

One Modernity, Many Modernisms: U.S. Literature from the Armory Show to the Second World War

(Prof. Dr. Frank Kelleter)

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 1:

MODERNIZATION, MODERNITY, MODERNISMS IN THE UNITED STATES

(Required Reading: Heinz Ickstadt, "Die amerikanische Moderne," *Amerikanische Literaturgeschichte*, ed. Hubert Zapf (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996), 218-303; Paul Boyer et al., ed. *The Enduring Vision* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, latest edition), chapters "World War I" and "The 1920s."
Suggested Further Reading: Malcolm Bradbury, Richard Ruland, *From Puritanism to Postmodernism: A History of American Literature* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992), 239-368 (chapters "Outland Darts and Homemade Worlds," "The Second Flowering," "Radical Reassessments"); George Santayana, "The Genteel Tradition in American Philosophy.")

1. Define the terms *modernization*, *modernity*, and *modernism*!
2. Mass-production and mass-consumption as aspects of modernity.
3. Define the term "flapper" and discuss it as a modern phenomenon!
4. Inform yourself about recent theories of popular culture and consumption (S. Hall, J. Fiske); compare those theories to the critique of "mass culture" in the 1950s and 1960s (especially T. Adorno's concept of the "culture industry")!
5. The 1920s as a paradigmatic age of American modernity. Discuss the term "Jazz Age"!
6. Discuss the impact of the Great War on American culture and society (take into account the failure of Wilsonian idealism, the nativist movement, the red scare, etc.)!
7. What is the "genteel tradition" and what is its relationship to American modernism?
8. The importance of the modern city for modernism. Simultaneity and fragmentation as elements of modernist aesthetics.
9. Define the term *avantgarde* and situate it in the history of modernism!
10. Comment on the following statement: "In many ways, modernism is an anti-modern force."
11. What was the Armory Show and what was its importance for American culture?
12. Discuss "order" as a keyterm of modernist aesthetics!
13. Name the three major historical phases in the development of modernism (according to Heinz Ickstadt)!
14. Define Imagism and describe its influence on modernist conceptions of style!
15. What are the basic principles of the New Criticism?
16. Why does Hugh Kenner call American modernism "a homegrown world"? What counter-examples could be named?

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 2:

THE LITERATURE OF IMMIGRATION: MARY ANTIN'S *THE PROMISED LAND* (1912), ANZIA YEZIERSKA'S *HUNGRY HEARTS* (1920), RANDOLPH BOURNE'S "TRANS-NATIONAL AMERICA" (1916), AND SUI SIN FAR'S "MRS. SPRING FRAGRANCE" (1910)

(Required Reading: from Antin, *The Promised Land*: "Introduction," "Chapter 1. Within the Pale," "Chapter 9. The Promised Land," "Chapter 19. A Kingdom in the Slums," "Chapter 20. Heritage"; from Yeziarska, *Hungry Hearts*: "Wings," "How I Found America"; Bourne, "Trans-National America"; Far, "Mrs. Spring Fragrance".

Suggested Further Reading: Yeziarska, "The 'Fat of the Land'".)

