

# ENGL 480/580 – Modernism – Spring 2015

Prof. Josh Epstein

## HEARING MODERNIST CULTURES: MUSIC, MEDIA, AND PERFORMATIVE TEXTUALITY

**Description:** This class considers the cultural and aesthetic valences of sound, music, and hearing in modernist writing and other arts. The sensory, psychological, and affective intensification of sound in the early twentieth century—one aspect of what we loosely refer to as "modernity"—reflects a range of cultural pressures: the noises of war, industrialization, urbanization, new media, racial and imperial conflict, and so on. As modernist texts use music and sound to explore these pressures, they break down barriers of genre and artistic form, blending music and writing, film and painting, written and aural inscriptions of language. Music, specifically, has been seen to endow modernist uses of language with a richly embodied, performative, interactive potential. Our class, then, will explore the interactive relationships among music, text, and sound world, as they unfold what we now call "modernist culture." How do modernist texts use music both to effect interactive modes of textuality, and to engage with the sounds of an increasingly noisy world? In what ways do they co-opt the new media forms that bring music to them? How do modernist writers work with the aesthetic medium of sound—as novelists and poets, and as librettists, anthologists, and screenwriters?

### REQUIRED TEXTS:

Daniel Albright (ed.), *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources*

Christopher Butler, *Modernism: A Very Short Introduction*

Ezra Pound, ed. Richard Sieburth, *The Pisan Cantos*

E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*

Additional materials posted to D2L.

### MUSICAL SELECTIONS:

George Antheil, *Ballet Mécanique* (to be made available via D2L).

Edgard Varèse, *Amériques* (to be made available via D2L).

Igor Stravinsky and W.H. Auden's opera *The Rake's Progress* (D2L).

Pound, from *Le Testament* (first six tracks from *Ego Scriptor Cantilena*; [bit.ly/PoundAlbum](http://bit.ly/PoundAlbum)).

### ON LIBRARY RESERVE:

Nancy Cunard (ed.), *Negro: An Anthology*. Copies of this book have been placed on reserve.

**Email** is the quickest way to contact me. Here, a few notes to help our exchanges go smoothly:

- (1) I do not discuss grades or review drafts over email, but I am more than happy to do so in person. Email is best for quick administrative matters, not for prolonged discussions.
- (2) **Read the syllabus** (assignment sheet, etc.) before emailing with a policy question.
- (3) If you miss class, it is not necessary to email me to explain why. Contact a classmate.
- (4) Write emails professionally. Include a salutation ("Hi Josh" is adequate) and a closing ("Thanks, [Rob]"); write like a grown-up; say "please" and "thank you"; etc.
- (5) Please leave me 48 hours to see and respond to an email.

Coursework is outlined separately for undergraduates (pp. 2-3) and grad students (p. 3).

Policies for all students are outlined on p. 4, the schedule on pp. 5-6.

Blog instructions are on p.7.

**COURSEWORK FOR ENG 480 (UNDERGRADUATE):**

**Class Presentation (10%):** Lead the class through a focused discussion (at least 30 minutes) on a specific topic related to the day's materials. **One class session in advance**, distribute, either on paper or via email, a few **discussion questions** for the class to consider. (Yes, this means you'll have to read ahead.) Work hard on these discussion questions: they will help frame your classmates' reading, which will help them to participate during your presentation.

**Blog (25%):** On an alternating basis, you will post entries to our course blog, available at <http://hearingmodernism480.wordpress.com>. **Initial instructions for setting up a blog account are attached to this syllabus.** Topics will usually be distributed—if they're not, you're responsible for developing one on your own. One option is to ask a provocative critical question prompted by our readings/discussions, and then develop an answer to it. Postings should be **700-800** words, and should draw on specific details from the course readings. These aren't formal papers—work through ideas and try things out—but they should be grounded in ***specific textual details from the reading***. Write well and proofread carefully.

On an alternating basis, you will **reply** to your peers' postings, in postings of ~300 words. Don't merely sum up or "grade" his or her posting ("I agree! Great job!"): use it as a springboard to develop new ideas with new textual examples.

