American fiction in this period embodies the variety and anxiety of an era of rapid change. How writers and critics attempted to define and respond to the idea of the “new” or the “transformed” illuminates specific works of literary art and the cultural contexts in which they were created. In literary practice and critical discourse, passages from realism to naturalism to modernism, and the reinvention of forms in an era of variety and synthesis, help shape the imagination of domestic and political reality. Through readings in fiction and selected critical essays, this course explores an aesthetic of change forged by working artists and analyzed by critics. The course is intended as a survey of forms and practices with an emphasis on modernism and contemporary, eclectic style.