1. Define the concept of the "melting pot" (relying on Israel Zangwill's use of the term)! In how far does the "melting pot"-concept become contested in the 1910s and 1920s?
2. The impact of World War I on the immigrationist debate. Take into account the rise of biblical fundamentalism and the debate about Darwinian evolution (Scopes Monkey Trial)!
3. Name some of the major ideas and books of the nativist movement!
4. Define the term "multi-culturalism"!
5. Discuss Mary Antin's *The Promised Land* as an autobiography! What are typical conventions of the genre? Where does Antin depart from traditional formulas? In how far does her membership in a minority group affect her autobiographical persona?
6. Identify Antin's intended audience!
7. Situate *The Promised Land* in the socio-political debates of its time!
8. Evaluate Antin's description of Americanization! Why does she paint such an unqualifiedly positive picture?
9. Transcendentalism and religion in *The Promised Land*: Is Antin's autobiography a spiritual autobiography?
10. Trace the influence of Ralph Waldo Emerson in *The Promised Land*!
11. Compare Anzia Yeziarska's *Hungry Hearts* to Mary Antin's *The Promised Land*! What are some of the major differences?
12. Evaluate Yeziarska's image of Americanization in "Wings"!
13. Comment on the term "hungry heart" in Yeziarska's literature!
14. Comment on the endings of Yeziarska's stories in *Hungry Hearts*!
15. Yeziarska's critique of modernity in "How I Found America."
16. Interpret the quotation from Waldo Frank at the end of "How I Found America"!
17. Summarize the thesis of Randolph Bourne's "Trans-National America"! Relate this essay to the literature of Mary Antin and Anzia Yeziarska.
18. Define Bourne's concept of "cultural pluralism"!
19. Text and sub-text in Sui Sin Far's "Mrs. Spring Fragrance."
20. Identify Far's intended audience in "Mrs. Spring Fragrance" and situate the story in the socio-political debates of its times!

**STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 3:
"MODERNIST POETRY (1): EZRA POUND AND T.S. ELIOT"**

Required Reading: Ezra Pound, F.S. Flint, "Imagist Manifestoes"; Pound, "In a Station of the Metro"; Eliot, excerpts from "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "Preludes," "The *Boston Evening Transcript*," "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock".

Suggested Further Reading: Pound, "A Pact"; Eliot, *The Waste Land*.

I. Ezra Pound

1. The significance of Ezra Pound for modernist poetry.
2. Pound's fascination with fascism.
3. The main stylistic tenets of "Imagism."
4. In how far is an "Image" (as defined by Pound) different from a metaphor?
5. Analyze the rhetoric of "A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste"!
6. "In a Station of the Metro" as an Imagist poem.
7. The poem's genesis.
8. The formal structure of the poem. (Pay attention to its syntax! What is the function of the semicolon?)
9. Word-choice in "In a Station of the Metro."
10. Formal characteristics of the poem.
11. "In a Station of the Metro" in connection to other literary forms.

II. T.S. Eliot

1. Summarize the main argument of "Tradition and the Individual Talent."
2. Relate Eliot's view of "tradition" to Pound's battle-cry "Make it new!" and to Pound's concept of *personae*!
3. Eliot's definition of the role of emotions in the poetic process.
4. Who is the speaker of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"?
5. The presence of the author in the poem. What is his attitude towards the speaker?
6. Intertextual allusions in the poem.
7. Juxtaposition as a structural principle in Eliot's poem (also see "Preludes" and "The *Boston Evening Transcript*").
8. Interpret the rhyme-scheme in the first stanza of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"!
9. How is "Prufrock" structured? How do the various parts of the poem cohere? (You may also want to have a look at *The Waste Land*.)
10. Interpret the mermaid-passage!
11. Interpret the beginning of *The Waste Land*!

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 4

MODERNIST POETRY (II): WALLACE STEVENS, WILLIAMS CARLOS WILLIAMS, ROBERT FROST

(Required Reading: Stevens, "Of Modern Poetry", "Anecdote of the Jar"; Williams, "Portrait of a Lady", "The Red Wheelbarrow", "This Is Just to Say".

Suggested Further Reading: Pound, "Canto XLV: With Usura"; Stevens, "The Emperor of Ice-Cream", "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird", "The Idea of Order at Key West"; Williams, "The Young Housewife"; e.e. cummings, "l(a).")

I. Wallace Stevens

1. "Of Modern Poetry" as a metapoetic poem.
2. What does the phrase "finding what will suffice" mean? Why is it repeated in line 10?
3. Predication in "Of Modern Poetry."
4. Interpret the last stanza!
5. Look up Stevens' concept of a "supreme fiction"!
6. "Anecdote of the Jar": the argument of the poem.
7. How is the poem's argument expressed on a formal level (rhyme, rhythm, sound)?
8. How is the poem structured? What is the function and meaning of the third stanza?
9. Intertextual allusions in "Anecdote of the Jar."
10. Interpret the title!
11. "The Emperor of Ice-Cream": Dramatic situation and its poetical representation. (Pay attention to word-choice!)
12. The role of art, according to the poem.

