

TERM: Spring 2026

COURSE NUMBER & CATEGORY: ENGL 5000: Seminar: Advanced Studies

COURSE TITLE: T.S. Eliot

SECTION TIMES/DAYS: Thursday, 4:30 PM – 7:00 PM

INSTRUCTOR: Jayme Stayer, S.J.

COURSE DESCRIPTION/PRINCIPAL TOPICS:

One of the most influential figures in modern literature, T. S. Eliot is known for his experimental poetry and for his later work expressing Christian feeling. His critical writings dominated literary study for half a century; his plays ran on Broadway; his poems for children became the Tony-award winning *Cats*. Eliot has also long been a controversial figure, early on because of his radical modernism, later because of his conservative politics, as well as some expressions of anti-Semitism, racism, and misogyny.

Just within the past fifteen years, an enormous amount of Eliot's work has been published or collected for the first time: nine volumes of letters (and still counting), a two-volume scholarly edition of his poems, an eight-volume Complete Prose, and over a thousand love letters that had been sequestered for a half century. These "new" publications emerging from the archives have shaken up entrenched views of who Eliot was; his work is now considered fertile ground for scholars working in sexuality and gender, ecocriticism, decolonial studies, and other areas of contemporary concern.

In this seminar, we will study a broad range of Eliot's poems, plays, and essays, confront the controversies, and examine the new editions. We will try to understand "what the fuss is about"—meaning both why Eliot's work has been so important and why aspects of his legacy have been so contested—with the goal of working toward our own conclusions.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:

1. By engaging with the course readings, participating in seminar-style discussion, and writing a research paper, students will develop the skills necessary to take part in the conversation of academic professionals.
2. Students will dive deeply into the work of one author, engaging his poetry, prose, theory, biography, and historical contexts.
3. Moving between primary texts of the author and secondary scholarship on the author, students will learn how to bring different critical lenses to bear: feminism, decolonialism, sexuality and gender studies, etc.
4. For their research projects, (undergrads: 8-10 pages; graduate students: 15-20 pages), students will first turn in a working thesis, then a working bibliography (lightly annotated), then a proposal, then an abstract, all before turning in the final draft.

CLASS LEVEL RESTRICTION:

Graduate Only

RECOMMENDED/PREREQUISITES:

N/A

This course fulfills the following M.A. Program Requirement:

Literature Elective