU Telephone	020 7244 6255
D. Email	<a href="mailto:juliecha@bu.edu">juliecha@bu.edu</a>
E. Office hours	By appointment

**Course Description**

Journeying across TS Eliot's *The Waste Land*, both figuratively and literally, and along the trenches of WW1, we make an intensive study of significant works of major poets and writers who both helped to create and were created by the Modern Age, and of those they influenced, establishing an imaginative bloodline from T S Eliot through Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney to Tony Harrison. The period covered by the literature is from 1900 up the first Gulf War but in learning how some of the greatest writers in the English language used their genius to articulate the *Zeitgeist* and their anxieties we will see how, across decades, we can connect with them and their work to the extent that we can access those anxieties and preoccupations and find creative ways of dealing with our own.

We will do this through a combination of educational and assessment strategies, including: close readings in and out of the classroom of the texts, shared analysis and understanding of those texts and an acquisition of the language we use to discuss them, including narrative techniques, style, structure, genres; writing assignments in and out of class (see below), to allow for group feedback and individual feedback from me by way of submitted work; a group, collaborative exercise whereby you will write your own *Waste Land* (see below); walking tours with me around London to the places where the writers lived and loved and worked, and wrote about.

I will use *The Waste Land* to establish an overarching metaphor for the texts we are studying, all of which deal in some way with the impact of Modernism as expressed in primarily the literature, and to a lesser extent art and music, of the early to late 20th Century. *The Waste Land* is Eliot's response to both personal, particular anxieties and those experienced by a generation and by Europe in the aftermath of the First World War, and is thereby an example of how the creative impulse can compel the artist/writer from a state of shock, lethargy, ennui, to indeed create in the midst of the destruction, often from the destruction. Eliot's friend, Virginia Woolf wrote that "On or about December 1910 human nature changed" - she was referring to the opening of an exhibition of paintings, but all the texts investigate human relationships, sexual and social, and human relationships with technology and within social structures, such as marriage. Common themes are sex, madness and war, and the ways in which writers and artists respond to trauma

Our focus will be on the literature of the period but we will also be contextualising the texts by considering responses to the *Zeitgeist* in art to illustrate Eliot's method and influences in *The Waste Land* and artistic responses to WWI, and music - specifically Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* - and watching Diaghilev's ballet. We will also be walking through Eliot's London as an

exercise in seeing the city as a text and ultimately I hope demonstrating how the city, a painting, and a piece of music can also be ‘read.’

Learning how to maintain an open mind and an open heart is necessary to any engagement, with each other, with strangers, with texts, and on the assumptions that all participants are possessed of both we will be able to open them wider.

A background in the period is not necessary but a desire to learn about it is - to that end students will need to commit to a heavy reading schedule - every one of the set texts must be read in full prior to the class during which it is to be discussed. I will also suggest additional material as I deem it necessary. Please see below.

## **Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes**

### **Area: Aesthetic Exploration**

1. At the conclusion of the course you will be able to demonstrate knowledge and appreciation of notable works of literature by some of the greatest writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Course Chronology for details). Through intensive study of the various texts and the historical and cultural context of the society into which these works were disseminated you will develop a deep understanding of the impact, effect and role of literature on and in the lives of both the writers and the readers. Moreover, the experience of The First World War was so devastating and life-changing (if not life-losing) for its participants, supporters and objectors, that by looking at the creative responses to such destruction we as readers 100 years later can access that experience and empathise in a way that great literature permits and thereby identify its ongoing significance and relevance.
2. You will study and recognize various narrative devices, such as first and third person, free indirect discourse, and their effect on the reader’s understanding and emotional response. You will encounter different literary forms, including the novel, the short story and the poem and learn the terms used to discuss these forms, as well as being made aware of definitions of literary styles and movements, such as Modernism and Postmodernism, and various critical lenses through which major works have been viewed, such as New Historicism.
3. Through various written assignments and class discussion you will produce evaluative, analytical and creative works that demonstrate an understanding of the terms and genres encountered and demonstrate an ability to employ such terms in both formal and creative assignments assessed both summatively and formatively. You will be able to analyse the primary texts as listed in the syllabus, create academic arguments through an assimilation of others’, and ultimately through a synthesis of the various historical, cultural, social and sexual context, produce both a creative response through your rewriting of The Waste Land, an academic response to the impact of the First World War in a long essay, and evidence of understanding of given texts in a closed exam. You will thereby demonstrate knowledge of not only specific works and their creators but by viewing them through cultural, social, religious and historical lenses, also of the time in which these works were generated and how we can share experiences - anxieties and hopes - across decades, and contemplate the nature of individual genius, the possibilities for a spokesperson for a generation, and a common, and uncommon perhaps, humanity.