II. William Carlos Williams

1. Williams's view of T.S. Eliot.
2. Williams's poetics of a modernism "in the American grain."
3. Typical themes (see "This Is Just to Say" and "The Red Wheelbarrow").
4. The idea of an American "epic."
5. Williams's influence on postmodern poetry.
6. Analyze "The Young Housewife"! Pay attention to character constellation, word-choice, stanza-form, and imagery.
7. The metaphorical process in "Portrait of a Lady."

Additional: e.e. cummings

1. cummings's concept of "picturepoems."
2. The semantic meaning of "l(a)."
3. Stanza-form of "l(a)."
4. Visual puns.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 5 THE EXPERIMENTAL PROSE OF GERTRUDE STEIN

(Required Reading: from *Three Lives*: "Melanctha.")

(Suggested Further Reading: from *Tender Buttons*: "Objects".)

I. *Three Lives* as a Modernist Novel

1. Gertrude Stein's roots in naturalism.
2. Stein's vocabulary in *Three Lives*.
3. The tone of narration.
4. The significance of adjectives.
5. The influence of impressionist painting on *Three Lives*.
6. The relationship of "plot" and "story" in *Three Lives*.
7. The rendering of death in *Three Lives*.
8. The influence of Jamesian psychology on Gertrude Stein's prose (consult William James's *Principles of Psychology* and *Pragmatism*).
9. Repetition as theme and rhetorical device in *Three Lives*.
10. Characterize the narrator of *Three Lives*: How does his/her language compare with the language of the characters? What is his/her attitude to the events narrated?

II. "Melanctha"

1. "Melanctha" and the question of race.
2. Time words in "Melanctha" (pay particular attention to the meaning and function of the word "now").
3. The telling of "Melanctha" and Stein's theory of a "continuous present" (compare to Henri Bergson's theory of temporality).
4. Is "Melanctha" told by an omniscient narrator?
5. Does "Melanctha" employ the "stream-of-consciousness" technique?
6. Parallels in the time structure of the three novellas.
7. What is the meaning and significance of the term "wisdom" in "Melanctha"?
8. Jeff and Melanctha's conversations.
9. Is there a development in Jeff and Melanctha's relationship?

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 6/7:

WHATEVER GETS YOU THROUGH THE NIGHT: THE FICTION OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY, PARTICULARLY IN THE SHORT-STORY COLLECTIONS *IN OUR TIME*(1925), *MEN WITHOUT WOMEN* (1927), AND *WINNER TAKE NOTHING* (1933)

A POPULAR KIND OF MODERNISM: THE FICTION OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY (CONTINUED) AND F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S *THE GREAT GATSBY* (1925)

(Required Reading: Hemingway, "Indian Camp," "In Another Country," "Hills Like White Elephants," "Now I Lay Me," "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place," and from *A Farewell to Arms*: chapters 1, 6, 27, 41.

Suggested Further Reading: Hemingway, "A Natural History of the Dead," and *The Sun Also Rises* or *A Farewell to Arms* in their entirety.

