BRST 175b

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This course focuses on American writers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries who left their homes in America and settled in London and Paris to partake of the cosmopolitan culture abroad. We begin with Henry James, the great novelist from Boston, who moved to England in his thirties and became a British citizen just before his death in 1916, and who hoped to render it "impossible to an outsider to say whether I am, at a given moment, an American writing about England or an Englishman writing about America." After two classes on James's masterpieces *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881), we'll jump ahead a few decades to watch the emergence of modernism in London and Paris in the years before "The Great War." A study of *World War I* itself (through Erich Remarque's harrowing war novel and the resources of the Imperial War Museum) forms a bridge to our second unit, on the Lost Generation, which focuses on Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald. We'll read two novels by each of these great American modernist writers, as well as Hemingway's wistful memoir of life in Paris in the 20s. In a four-day excursion to Paris we have the chance to retrace the steps of these writers and to learn more about the artistic company they kept as they helped to forge the movement we call modernism. Returning to London, we'll make a study of T. S. Eliot's ground-breaking poem *The Waste Land*, researching the circumstances of its composition and publication, situating it in its London settings and in the context of the Bloomsbury Circle, and comparing it to other literary responses to the war.

Texts (available through amazon.co.uk)


Requirements

There will be three formal essays (the first 5 pages and the second two 6-8 pages each), in addition to regular informal assignments to guide students through the reading and to enrich our weekly discussions. Discussion is very much at the heart of this course; preparation and participation together will form a significant part of each student's final grade.