**NO BLOGS OR REPLIES WILL BE ACCEPTED LATE.** However, during the last week, you'll be able to make up *one* missed posting or reply (not both) for full credit.

**Midterm Paper (20%):** An essay of 1500-2000 words, using close analysis of language to develop an argument about one or two course texts. You are welcome to use your own blog writings as starting points for this essay.

**Final Paper (30%):** An essay of 2400-2700 words, plus a Works Cited page. This is a longer essay that addresses a **question related to sound, music, or hearing in one or two course texts**. You are welcome to draw on the first essay and develop it further for this final paper, provided that you are doing significant amounts of *new* thinking, writing, and research.

**Mock Conference** (included in final paper grade): A short version of your final paper project in an oral presentation (length TBA). Communicate a focused scholarly topic and argument, even if you still have some snags to work out, and plan for good Q&A.

**Annotated Bibliography** (included in your final paper grade): In advance of the final paper, submit an annotated bibliography of criticism on your primary text(s). Include MLA citations for 5-6 sources (scholarly articles, book chapters, etc.), each of which is followed by an entry of 100-150 words. In each entry, summarize and critically engage the source's arguments and methods. Only *scholarly sources from beyond the syllabus* count toward your 5-6 sources. You aren't required to use all of the sources in the paper itself; the idea is to start building a base of ideas from which to develop your argument.

**Participation (15%):**

Come to class *having done the reading and taken notes*, prepared with *questions, ideas, and textual examples*, and ready to *argue, write, and collaborate, and engage*. Your final participation grade will be A (excellent), C (adequate), or F. To participate, you have to be

here. If you miss more than two classes, your final participation grade will be *at best* a C, and may well be lower. If you miss five or more classes, your participation grade will be an F. **I don't distinguish between excused/unexcused absences.** As in the workforce, you're here or you're not. In-class assignments cannot be made up if missed.

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### **COURSEWORK FOR ENG 580 (GRADUATE):**

**Participation (15%):** Come to class *having read carefully*, prepared with *questions and arguments about the reading*, ready to take an active leadership role in class. **For grad students there are no "free skips." Attend every class, ready to go.** I may also ask you, on an *ad hoc* basis, to respond to blogs written by your undergrad classmates.

**"Position Paper" and Seminar (25%):** This pair of assignments, in addition to setting up your longer essay, models the format of the Modernist Studies Association conference.

**Position Paper:** As a lead-in to the final seminar paper, you will write a paper of 1500-1700 words that explores a critical question relevant to our course, using close reading, theory, or other scholarly analysis. A "position paper" may not read as a fully developed argumentative essay, but neither should it be slapdash or sloppy. It should represent thoughtful, polished writing with supported claims—even if some of the "snags" of the project are not fully figured out, you should be working toward a well-considered scholarly argument. Cite at least four sources. Samples will be distributed.

**Mock Seminar:** During the last class, you will meet to discuss your position papers with the other grad students, so as to develop connections that that will help each participant develop her or his project further. Each seminar participant should read every other position paper, and should come up with 2-3 questions for each paper, as well as 2-3 points of connection to his or her own paper.

**Final Paper (35%):** An essay of ~4000 words (MLA, plus Works Cited), which develops a **theoretical, conceptual, or historical argument** grounded in our course texts. The topic is up to you. Your paper must contain rigorous in-text citations, demonstrating broad and deep reading in the field, and clarifying how *your* argument is intervening in the critical discussion.

**Scholarly Research Presentation (25%):** A 10-15-minute presentation about a relevant scholarly book, followed by 15-20 minutes of leading discussion on how that scholarship might apply to the primary text being discussed. These books are listed on the schedule and will be placed on library reserve. In your presentation, explain the text's main concepts and arguments. (Keep in mind that your classmates won't have read this book, so you need to synthesize it compellingly and clearly). **Distribute a handout** with details, outlines, relevant context, etc., and bridge into the discussion portion of your presentation with a few focused questions, or a few helpful passages from the primary text, that will help your classmates use the concepts you've just given them.

**POLICIES (ENG 480 and ENG 580):**

**Office Hours:** You are cordially invited to visit office hours, no appointment needed. If you can't meet during those times, please *send me an email to set up an appointment*.