1. Hemingway as a "popular" modernist.
2. Stylistic influences on Hemingway.
3. Describe Hemingway's use of dialogue in his short stories!
4. Analyze Hemingway's syntax in the opening paragraphs of "Hills Like White Elephants" and *A Farewell to Arms*! In how far is this a modernist syntax?
5. What is the "iceberg theory"?
6. In how far is "Hills Like White Elephants" a modernist story - not just in style, but also in content?
7. The function of food and drink in Hemingway's fiction (pay particular attention to "Hills Like White Elephants" and *The Sun Also Rises*).
8. Comment on the term "lost generation"!
9. "Hills Like White Elephants" as a metalinguistic story. In how far can speech act theory help to elucidate this story?
10. The function of the love plot in *A Farewell to Arms*. How do war plot and love plot relate to each other?
11. Metalinguistic reflections in *A Farewell to Arms*.
12. Interpret the last sentence of *The Sun Also Rises*!
13. "Indian Camp" as a story about expulsion.
14. Interpret the last sentence of "Indian Camp"!
15. Insomnia and sleeplessness as themes in Hemingway's literature.
16. "In Another Country" as a story about modernity.
17. The function of marriage in "In Another Country" (compare to *A Farewell to Arms*).
18. Interpret the titles "In Another Country" and *Men Without Women*!
19. The "impossibility of regeneration" as a general theme in modernist literature. Consider scenes of childbirth and the role of sexuality in Hemingway's fiction!
20. Discuss "Now I Lay Me" as a story about shell-shock!
21. The structure of "Now I Lay Me."
22. Nick's methods of keeping awake: Is there a common denominator to his various strategies?
23. Ritual and remembrance in "Now I Lay Me."
24. "Skill" as a central value in Hemingway's fiction: Consider the function of fishing and praying in "Now I Lay Me"!
25. The theme of formal order in "Now I Lay Me."
26. The function of naming in "Now I Lay Me."
27. *A Farewell to Arms* as a novel about World War I (you may want to consult Kelleter, *Die Moderne und der Tod*, chapter 2.4.). Comment on the following statement: "Modernism after 1914 begins to look like a peculiar but significant form of war writing."
28. The significance of the last chapter of *A Farewell to Arms*.
29. Interpret the title *A Farewell to Arms*!
30. Existentialist philosophy in *A Farewell to Arms* and "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place" (compare to Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe*).
31. Define the term "nada" in "A Clean, Well-Lighted Place"!

32. The concept of "grace under pressure" and the construction of the Hemingway-hero.
33. Hemingway's career after *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

STUDY QUESTION FOR SESSION 7/8:

"A POPULAR KIND OF MODERNISM: THE FICTION OF ERNEST HEMINGWAY (CONTINUED) AND F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S *THE GREAT GATSBY* (1925)"

"WE COULD STAND THE WAR, BUT THE PEACE HAS DONE US IN": F. SCOTT FITZGERALD'S *THE GREAT GATSBY* (CONTINUED)"

(Required Reading: Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*.

Suggested Further Reading: T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*.)

1. *The Great Gatsby* as a novel of the "Jazz Age."
2. Characterize the narrator (pay particular attention to his initial self-presentation)!
3. Literary models for Fitzgerald's narrator.
4. The presentation of New York in the novel (compare with the urban scenes in Eliot's *The Waste Land*).
5. The presence of advertisement and consumer culture.
6. The importance of "displaying" things and Fitzgerald's critique of "conspicuous consumption" (cf. Thorstein Veblen's *Theory of the Leisure Class*).
7. The influence of consumerism on the construction of character (pay particular attention to Myrtle).
8. Parallels between Myrtle and Gatsby (*sic!*). Pay close attention to the New York-party in the second chapter!
9. Is Gatsby a typical hero in the Horatio Alger-tradition?
10. Characterize Nick's relationship to Gatsby!
11. Gatsby's love for Daisy.
12. Gatsby's *recherche du temps perdu*.
13. Characterize the Buchanans! How do they relate to Gatsby?
14. Interpret Gatsby's death! What is the significance and symbolism of the events leading up to it?
15. Interpret the final paragraphs of Nick's narrative!
16. The theme of pastoralism in the novel.
17. What is Fitzgerald's understanding of the "American Dream"? How does the "American Dream" relate to Gatsby's "incurruptible dream" (147)?
18. Geography and American mythology in the novel.
19. Why does Nick describe his narrative as a "story of the West"?

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 9:

"MODERNIST DRAMA, COVERTLY AND OVERTLY: SUSAN GLASPELL'S *TRIFLES*(1916) AND EUGENE O'NEILL'S *THE EMPEROR JONES* (1920)"

(Required Reading: Glaspell, *Trifles*; O'Neill, *The Emperor Jones*.)

(Suggested Further Reading: O'Neill, *Mourning Becomes Electra*.)

