

Sophister Module Description Template 2023-24

Full Name: Samuel Beckett: Afterlives

Short Name: Beckett

Lecturer Name and Email Address: Dr Julie Bates batesju@tcd.ie

ECTS Weighting: 10

Semester Taught: MT

Year: SS

Module Content:

This module explores Beckett's creative legacy and continuing relevance for several contemporary writers and an artist whose work is motivated by similar thematic, formal or conceptual preoccupations as Beckett's writing. The contemporary figures under study are the writers Claire-Louise Bennett, Anna Burns, Brian Dillon, Enda Walsh, and the artist Brian O'Doherty. The first creative assignment will feature engagement with recorded audio and film productions of Beckett's works, which will be made available through Blackboard.

Week-by-week outline and key texts:

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2+3: Modernist Ruins

- Beckett: 'The Capital of the Ruins' (1946), *Lessness* (1970), *That Time* (1975)
- Brian Dillon: *Sanctuary* (2001)

Week 4+5: Surreal Everyday

- Beckett: *Watt* (1953), *Happy Days* (1961)
- Claire-Louise Bennett: *Pond* (2015)

Week 6+8: Farcical Intensity

- Beckett: *Waiting for Godot* (1953), *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958)
- Enda Walsh: *Misterman* (2011)

Week 9+10: Menacing Worlds

- Beckett: 'The Expelled' (1946), *Molloy* (1951), *Endgame* (1957)
- Anna Burns: *Milkman* (2018)

Week 11+12: Intermedial Creativity

- Beckett: *Film* (1964), *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1965), *Quad* (1981)
- Brian O'Doherty: *Aspen 5+6* (1967)

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop a sophisticated understanding of Beckett's writing through close reading, private research, class discussion, and interaction with his manuscripts
- Map the relationship between Beckett's creative practice and that of the contemporary writers and artist under study
- Explore Beckett's archive and respond creatively to his manuscripts and letters. If access to the archive is not possible, we will consider ideas related to adaptation, media and performance when engaging with productions of Beckett's texts

Learning Aims:

- Introduce students to Beckett's novels, plays, short stories, film, and archive
- Introduce students to the contemporary writers and artist on the module
- Identify aspects of Beckett's creative practice that remain relevant in contemporary literature and art

Assessment Details:

Number of Components: 2

- 1) Creative response following engagement with Beckett's archival materials in Trinity's Manuscripts library OR with recorded productions of Beckett's works (1,500 words, 25%)
- 2) Essay (3,500 words, 75%)

Preliminary Reading List:

Primary material

Texts and recordings of Beckett's work will be made available through Blackboard. I have indicated the main texts that we will focus on each week in the week-to-week outline – you should read these in advance of each lecture. Each week features texts by Beckett in a range of media, genres, and of differing lengths.

Secondary material

James Knowlson's *Damned to Fame* (1996), Anthony Cronin's *The Last Modernist* (1996), and Andrew Gibson's *Samuel Beckett* (2009) are all useful biographical studies. In terms of secondary reading, good starting points are *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett* (2004), and the two *Cambridge Companions to Beckett* (2006, 2015). I will recommend and provide suitable secondary and critical resources to support our discussions throughout the course.

Please note:

- ***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.**