**Extensions/Late Work:** For formal essays (not blogs), I will grant *reasonable* extension requests made *at least 48 hours before the deadline*. No questions asked, no excuses needed (or desired). Simply write me an email letting me know when you can have it done. Without an extension *granted in advance*, late work will be docked half a grade per day (e.g. A- to B+), including weekends. Computer crashes, missed busses, work schedules—these things happen to us all, but they do not exempt late work from its normal penalties.

**Civility/Anti-Discrimination:** I do not permit personal attacks or hate speech on any basis, including but not limited to race or ethnicity, sex or gender, sexual/affectional orientation, socioeconomics, religion, age, veteran status, or disability.

**Academic Misconduct:** The Student Code of Conduct (<http://www.pdx.edu/dos/psu-student-code-conduct>) applies to all work submitted in this class. I am doggedly serious about academic dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, forgery, and multiple submission (i.e. submitting the same assignment for credit in multiple classes). Plagiarism ranges from the obvious (e.g. downloading a paper from the web) to the subtle (e.g. citing a source but neglecting to indicate that you have borrowed its exact language). **Any instance of academic misconduct, no matter how "minor" or "accidental," will result in a zero for the assignment and will be reported immediately to the Dean of Students.** It is important that you **contact me *before* completing the assignment if you are unsure about what you're doing.** Uncertainty about the rules is not an excuse for violating them.

**Disability Accommodations:** If you have a disability that requires accommodation, please contact PSU's Disability Resource Center ([www.drc.pdx.edu](http://www.drc.pdx.edu)) *as soon as possible*.

**Writing Center:** Use it. Cramer Hall 188; [www.writingcenter.pdx.edu](http://www.writingcenter.pdx.edu); 503.725.3570

**ASSESSMENT**

**All major presentation and paper assignments must be completed to pass the course.**

PSU's grading standards are as follows:

Undergraduate:

A = Excellent  
B = Good  
C = Satisfactory  
D = Inferior  
F = Failure

Graduate:

A = Excellent  
B = Satisfactory  
C = Below Standard  
D, F = Failure

A "satisfactory" grade (C for undergrads, B for grads) signifies coursework that satisfies the assignment competently. An A signifies outstanding analytical insight, argumentative sophistication, and expressive clarity. **All coursework is held to the same standards, regardless of the student's curricular or extracurricular obligations.** Grades are assigned based on the quality of work done, not on who the student is.

## COURSE SCHEDULE:

*M&M* = *Modernism and Music* anthology (ed. Albright)

Online readings will be posted to D2L, as PDF files or hyperlinks. (Some links may require your PSU Odin ID/password.) Read them, print them out, and bring them to class.

‡ = *required* for graduate students, *optional* for undergraduates.

**M 3/30** **Introductions.** In class: excerpts from Barthes, "The Grain of the Voice"; Steven Connor, "Edison's Teeth"; R. Murray Schafer, *The New Soundscape*

**W 4/1** Butler, *Very Short Intro*, 1-29. From *M&M*: Schoenberg (38-42), Joyce (45-8), Eliot (52-4).

‡ Raymond Williams, "Culture," "Media," and "Mediation" from *Keywords* (D2L)

**ALL UNDERGRADS: write blog entries— due Fri., 4/3 by 11:59 p.m.**

**M 4/6** **Presentation (undergrad).** Butler, *Very Short Intro*, 30-44; from *M&M*: Antheil (71; 390-397), Russolo (177-184); Varèse (185-189). Listen to Antheil, *Ballet Mécanique*, Edgard Varèse, *Amérique* (recordings on D2L). **Scholarly Presentation (grad): Emily Thompson, *The Soundscape of Modernity***

**W 4/8** Pound, *Le Testament du Villon* (musical excerpts), "A Retrospect" (D2L), excerpts from *Antheil and the Treatise on Harmony* (D2L), **Scholarly Presentation (grad): Bucknell, *Literary Modernism and Musical Aesthetics*.**