I. General

1. Was there American drama before Eugene O'Neill?
2. Discuss the importance of the "little theater"-movement!
3. Define the terms "Off-Broadway" and "Off-Off-Broadway"!

II. *Trifles*

1. Discuss the importance of the Provincetown Players for the history of American drama and theater!
2. Discuss the influence of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg on modern American drama!
3. Freudian psychoanalysis, Marxism, and feminism as intellectual frameworks of modern American drama.
4. Setting and form in Susan Glaspell's *Trifles*.
5. Is *Trifles* a feminist play?
6. Interpret the title of Glaspell's play!
7. Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* and the tradition of American regionalism: similarities and differences, especially in the representation of female characters (compare to the fiction of Willa Cather).
8. Domesticity as a theme in *Trifles*.
9. Define the term "analytical drama"! In how far does *Trifles* fit this definition?
10. In how far can *Trifles* be called a modernist play?
11. Does the Freudian concept of "repression" play a role in *Trifles*?
12. Susan Glaspell's *Trifles* and the American dramatic tradition of the 20th century.

III. *The Emperor Jones*

1. The importance of O'Neill's play in the history of American theater.
2. *The Emperor Jones* as a modernist play. Pay particular attention to the influence of German expressionism!
3. Discuss the function of setting and stage-props in *The Emperor Jones*!
4. Discuss the function of sound in *The Emperor Jones*!
5. Discuss the function of clothes in *The Emperor Jones*!
6. The rendering of dialects and sociolects in *The Emperor Jones*.
7. Discuss *The Emperor Jones* as a play about race and (American) colonialism!
8. Describe the structure of the plot.
9. Interpret scene 7!
10. The influence of psychoanalysis on the play. In how far can *The Emperor Jones* be seen as being connected to Freud's ideas in *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (1930)?
11. Define the term "primitivism" and discuss the presence of primitivist discourse in *The Emperor Jones*!
12. Racialism in O'Neill's play.
13. *The Emperor Jones* and the Harlem Renaissance: influences, similarities, differences, contentions.

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 10:

"THE 'NEW NEGRO' MOVEMENT AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE"

(Required Reading: Alain Locke, "The New Negro"; Claude McKay: "The Harlem Dancer", "If We Must Die"; Countee Cullen, "Incident", "Scottsboro, Too, Is Worth Its Song"; George Samuel Schuyler, "The Negro-Art Hokum"; Langston Hughes, "The Negro Speaks of Rivers", "The Weary Blues", "I, Too", "Note on Commercial Theater", "Johannesburg Mines"; Jean Toomer, from *Cane*: "Fern"; Nella Larsen, from *Passing*: chapter 2.

Suggested Further Reading: W.E.B. Du Bois, from *The Souls of Black Folk*: excerpts in NAAL (vol. C); Langston Hughes, "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain.")