### **Assessment**

Assessment will be both formative and summative as illustrated below, but there will be an ongoing evaluation of your needs and understanding through, initially one minute tests, and throughout the course where you will have the opportunity to discuss individual needs and interests (see 2)

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Weighting</b>
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One Minute Tests and One Sentence Summaries	formative
Five Minute Writing Assignment	formative
Class participation	10%
Writing Assignment one	10%
Writing Assignment two	40%
Writing Assignment three	40%

*One Minute Tests and One Sentence Summaries, Five Minute Writing Assignment: Ungraded*

Undertaken in class to assess students' understanding of literary terms, their prior experience of literature.

*Writing Assignment one – Creative, Collaborative: Graded 10% as Participation*

Following our reading and class discussion of the poem you will be split into groups to write a collective Waste Land for 2018, using techniques and updating tropes and cultural references used by Eliot. This assignment encourages you to share ideas, knowledge and life experiences, and significant cultural references which may differ from your peers' who may have grown up in other cultures. Furthermore, the effort required to use language and your life to create a piece of relevant and well-written and well-constructed literature should highlight the skill and genius of the poet whose work you are seeking to emulate. The various sections are then submitted to me for collation and redistribution and you will read the complete version in our last class together.

*Writing Assignment two – Academic, Formal: Graded 40%*

Following individual discussion with me you will choose a topic suggested by their reading of *Regeneration* and write a research paper of 2,000 words (eight double-spaced pages, including brief quotes) - using my 'Guidelines and Style Sheet'.

This assignment allows for perusal of independent interests and opportunities for me to provide feedback on your initial proposal; develop or augment your ability to seek out and use secondary sources, assimilate and synthesise various arguments; develop confidence in your ability to argue your point and select evidence from external sources to support your argument. (graded 40% - paper to be submitted in Session 8 - a brief proposal outline (50 words) to be submitted to tutor within 24 hours of the field trip to the Imperial War Museum where students will find source material for their papers and have an opportunity to discuss topics and secondary sources with the tutor) The paper will be marked and graded and returned in the penultimate class and you will be able to discuss my comments and your grade.

*Writing Assignment three – Closed Examination: Graded 40%*

At the end of the course you will be given a choice of 8 prompts relative to the material covered over the term, including narrative techniques and specific texts, as starting points for two responses/essays to be completed within 90 minutes. This will test your memory and general comprehension of concepts, your ability to write unaided and under pressure within an allotted time period and is a true test of a student's understanding, engagement and commitment.

20% of the final grade is allocated for class participation, to include the group exercise. Please note that this is not for attendance nor for completing the reading for every class since both are

mandatory requirements but to allow the tutor to reward the student for effort, application and engagement with me, your peers and the material.

## **Grading**

The following Boston University table explains the grading system that is used by most faculty members on Boston University's Study Abroad London Programmes.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Honour Points</u>	<u>Usual %</u>
A	4.0	93-100
A-	3.7	89-92
B+	3.3	85-88
B	3.0	81-84
B-	2.7	77-80
C+	2.3	73-76
C	2.0	69-72
C-	1.7	65-68
D	1.0	60-64
F	0.0	Unmarked

## **Grading Criteria**

**'Incomplete'** or **I** grades are not permitted because of the obvious difficulty in making up missed work once the student has left the country. All work must be completed on time. We also do not allow **'Audits'** (AU), **'Withdrawals'** (W), or **'Pass/Fail'** (P) grades.

The grades reflect the quality of the work. Lecturers and students should use the following criteria for an understanding of what each grade means.

**A** This exceptional grade is assigned only to work that has persistently outstanding quality in both substance and presentation. The student must demonstrate a sustained capacity for independent thought and extensive study, producing rigorous and convincing analyses in well-ordered prose.

**A-** Awarded to work that is clearly focused and analytical, and based on wide reading. The student must cover all the principal points of a question and systematically develop a persuasive overall thesis, allowing for one or two venial omissions or inapt expressions.

**B+, B, B-** This range of grades indicates that the student has shown some evidence of original thought and intellectual initiative. The student has cited sources beyond the class materials, and shown a degree of originality in perception and/or approach to the subject. The work will show thoughtful management of material, and a good grasp of the issues. The differences between a B+, a straight B and a B- may reflect poor presentation of the material, or mistakes in punctuation, spelling and grammar.

