



EN 6923/4923

American Novel after 1900

## Modernism and Mass Culture

Dr. Ted Atkinson / Spring 2016 / TTH 9:30-10:45 AM

In this course, we will explore the complex relationship between modernism and the rise of mass culture in the U.S. during the early twentieth century. We will study how the meaning of “literary modernism” has changed over time—from an initial conception built on a clear distinction between art and popular culture to recent scholarly reassessments that unsettle the hierarchical model of highbrow, middlebrow, and lowbrow categories in American culture. Reading a representative selection of novels, drawing on relevant literary and cultural theory, and mining the vast archive of popular culture (film, radio, music, [little] magazines, advertising, and fashion) will enable us to examine the formal properties of modernist texts and to place them in illuminating historical and cultural contexts.

Possible texts: Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby; Larsen, Passing; Loos, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes; Faulkner, As I Lay Dying or Sanctuary; West, A Cool Million; Chandler, The Big Sleep; Hemingway, To Have and Have Not