1. Define the terms "New Negro Movement" and "Harlem Renaissance"!
2. Comment on Langston Hughes's statement (made in 1940) that the Harlem Renaissance begun with "*The Emperor Jones*, Charles Gilpin, and the tom-toms at the Provincetown."
3. Primitivism, Africanism, and patronage as problems for the Harlem Renaissance-writers.
4. Interpret Langston Hughes's poem "Johannesburg Mines" against the background of Primitivism and Africanism!
5. The importance of jazz for the New Negro Movement. Consider the problems of performance and audience!
6. The impact of the stock market crash of 1929 on the New Negro Movement.
7. Discuss the relevance of W.E.B. Du Bois's concept of "double consciousness" for the New Negro Movement! In how far does the Harlem Renaissance continue Du Bois's critique of Booker T. Washington? Consider the idea of racial "uplift" and Du Bois's concept of the "talented tenth"!
8. Discuss the importance of Alain Locke's *The New Negro*-anthology! In how far is "the New Negro" different from "the Old Negro," according to Alain Locke?
9. Interpret Langston Hughes's poem "The Negro Speaks of Rivers" in the context of Locke's program.
10. What does Locke mean when he speaks of "the second African diaspora"?
11. Why does Locke call Harlem "the race capital"? What does this imply about his view of modernity?
12. The relationship of black American culture to black African culture, according to Alain Locke.
13. Define Countee Cullen and Claude McKay's understanding of black modernism and distinguish it from Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston's understanding of black modernism!
14. Form and content in Claude McKay's "The Harlem Dancer" and "If We Must Die."
15. Form and content in Countee Cullen's "Incident" and "Scottsboro, Too, Is Worth Its Song."
16. Summarize the main thesis of Langston Hughes's "The Negro Artist and the Racial Mountain," written in reaction to George Samuel Schuyler's "The Negro-Art Hokum."
17. "North" and "South" in the poetry of Langston Hughes.
18. Identify the political position of Langston Hughes's "I, Too"!
19. How does Hughes try to bypass the problem of primitivism? Consider his use of folklore and improvisation, e.g. in "The Weary Blues."
20. "North" and "South" in Jean Toomer's *Cane*. How does Toomer try to bypass the problem of primitivism?
21. The theme of alienation in Toomer's "Fern."
22. Compare the theme of return in Toomer's "Fern" and O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*!
23. In how far is "Fern" a modernist text?
24. Define Nella Larsen's concept of race in *Passing*!
25. "Passing" as a social practice: Differences between Irene Redfield and Clare Kendry.
26. In how far can "passing" be described as a modern (and maybe even modernist) practice?

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 11/12:

"LEARNING TO READ: WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY* (1929)"

"WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY* AND THE SOUTHERN FAMILY ROMANCE (CONTINUED)"

(Required Reading: Faulkner, *The Sound and the Fury*, "Appendix. Compson: 1699-1945.")

I. Background and structure

1. *The Sound and the Fury* as a Yoknapatawpha-novel.
2. In how far is *The Sound and the Fury* a modernist novel?
3. Describe the structure of the novel!
4. Donald Kartiganer speaks of "Faulkner's reversed picaresque structure." What does that mean?
5. The theme of temporality in *The Sound and the Fury* (look up Jean-Paul Sartre's essay on the novel).

II. Benjy's section

1. Give a *close* reading to the first two pages of the novel! Distinguish between *plot* and *story* and the different levels of sense-making (authorial, narratorial, figural)!
2. In how far is *closure* important for the plotting of events?
3. Identify the most important structuring devices in Benjy's monologue!
4. Count the temporal switches in Benjy's monologue! How many plot-points are introduced?
5. Characterize Benjy's experience of time, considering Sartre's essay on the novel!
6. The significance of the scene about Damuddy's death.
7. Richard Chase, quoting Lionel Trilling, writes that "there is a pathos about Benjy which is unparalleled in the American novel; little Pip in *Moby-Dick* ... is by comparison ... a mere literary idea." Can you comment on this sentence? What is Benjy's *pathos*?
8. Define the concept of *loss* in the first section of the novel!

III. Quentin's section

1. Differences and similarities between Benjy's and Quentin's monologue.
2. Identify the most important structuring devices of Quentin's monologue!
3. Reconstruct Quentin's day! What additional information does the Quentin-section contribute to the plot of the novel?
4. Characterize Quentin's experience and understanding of time!
5. Comment on Quentin's sentences "*Non fui. Sum. Fui. Non sum.*"!
6. In how far is Caddy a symbol of loss for Quentin?
7. Olga Vickery writes: "Quentin's world is almost as isolated and inflexible as Benjy's, but its order is based on abstractions rather than sensations." What does that mean?
8. Patriarchy and permanence as themes in Quentin's monologue.
9. Michael Millgate writes: "[Quentin's] idea of announcing that he and Caddy had committed incest was, paradoxically, a scheme for regaining lost innocence." In how far?
10. In how far is Quentin's family ideology a Southern ideology?
11. Comment on the Compsons' strategy of naming their children! What is the significance of naming on the figural and on the authorial level of sense-making?
12. In how far does Quentin's Northern experience influence his understanding of the Old South?
13. Quentin is told by his father: "you cannot bear to think that someday it will no longer hurt you like this now." What does that mean?