**C+, C, C-** Work in this grade range is satisfactory, but uninspiring. If the work is simply a recitation of the class materials or discussions, and shows no sign of genuine intellectual engagement with the issues, it cannot deserve a higher grade. Should an essay fail to provide a clear answer to the question as set, or argue a position coherently, the grade will fall within this range.

Quality of presentation can lift such work into the upper levels of this grade range. Work of this quality which is poorly presented, and riddled with errors in grammar, spelling and punctuation, will fall into the lower end of the range. To earn a C grade, the work must demonstrate that the student is familiar with the primary course material, be written well enough to be readily understood, be relevant to the assignment, and, of course, be the student's own work except where properly cited.

**D** A marginal pass can be given where some but not all the elements of the course have been completed satisfactorily.

**F** The failing grade indicates the work is seriously flawed in one or more ways:

- Obvious lack of familiarity with the material
- So poorly written as to defy understanding
- So brief and insubstantial that it fails to properly address the subject
- Material presented is not relevant to the assignment

Demonstrates evidence of plagiarism (see following section in Academic Conduct Code)

Please refer to the Academic Handbook for detailed grading criteria and policies on plagiarism:

<http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester>

*\* Final Grades are subject to deductions by the Academic Affairs Office due to unauthorised absence.*

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Classes**

All Boston University London Programme students are expected to attend each and every class session, seminar, and field trip in order to fulfil the required course contact hours and receive course credit. Any student that has been absent from two class sessions (whether authorised or unauthorised) will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their continued participation on the programme.

### *Authorised Absence:*

Students who expect to be absent from any class should notify a member of Academic Affairs and complete an Authorised Absence Approval Form 10 working days in advance of the class date (except in the case of absence due to illness for more than one day. In this situation students should submit the Authorised Absence Approval Form with the required doctor's note as soon as possible).

The Authorised Absence Approval Request Form is available from:

<http://www.bu.edu/london/current-semester/>

**Please note: Submitting an Authorised Absence Approval Form does not guarantee an authorised absence**

Students may apply for an authorised absence only under the following circumstances:

- **Illness (first day of sickness):** If a student is too ill to attend class, the student must phone the BU London Student Affairs Office (who will in turn contact the student's lecturer).
- **Illness (multiple days):** If a student is missing more than one class day due to illness, the student must call into to the BU London Student Affairs Office each day the student is ill. Students must also provide the Student Affairs office with a completed Authorised Absence Approval Form and a sick note from a local doctor excusing their absence from class.
- Important placement event that clashes with a class (verified by internship supervisor)
- Special circumstances which have been approved by the Directors (see note below).

**The Directors will only in the most extreme cases allow students to leave the programme early or for a significant break.**

### *Unauthorised Absence:*

Any student to miss a class due to an unauthorised absence will receive a **4% grade penalty** to their final grade for the course whose class was missed.

This grade penalty will be applied by the Academic Affairs office to the final grade at the end of the course. As stated above, any student that has missed two classes will need to meet with the Directors to discuss their participation on the programme as excessive absences may result in a 'Fail' in the class and therefore expulsion from the programme.

### **Religious Holidays**

Boston University's Office of the University Registrar states:

'The University, in scheduling classes on religious holidays and observances, intends that students observing those traditions be given ample opportunity to make up work. Faculty members who wish to observe religious holidays will arrange for another faculty member to meet their classes or for cancelled classes to be rescheduled.'

### **Special Accommodations**

Each student will need to contact the Office of Disability Services to request accommodations for the semester they are abroad. Students are advised by BU-ODS not to expect the same accommodations as they receive on campus.

BU London can only uphold special accommodations if we have received the appropriate documentation from the BU-ODS. We cannot accept letters from other universities/centres.

All disabilities need to be known to the ODS in Boston if they are to be used as a reason for requiring a change in conditions, i.e. reduced internship hours or special accommodations for the internship schedule.

### **Lateness**

Students arriving more than 15 minutes after the posted class start time will be marked as late. Any student with irregular class attendance (more than two late arrivals to class) will be required to meet with the Associate Director for Academic Affairs and if the lateness continues, may have his/her final grade penalised.

## **Course Chronology**

### Session 1 () The Shock of the New - An Introduction and Meeting The Flaneur

We will consider our understanding of Modernism and its starting points in Art, Poetry and Music. We will also be meeting our metaphorical guide through the texts, The Flaneur or Urban Wanderer.

