English 431A
Modernist Poetry
Spring 2022

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Course Description:
Reading the early work of T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound praised him as “the only American who has actually trained himself and modernized himself on his own.” Pound was only one, though arguably the most vocal, of many writers and artists who were self-consciously attempting to modernize the arts—or, in his words, to “make it new.” In a poetics marked above all by invention, a new generation poets experimented with literary form in ways that demanded new ways of reading. At stake in these innovations, as these artists saw them, were fundamental questions of feeling, thought, attitude and perspective under “modern” conditions of experience. With an emphasis on careful reading, we will study their poems as unique aesthetic interventions into the matter of experience and also inquiries into the broader cultural and social concerns of modernism, such as questions of sexuality and gender.

Assignments:
3 1-page analyses 15%
2 four-page analyses 45%
three-hour final exam 30%
8 to 10 quick quizzes 10%

Text:
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