

Sophister Module Description Template 2023-24

Full Name: The Art of Writing War: David Jones's *In Parenthesis*

Short Name: David Jones's *In Parenthesis*

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Dr Rosie Lavan, lavanro@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught: HT

Year: JS

Module Content:

In Parenthesis is a poem of seven parts. We will devote a week to each part of the poem, discussing our readings and observations in detail. This will be supplemented by close attention to some of Jones's key essays, his visual art, and the work of his contemporaries, in art and poetry.

Learning Outcomes:

On successful completion of these course, students should be able to:

1. Analyse and appraise Jones's poetry, with a particular sensitivity to questions of language, form, and allusion
2. Discuss *In Parenthesis* in relation to Jones's visual art and critical prose, and in relation to the literature and visual art of his contemporaries
3. Evaluate a range of theoretical and critical arguments, and challenge, extend, or synthesise them
4. Propose and justify their own readings of *In Parenthesis* and other works encountered on the module
5. Reflect on the issues raised by this module, and apply insights and methodologies developed here elsewhere in their study

Learning Aims:

This module will focus on David Jones's *In Parenthesis* (1937). Despite his relative obscurity, Jones is an essential figure in the story of British Modernism, both in poetry and in visual art, and the years since the centenary of the First World War have seen a significant resurgence of critical interest in his work. *In Parenthesis*, his long poem based on his own experience as a soldier in World War One, was recognized at the time of its publication as a major work. In this module, we will read the poem closely, considering issues including form, language, and genre, and delving into the complex and varied allusions Jones built into his poem – to Catholicism, Welsh mythology, Roman Britain, and the London of his childhood and youth. We will look at Jones's strategies for representing the body in pain, perception and sense experience, space, the natural world, and violence, and reflect on how these issues resonate more widely in Modernism. We will explore his essays, to illuminate his

convictions about craft, ritual, and the relationship between the human, the animal, and the non-human, man-made, weapons of mass warfare. We will consider his work alongside other writers of the period, including T. S. Eliot, Wilfred Owen, James Joyce, and Isaac Rosenberg, and we will be constantly attentive to the relationship between his poetry and visual art – so contemporary artists including Stanley Spencer, Mark Gertler, and Paul Nash will also be discussed. Finally, we will explore a range of critical and theoretical engagements with Jones's work and the literature of war more broadly.

Assessment Details:

- Type of Assessment: Continuous
- Close Reading Exercise due week 6 (2000 words): 30%
- Essay due at the end of term (4000 words) 70%
- Number of Components: Two
- Word Count of Component(s): 2000 and 4000
- Percentage Value of Component(s): 30%; 70%

Preliminary Reading List:

Primary Texts

David Jones, *In Parenthesis* – any Faber edition.

Jones's essays were collected in the Faber volumes *Epoch and Artist* and *Dai Greatcoat*: selected essays will be made available as pdfs.

Similarly, online/pdf access to examples of Jones's visual art will be provided. For those wishing to explore this in advance, I would recommend Ariane Bankes and Paul Hills, *The Art of David Jones: Vision and Memory* (Farnham: Lund Humphries, 2015).

Initial Recommendations for Secondary Reading

Armstrong, Tim, *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Polity, 2005).

Dilworth, Thomas, *David Jones: Engraver, Soldier, Painter, Poet* (London: Cape, 2017).

Fussell, Paul, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Twenty-fifth Anniversary Edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Hills, Paul, ed., *David Jones: Artist and Poet* (Warwick Studies in the European Humanities. Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1997).

Miles, Jonathan, and Derek Shiel, *David Jones: The Maker Unmade* (Bridgend: Seren, 1995).

Sherry, Vincent, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Literature of the First World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

Svensden, Anna, and Jasmine Hunter Evans eds., *Religion & Literature* 49:1 (Spring 2017) – Special Issue: *David Jones: Towards a Theology of History*.

Please note:

School of English

- **Curricular information is subject to change.**
- **Information is displayed only for guidance purposes, relates to the current academic year only and is subject to change.**