IV. Jason's section

1. What are the major characteristics of Jason's monologue, compared to Benjy's and Quentin's?

2. How are past and present related in Jason's monologue?
3. Distinguish between *stream of consciousness* and *inner monologue* as literary techniques!
4. Characterize Jason's experience of time!
5. What additional information does the Jason-section contribute to the plot of the entire novel?
6. Discuss Jason's relationship to the girl Quentin, comparing it to Quentin's relationship to his sister Caddy.
7. How do you account for Jason's character traits? What was he like as a child? Describe his relationship to Caddy when they were children, considering especially the scene about Damuddy's death!
8. The theme of loss in Jason's monologue.
9. Jason as the only "sane" member of the Compson family: In how far is this description connected to his view of the Southern family romance?
10. Interpret Uncle Maury's letter!
11. Pathos, tragedy, and comedy in the novel.
12. In how far can Jason be seen as a representative of the post-Reconstruction South?
13. Characterize Jason's attitude to the New York stock market!
14. Comment on Jason's ideology of honest work!

V. The fourth section

1. Focus and voice in the fourth section.
2. How does the fourth section change the reader's understanding of the plot?
3. What additional information is added to the plot in the fourth section?
4. In how far does the plot (and not only the narrative voice) of the fourth section present a possibility of order?
5. Characterize Dilsey's experience of time!
6. Can the character of Dilsey be seen as an example of modernist primitivism?
7. The meaning of ritual in the fourth section.
8. Comment on Dilsey's sentence "Ise seed the first and the last"!
9. The concept of *endurance* in the fourth section.
10. Closure in the novel.
11. Give a close reading to the last page of the novel!

VI. Conclusion

1. Interpret Faulkner's title! Define the concepts of *sound* and *fury* in the novel!
2. Richard Chase parodies the canonized interpretation of Faulkner's oeuvre by saying that Faulkner's characters are usually "divided into Satorises (good) and Snopeses (bad). The good people, according to this account, retain the southern ideals of honor and justice; they believe in a society based on tradition, religion, and the sense of community. The bad people are individualistic materialists who have no conception of honor, tradition, or the sanctity of family and community, whose only notion of community is, in fact, the cash nexus." In how far is this true - or not true - in *The Sound and the Fury*? (Consider Faulkner's "Introduction" to his novel!)

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 13:

"POLITICAL MODERNISM (1): SOUTHERN AGRARIANS, NORTHERN AGITATORS"

(Required Reading: from Boyer et al., *The Enduring Vision*: chapter "American Life in a Decade of Crisis at Home and Abroad"; from *I'll Take My Stand* by Twelve Southerners: John Crowe Ransom, "A Statement of Principles"; Clifford Odets, *Waiting for Lefty*.)

Suggested Further Reading: from *The Enduring Vision*: "Crash, Depression, and New Deal"; from *I'll Take My Stand*: Donald Davidson, "A Mirror for Artists"; Ezra Pound, "Canto XLV: With Usura".)

I. General

1. Define the term "political modernism"!
2. The cultural impact of the Great Depression and the New Deal.
3. Distinguish between the First and the Second New Deal!
4. In how far is it justified to speak of the American Thirties as "the Red Decade"?

II. *I'll Take My Stand*

1. Who (and what) are the "Fugitive" writers of the 1920s?
2. Interpret the title *I'll Take My Stand*!
3. The theme of secession in *I'll Take My Stand*: Political, economic, and cultural dimensions of the Agrarian argument.
4. Comment on John Crowe Ransom's sentence: "The carpet-baggers are again in our midst"!
5. Characterize Ransom's use and understanding of the term "America"!
6. Interpret the title of Ransom's essay "Reconstructed but Unregenerate"!
7. Is there a discourse of Europeanism in early twentieth-century American culture? What would be its chief elements?
8. Outline Ransom's critique of modern production and modern consumption!
9. Outline Ransom's critique of "progress"! Pay particular attention to the meaning of the concept of "leisure"! In how far has leisure always been a central ideological value in the Southern tradition?
10. The Vanderbilt Agrarians and the Republican Tradition.
11. In how far is *I'll Take My Stand* a modernist book?
12. Describe various strategies among the Vanderbilt Agrarians to deal with the historical problem of Southern slavery! In particular, inform yourself about Frank Owsley's revisionism and its influence on American historiography!
13. The Agrarian program as a continuation of the "planter legend" and "cavalier myth" (cf. William R. Taylor's landmark study *Cavalier and Yankee*, 1961).
14. Why does Donald Davidson call T.S. Eliot a "romantic"?
15. Compare the Southern Agrarian Revival to other regionalist movements of the time!
16. Southern Agrarianism and the New Criticism.

