

Professor Potolsky (m.potolsky@utah.edu)  
Office: 3617 LNCO

Office Hours: TH 2:00-3:20  
and by appointment

**Required Readings** (Available at the Campus Bookstore; please buy these editions)

Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, Venus in Furs (Penguin)  
Walter Pater, Studies in the History of the Renaissance (Oxford)  
Joris-Karl Huysmans, Against Nature (Penguin)  
Gabriele D'Annunzio, Pleasure (Penguin)  
Vernon Lee, Hauntings (Broadview)  
Oscar Wilde, Salomé (Dover)  
Michael Field, Michael Field, the Poet (Broadview)

Other texts available through the course Canvas page (marked “c” on the syllabus)

**Course Description and Outcomes:** This course will look at the major works of the decadent movement, an important strand in European modernism, which flourished, if that is the right word for it, in the later half the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth. We will read poetry, prose, stories, and novels by writers from France, England, Austria, and Italy. Authors studied will include Baudelaire, Swinburne, Sacher-Masoch, Pater, Huysmans, Vernon Lee, Michael Field, D'Annunzio, and Wilde.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon completion of this course, students will have knowledge of the history and uses of the concept of decadence, a familiarity with the main figures in the European decadent movement, and will improve their skills in close-reading and critical writing.

**Attendance and Participation:** You are required to be here, to complete all the reading before the class in which we will discuss it, and to participate actively in class discussion. I expect everyone to participate in class every day—plan to come in with something to say as I will call on people at random. You are allowed three absences, with no need for excuses or doctors notes. Any more than three, excused or not, will affect your grade in the course; more than five will result in a failing participation grade. If you miss more than 50% of the class meetings, you will fail the course.

**Writing Assignments:** Assignments include an in-class midterm and final exams and a semester project, as well as daily in-class writing exercises, occasional reading quizzes and other informal and group assignments. You must turn in all formal assignments to receive a passing grade in the course. You are responsible for finding out about all assignments and handouts given while you are absent—no excuses. Please be sure to check the class Canvas site regularly for changes. No late assignments will be accepted unless you clear it with me before the due date.

**Grading:** Course grades will be determined according to the following breakdown, with some additional allowance for marked improvement over the course of the semester:

In-Class Midterm: 20%  
In-Class Final: 25%

Semester Project: 30%  
Quizzes, Attendance, and Participation: 25%

**Due Dates:** Except for in-class writing (which you will submit on paper), assignments will be turned in through our class Canvas page and will be due by midnight on the specified date. Please double space all written assignments and proofread carefully before submitting.

In-Class Writing Checks: Oct 16, Dec 2  
Midterm Exam: Thursday, Oct 20, in class

Semester Project: Thursday, Nov 20  
Final Exam: Wednesday, Dec 10 3:30-5:30

**English Department Statement of Belonging:** Literature allows us to imagine the lives of others and broaden our perspectives. How we talk about it together, in the physical and virtual classroom, is part of that process. Our diverse identities and experiences will inform and enhance those discussions. As we approach sometimes difficult topics, each member of the class is expected to foster a respectful, generous, and supportive classroom environment that makes room for productive difference and reasoned debate.

**Electronic Devices:** In the interest of creating a vibrant intellectual community, all mobile electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class. Laptops and e-readers are allowed for accessing class materials or taking notes, but if they become a disruption, I reserve the right to prohibit them from the classroom. Please be considerate to your classmates desire to learn and do not spend the class period watching porn or editing photos—at least in their line of sight.

**Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:** It is expected that students adhere to University of Utah policies regarding academic honesty, including but not limited to refraining from cheating, plagiarizing, misrepresenting one's work, and/or inappropriately collaborating. This includes the use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools without citation, documentation, or authorization. Students are expected to adhere to the prescribed professional and ethical standards of the profession/discipline for which they are preparing. Any student who engages in academic dishonesty or who violates the professional and ethical standards for their profession/discipline may be subject to academic sanctions as per the University of Utah's [Student Code](#).

**Drop/Withdrawal Policies:** Students may drop a course within the first two weeks of a given semester without any penalties. Students may officially withdraw (W) from a class or all classes after the drop deadline through the midpoint of a course. A "W" grade is recorded on the transcript and appropriate tuition/fees are assessed. The grade "W" is not used in calculating the student's GPA. For deadlines to withdraw from full-term, first, and second session classes, see the U's [Academic Calendar](#).

**Students with Disabilities (ADA):** *The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability & Access, 162 Olpin Union Building, 801-581-5020. CDA will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the [Center for Disability & Access](#). To read the full accommodations policy for the University of Utah, please see [Section Q](#).*

**University Safety Statement:** The University of Utah values the safety of all campus community members. To report suspicious activity or to request a security escort, call Campus Police at 801-585-COPS (2677). You will receive important emergency alerts and safety messages via text messages. For more information regarding safety, including helpful videos, visit [SafeU](#).

**Addressing Sexual Misconduct:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a civil rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran's status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the [Title IX Coordinator](#) in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or in the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the [Center for Student Wellness](#), 426SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the [Department of Public Safety](#), 801-585-COPS (2677).

**Note:** This syllabus is meant to serve as an outline and guide for our course, and I may modify it with reasonable notice to you. Any changes will be announced in class and posted on Canvas under Announcements.

## Syllabus and Schedule of Assignments

<b>Week 1</b>	Aug 19: Aug 21:	Introduction to the Course Defining Decadence
<b>Week 2</b>	Aug 26: Aug 28:	Decadent Poems (c) Decadent Poems (c)
<b>Week 3</b>	Sept 2: Sept 4:	Sacher-Masoch, <u>Venus in Furs</u> Sacher-Masoch, <u>Venus in Furs</u>
<b>Week 4</b>	Sept 9: Sept 11:	Pater, <u>The Renaissance</u> Pater, <u>The Renaissance</u>
<b>Week 5</b>	Sept 16: Sept 18:	Pater, <u>The Renaissance</u> Pater, <u>The Renaissance</u>
<b>Week 6</b>	Sept 23: Sept 25:	Huysmans, <u>Against Nature</u> Huysmans, <u>Against Nature</u>
<b>Week 7</b>	Sept 30: Oct 2:	Huysmans, <u>Against Nature</u> In-Class Midterm Exam
<b>Week 8</b>	Oct 7,9:	<b>No Class (Fall Break)</b>
<b>Week 9</b>	Oct 14: Oct 16:	D'Annunzio, <u>Pleasure</u> D'Annunzio, <u>Pleasure</u>
<b>Week 10</b>	Oct 21: Oct 23:	D'Annunzio, <u>Pleasure</u> D'Annunzio, <u>Pleasure</u>
<b>Week 11</b>	Oct 28: Oct 30:	Lee, <u>Hauntings</u> Lee, <u>Hauntings</u>
<b>Week 12</b>	Nov 11: Nov 13:	Lee, <u>Hauntings</u> <b>No Class (Out of Town)</b>
<b>Week 13</b>	Nov 18: Nov 20:	Michael Field, poems from <u>Long Ago</u> Michael Field, poems from <u>Sight and Song</u>
<b>Week 14</b>	Nov 25: Nov 27:	Wilde and Beardsley, <u>Salomé</u> <b>No Class (Thanksgiving)</b>
<b>Week 15</b>	Dec 2: Dec 4:	Wilde and Beardsley, <u>Salomé</u> Summary, Review, and Conclusion