**English 2250 Midterm Exam 2: American Modernism**

**EXAM PROMPT:**

**In a five page single-spaced essay, address the following questions. Please note the page requirement for each question below.**

**1. Define and explain the modernist era through the literature we have covered in class. Consider our notes, my lectures, the referential material in our book, and a close reading of the texts in your response. Your analysis must include two short stories of your choice and two poems of your choice (from those we have gone over in class/assigned in our syllabus). In addition, please reference Faulkner’s “A Rose for Emily” (765) *or* Steinbeck’s “The Chrysanthemums” (846) in your overall study. To be clear, five selections are required: Two Modernist Short Stories of your choice, Two Modernist Poems of your choice, plus Faulkner *or*Steinbeck. Page requirement: 3 full pages.**

**2. Apply one of the following studies to the novel *Miss Lonelyhearts:* Cultural, Formal, Economic or Philosophical. Please see below for an explanation of these studies.  Page requirement: 1 full page.**

**3. After watching Eugene O’Neill’s play *A Long Day’s Journey Into Night* (in Content), explain how the play deals with modernist themes and styles. For example, how do we see the interplay of different art forms, and how do we assess the representation of hope/despair, opportunity and economic hardship, choice and circumstance, and/or other modernist tropes? Page requirement: 1 full page.**

**Literary Studies for Question 2 of the Midterm**

For Question #2 you are choosing to offer either a cultural, formal, economic **or** a philosophical study of the novel *Miss Lonelyhearts*. Depending on which study you choose, address the following questions prompted by that study.

**Option 1: Cultural Study:**

Cultural studies examine how a novel represents the idea of culture and cultural practices. This study may also include an examination of subcultures that further define or resist dominant cultures. A study of culture can focus on the representation of groups of people, customs and practices, and ideals and ideologies. After reading *Miss Lonelyhearts*in its entirety, explain how the novel represents women and minorities (African-American, LGBTQ, etc.), and how this representation compares to those we have read so far by other modernist writers? Moreover, how does the novel represent religion (Christianity and Buddhism) and violence during the 1930s, and what this could mean?

**Option 2: Formal Study:**

After reading *Miss Lonelyhearts* in its entirety, examine the formal and stylistic devices used in the novel. What is the meaning of its narrative style, its structure, the uses of symbolism, names and metaphors, its uses of satire (in part and in whole), and/or other stylistic elements that appear in your close reading of the novel? Moreover, how does the novel represent the value of art, and how does this compare to the ways other modernists (that we've read so far) have represented it?

**Option 3: Economic Study:**

*Miss Lonelyhearts* is written during the Depression Era (1930s) in American history. After reading the novel in its entirety, explain how economics and class is depicted, whether explicitly or implicitly. Furthermore, how does the novel convey an ideology of economics that creates a view of others based on what they have, how much money they make, or their value in relation to the objectives of others?

**Option 4: Philosophical Study:**

We have already read about the ideas of existentialism, and the ways it appears in many modernist works. After reading *Miss Lonelyhearts* in its entirety, explain what makes the novel an existentialist work or not. Consider the moral dilemmas represented in the novel, and what choices characters have. What do you make of character's actions or inactions, and what is the meaning of these actions/inactions by the time we get to the end? You can also consider characters’ motives and intentions while analyzing their actions.

 Again, you are choosing just **one** of the options above to apply to Question 2 of the Midterm.

**General Guidelines for the Exam:**

**This midterm exam essay is single-spaced. For the sake of clarity and organization, please use the numbers 1, 2 and 3 to cover the corresponding questions in your paper.**

**Avoid simple summaries of the stories/poems/play. Present an analysis of their meaning in relation to how they represent modernism, or how they support your particular study (for Question 2).**

**The midterm exam is due Sunday April 11 by 11:59pm. Please do not submit it before Sunday April 11 or after 11:59pm. To be fair to all students, no late work will be accepted.**