II. *Waiting for Lefty*

1. What is agitprop drama? In how far does *Waiting for Lefty* belong into this category?
2. Discuss *Waiting for Lefty* as a commentary on the Second New Deal!
3. Discuss the function of "Fatt"!
4. Describe the structure of the play!
5. Discuss the function of the four episodes! What do these episodes have in common, in terms of structure and argument?
6. Characterize Odets's critique of the media in *Waiting for Lefty*!
7. Characterize Odets's image of masculinity in *Waiting for Lefty*!
8. The presence of FDR in *Waiting for Lefty*.
9. Americanism in *Waiting for Lefty*: Describe its function and account for its presence in a communist play!
10. Interpret the ending of the play, paying particular attention to the role of the audience!

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR SESSION 14:

"POLITICAL MODERNISM (2): JOHN DOS PASSOS'S *U.S.A.* (1930-1938) AND RICHARD WRIGHT'S *NATIVE SON* (1940)"

Required Reading: Dos Passos, from *The Big Money*: "Newsreel LXVIII", "The Camera Eye (51)", "Mary French"; Wright, from *Native Son*: "Book 3. Fate."

I. General

1. 1935 as a watershed in the American cultural climate.
2. What was the "Popular Front"? In how far did it influence American culture?
3. Is *The Enduring Vision* justified in speaking of the late Thirties as an era of "cultural nationalism"? What national and international developments have contributed to this era?

II. U.S.A.

1. The significance of Dos Passos's novel *Manhattan Transfer*.
2. *U.S.A.* as an example of political modernism.
3. Discuss *U.S.A.* as an epic!
4. Describe the structure of Dos Passos's trilogy.
5. The function of the narrative chapters and their inter-relation with the other sections.
6. The function of the "Newsreels" and their inter-relation with the other sections.
7. The function of the "Camera Eye"-passages and their inter-relation with the other sections.
8. The function of the biographical chapters and their inter-relation with the other sections.
9. The private and the political in *U.S.A.*
10. Reflections of Marxist theory in the form of Dos Passos's trilogy.
11. Would you describe the final "Mary French"-chapter as communist literature?
12. The theme of language-use and ideology in the final "Mary French"-chapter.
13. Interpret Eveline Johnson's cocktail party (and compare it to similar party scenes in modern American literature, e.g. *The Great Gatsby*)!
14. What is the function of George Barrow in the final "Mary French"-chapter?
15. Interpret the last paragraph of the final "Mary French"-chapter!
16. Discuss *U.S.A.* as a satire!

III. Native Son

1. Richard Wright's *Native Son* and the New Negro Movement: In how far can Wright's novel be seen as a radical point of departure?
2. Richard Wright and the Federal Writers Project of the WPA.
3. Why did Wright come to regret the success of his early collection of short stories, *Uncle Tom's Children*?
4. Stylistic and philosophical influences on *Native Son*.
5. Bigger Thomas as a character beyond racial uplift and primitivism.
6. The theme of charity in *Native Son*.
7. The function of violence in *Native Son*.
8. Characterize Bigger Thomas's attitude towards black religion.
9. Characterize Bigger Thomas's attitude towards the black political intelligentsia.
10. "Double consciousness" in *Native Son*.
11. Interpret the title of Wright's novel!
12. The theme of communication in *Native Son*.
13. Marxism and Existentialism in *Native Son*.
14. The importance of *Native Son* for the future course of (African) American literature.