Text: *Prufrock and Other Observations* by TS Eliot

Activity: One Minute and Five Minute Tests

### Session 2 () The Waste Land

Text: *The Waste Land* by TS Eliot, (and *Ulysses, Order and Myth*, by TS Eliot - available on line, copies to be handed out in class)

Activity: One Minute Tests

### Session 3 () The Waste Land

Text: *The Waste Land*

Field Trip: The British Library

### Session 4 () Writing and Walking The Waste Land

Activity: Group Exercise - writing assignment

Field Trip: Walking tour of Eliot's Waste Land, from London Bridge to Bank, arriving at the site of Lloyds Bank where Eliot worked for almost 8 years.

#### Sessions 5 () The Great War in the novel and in poetry

Texts: *Regeneration* by Pat Barker. (We will also be reading extracts from *Toby's Room* by Barker and *Strange Meeting* by Susan Hill.)

A selection of poems by Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon will be handed out and discussed in class. Sassoon is a major character in *Regeneration* and we will consider the role of the War Poet during the First World War as a hero, a propagandist, and a critic, and how 'Knowing the War Poets', which generally means knowing the poetry of Owen and Sassoon, has become a marker of Britishness. Unlike Eliot who writes *The Waste Land* in the aftermath of the war, these soldier poets were actually walking across the wasteland between the trenches. We will also learn how the devastating, fatal for many, four years changed the much of the world and they way people lived, and died, in it.

#### Session 6 () The Imperial War Museum, Lambeth - Field Trip

Following a brief introduction to the museum and its collections you will be given a checklist of significant items in the First World War Galleries where they will be able to conduct research for their independent research papers and discuss possible topics and sources with me. You will email me a brief outline proposal for said paper (50 words maximum) within 24 hours of class end.

#### Session 7 () The Bloomsberries

An introduction to the writers, artists, and many now well-known characters who became known as The Bloomsbury Group, and a close study of a long essay of its most famous 'member' Virginia Woolf, a close friend of Eliot's and, with her husband Leonard, published the first British edition of *The Waste Land*.

Text: *A Room of One's Own* by Virginia Woolf

#### Session 8 () James Joyce and the Irish Short Story

We will be focusing on two stories from Joyce's collection *The Dubliners* - *The Dead* and *Araby* and comparing them to John Boyne's reworking of *Araby* in his short story collection *Beneath the Earth*. Like the contemporary Irish writer Boyne, Eliot was a great admirer of Joyce whose masterpiece *Ulysses* was published in the same year as *The Waste Land*.

Texts: *The Dead* and *Araby* by James Joyce in *The Dubliners*, and *Araby* by John Boyne.

Please note that Long Papers are due this class

#### Session 9 () D H Lawrence

Definitely not a member of the Bloomsbury Group, not generally accepted as a Modernist, and excoriated by Kate Millett in her *Sexual Politics* of 1970, Lawrence's impact on 20th Century British literature and thought cannot be denied. A great novelist, we will be focusing on four short stories and looking for thematic connections.

Texts: *The Odour of Chrysanthemums*, *The Prussian Officer*, *Tickets Please* and *England, My England* by D H Lawrence. All stories are available free online.

Field Trip: From Russell to Montague Square, walking Virginia's Bloomsbury.

Papers will be graded and returned this class.

#### Session 10 () The Anxiety of Influence

Poetry from Hughes to Harrison to Eliot

Texts: *V* by Tony Harrison, plus selected poems by Ted Hughes, Seamus Heaney and Tony Harrison which will be handed out in session 8 and discussed in this class. And a final poem by Harrison that takes us back to *The Waste Land*, via the Road to Basra, in *A Cold Coming*.

**Set Texts as Above**

**Secondary Reading** as discussed with the tutor but may I advise dipping in to the most accessible and informative book on Reading and Writing Literature - *Beginning Theory, 4th Edition*, by Peter Berry, copies in the Library.

Also

*The World Broke in Two*, by Bill Goldstein, Bloomsbury Circus, 2017

*Modernism: An Anthology*, edited by Lawrence Rainey, Blackwell, 2005

*Modernism: an Anthology of Sources and Documents*, edited by V Kolocotroni, J Golman, O Taxidou, Edinburgh UP, 1998

*Modernism: A Guide to European Literature 1890-1930*, by Malcolm Bradbury, Penguin, 1991

*Selected Prose of T S Eliot*, by T S Eliot, Faber & Faber, 1975

*Virginia Woolf*, by Hermione Lee, Vintage, 1997

*A Room of One's Own*, by Virginia Woolf, various, 1929