**F 4/10** **Blogs due F 4/10, 11:59 p.m., as follows:**

**BLOG GROUP 1 (last names A through H); write blogs (700-800 words).**

**BLOG GROUP 2 (last names I through N); respond to a blog entry from last week (don't respond to your own!) 300 words.**

**BLOG GROUP 3 (last names O through Z)—no blogs or replies due this week.**

**M 4/13** Pound, *The Pisan Cantos*.

**W 4/15** Pound, cont. **Student presentation (undergrad). Scholarly Presentation (grad):** Campbell, *Wireless Writing in the Age of Marconi*

**F 4/17** **Blogs due 11:59 p.m., as follows (BLOG GROUP 1—no blogs or replies due this week):**

**BLOG GROUP 2; write blogs (700-800 words).**

**BLOG GROUP 3; respond to a blog entry from last week (300 words).**

**M 4/20** Forster, *A Passage to India*, section 1 ("Mosque"). **Scholarly Presentation (grad student): Sterne, *The Audible Past***

**W 4/22** **Presentation (undergrad).** *Passage*, section 2 ("Caves") through ch. 18.

**F 4/24** **Blogs due F 4/24, 11:59 p.m. (BLOG GROUP 2: no blogs or replies due this week).**

**BLOG GROUP 3; write blogs (700-800 words)**

**BLOG GROUP 1; respond to a blog entry from last week (300 words).**

**M 4/27** *Passage*, finish the novel. **Scholarly Presentation (grad):** Jacques Attali, *Noise*

**W 4/29** Forster, cont. **Student presentation (undergrad).**

‡ Either Spivak, "Echo" (D2L) or excerpt from Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (D2L)

**5/1—ALL BLOGGERS: respond to a blog entry from last week (300 words). Due by 11:59 p.m.**

**M 5/4** Stein/Thomson, *Four Saints in Three Acts* (text/music on D2L); *M&M*: Stein (304-6).

**W 5/6** **Presentation (undergrad).** Stein, cont. Frank, "Resonating Bodies and the Poetics of Aurality" (D2L). **Scholarly Presentation (grad):** Michael North, *Dialect of Modernism*

**F 5/8—UNDERGRADS: MIDTERM PAPER DUE. No blogs (grad students may do bloggy behaviors).**

**For the coming week (5/11):** We are discussing Cunard's *Negro Anthology*, on library reserve. Browse the anthology. Be prepared to discuss what you notice about its overall organization/structure as well as specific pieces of writing.

- All students read and photocopy the following excerpts:
  - Intro and Selections Note (xi-xxix);
  - Zora Neale Hurston (24-46),
  - W.E.B. DuBois (99-103),
  - Henry Crowder (115-119)
  - Nancy Cunard (47-55, 120-24);
  - Sculpture and "Negro Art" (408-415)
- Skim the following sections. From each section, each student should select 3-4 excerpts from each section to read closely:
  - "Negro Stars" (181-213)
  - Music (214-56)
  - Poetry (259-69)
- Each student should choose, read, and photocopy ~5-10 pages of other literary, musical, or visual materials from the anthology. Be prepared to speak/write in class about what's interesting about these excerpts and how they speak to other course readings.
- Also read, from *M&M*: Hughes (375-77), Goll (378-80), Ansermet (368ff).

M 5/11 Discuss anthology, *M&M* excerpts.

W 5/13 Anthology, cont.; Winkiel, "Cunard's *Negro* and the Transnational Politics of Race" (D2L).

**For Friday, 5/15, by 11:59 p.m., ALL BLOG GROUPS: write blog entries (topics TBD).**

M 5/18 **Presentation (undergrad).** Short films: Jennings, *Listen to Britain*, *London Can Take It*, *Diary for Timothy*, *Spare Time* (D2L); Wright, *Night Mail*.

W 5/20 Article TBA. Readings from *M&M*: Brecht (343-348), Eisler (93ff). **Scholarly Presentation (grad):** György Lukács, "Reportage or Portrayal?"

**F 5/22 Undergrads—Proposal/Annotated Bib due by 11:59 p.m. No blogs due.**

M 5/25 **No class—Memorial Day.**

W 5/27 Stravinsky/Auden, *The Rake's Progress* (D2L). From *M&M*: Auden (134-136), Stravinsky (284-289), Adorno (72-79; 272-276), Lambert (300-304) **Scholarly Presentation (grad student):** Daniel Albright, *Untwisting the Serpent*.

