

**GE CAT I COURSE! GE CAT I COURSE! GE CAT I COURSE!**

## **Modern Western Literature and Culture**

**COLT 151xg, Class #22005R, SUMMER 2008, MTWTh 1-3:05, THH 106**



Wyndham Lewis, "Workshop" (1914-5)

This class will survey major developments in literature from the seventeenth century through the contemporary period. Our journey will take us from Neo-Classicism in Europe through the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Modernism, and Existentialism. We will accompany our study of literature with the consideration of various movements in the visual arts, particularly Cubism and Dada and Surrealism in the twentieth century. We will also consider the works of women writers as they emerge in these periods and inquire into the philosophical arguments that have resulted in their omission or inclusion in the canon and the analyses provided by pioneer feminists such as Virginia Woolf and Simone de Beauvoir.

As we trace the evolution of scientific knowledge and its influence on the transformation of society and literary genres, we will also study the emergence of the irrational and non-linear forms of knowledge and expression in the more modern forms of art. As quantum theory, relativity theory, and psychology open the realms of uncertainty, dream, and non-ordinary states of consciousness to the creative imagination, artists and writers turn toward interior models and new frontiers of discovery and experimentation. As we move away from the foundations of humanism and the Enlightenment, and approach the destabilizing concepts of the postmodern, we are obliged to question the roles of reason, "progress," and concepts such as identity, memory and gender as they change the meaning of our understanding of what is meant by the "Western tradition in literature."

Our readings will cover works by writers such as Molière, Descartes, Voltaire, Mary Shelley, Ibsen, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Kafka, Woolf, Freud, de Beauvoir, Ionesco and Beckett. Films and slide lectures will accompany our time-travel through the last three centuries of literary creation. Students will also have the opportunity to work in a multimedia lab where they will learn how to create video projects for the class.

**Professor Gloria Orenstein**  
**orenstei@usc.edu, THH 174, x00100**

**GE CAT I COURSE! GE CAT I COURSE! GE CAT I COURSE!**