



## **Conceptualizing the Universe – Physical Science and the ‘Physics’ of Modernist Visual Art and Poetry**

### **Course Description**

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What is the nature of the universe? – In this seminar we will tackle this age-old question with special view to conceptualizations of the universe in turn-of-the-century physics, modernist literature, and modernist visual art. We will take into focus modernist subjects and means of (re)presentation and explore their possible connections to new notions about the universe following, for example, Wilhelm Conrad Röntgen’s discovery of X-rays (1895), Henri Becquerel’s detection of radioactivity (1896) or Albert Einstein’s Special Theory of Relativity (1905). Additionally, we will explore differences and shared means as well as the limits of knowledge formation in both natural science and the arts. Theoretical explorations will be followed by critical examinations of selected literary and visual artworks by Mina Loy, William Carlos Williams, Joseph Cornell, Arthur Dove, and others. Course participation does not require physical preknowledge nor an in-depth engagement with physical concepts but instead calls for interdisciplinary openness, philosophical interest, and the willingness to engage with artistic negotiations of our universe.