**F 5/29 Grad students—"Position Paper" due by 11:59 p.m.**

**ALL BLOG GROUPS; respond to a blog from 5/15 (300 words). Due Friday, 5/29, 11:59 p.m.**

M 6/1 **Undergrad "Mock Conference."** Each student will present the topic and argument of his/her final paper. Details TBD. (Grad students: attendance optional.)

W 6/3 **Grad "seminar."** (Undergrads: attendance optional.) Before the seminar, read your peers' position papers. For each paper, write down 2-3 comments, questions, or suggestions for development. Also, for each paper, write down 2-3 points of connection to your own paper.

**F 6/5 No blogs due this week. You may use this week to make up one missed blog post or one reply (not both). This make-up must be posted by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, June 5.**

**Final Paper Due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, 6/12. Email to me as a Word doc or RTF file. (No other formats, please.)**

## INITIAL BLOG SETUP

To add yourself to the class blog, do the following (I encourage you to do the steps in this order, unless you already have a Wordpress account):

- (1) **Sign up for a Wordpress account at <http://signup.wordpress.com/signup>** . It's probably best to use your PDX email address, since that's what I'll use to give you posting access.

**This will set you up with your own individual blog, which is not what you'll use for our course blog postings. (Of course you're free to start a blog of your own.)** Go ahead and "click through" all the stuff about creating your own blog. A free account is adequate, unless you really feel like spending some money.

If you already have a Wordpress account, you're free to use that one too, so long as your username is recognizable (and appropriate).

Create and confirm your account by verifying your email address.

- (2) **Using my class list—and using your PDX EMAIL ADDRESSES—I have emailed the class with invitations to join Wordpress. The subject heading will say "Josh E. invites you to contribute to [Hearing Modernist Cultures](#)."**

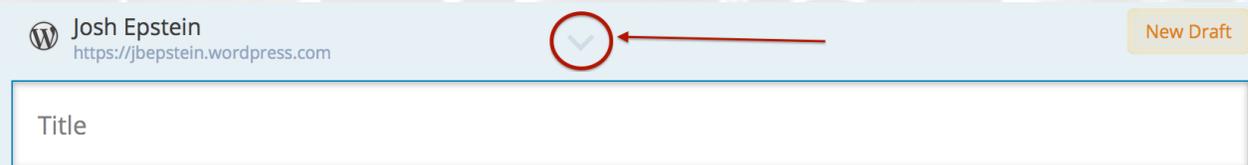
Accept my invitation (pleeeeeease?!). This will allow you to post to our class blog.

- (3) Go to our site: <http://hearingmodernism480.wordpress.com> . You now have posting privileges.

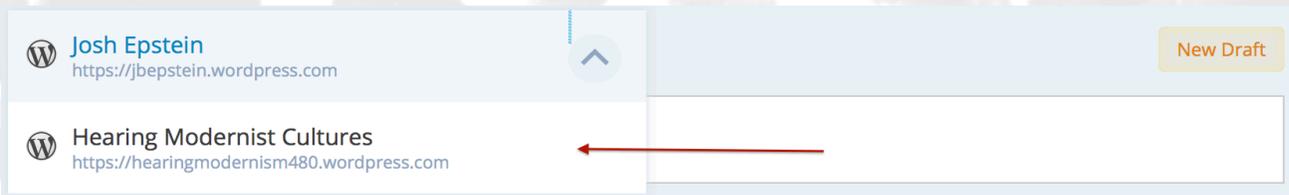
- (4) **To post a blog, click the little "pencil" image at the top right of the page.**



You will find a little drop-down menu with your name/the name of your "blog" on it.



Go to this menu and make sure to select our class blog, "Hearing Modernist Cultures."



- (5) **You're ready to blog!** We'll talk later about how to label these blogs. For now, just make sure that your name appears in the blog, and give it a recognizable title, so that I can track which topic you're posting about (e.g. "Josh's blog on Ezra Pound," or whatever).