With the publication of his seminal novel *White Noise*, Don DeLillo was elevated into the pantheon of great American writers. His novels are admired and studied for their narrative technique, political themes, and prophetic commentary on the cultural crises affecting contemporary America. In an age dominated by the image, DeLillo’s fiction encourages the reader to think historically about such matters as the Cold War, the assassination of President Kennedy, threats to the environment, and terrorism. This *Companion* charts the shape of DeLillo’s career, his relation to twentieth-century aesthetics, and his major themes. It also provides in-depth assessments of his best-known novels – *White Noise, Libra, and Underworld* – which have become required reading not only for students of American literature, but for everyone interested in the history and the future of American culture.

*A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book*
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO
DON DELILLO

EDITED BY
JOHN N. DUVALL

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Edited by John N. Duvall
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ABBREVIATIONS

Citations to DeLillo’s novels are made parenthetically in this volume. Full publication information for these novels appears in the Select Bibliography.

A Americana (1971)
BA The Body Artist (2001)
C Cosmopolis (2003)
EZ End Zone (1972)
FM Falling Man (2007)
GJS Great Jones Street (1973)
L Libra (1988)
M Mao II (1991)
N The Names (1982)
P Players (1977)
RD Running Dog (1978)
RS Ratner’s Star (1976)
U Underworld (1997)
WN White Noise (1985)
CHRONOLOGY OF DELILLO’S LIFE AND WORK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>Don DeLillo’s father emigrates with his family from Italy to the USA at the age of nine, eventually becoming an auditor for a life insurance company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Don DeLillo is born on November 20 in a working-class, Italian-American, North Bronx neighborhood of New York City.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>Soviet Union develops the atomic bomb; DeLillo is a sophomore in high school.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td>DeLillo graduates from Cardinal Hayes High School in the Bronx.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>DeLillo earns his BA in Communication Arts from Fordham University.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>DeLillo takes a job at Ogilvy &amp; Mather, an advertising agency, as a copywriter.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>President John F. Kennedy is assassinated on November 22.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>DeLillo leaves Ogilvy &amp; Mather to become a freelance writer.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>USA begins saturation bombing and a major troop build-up in Vietnam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>DeLillo begins working on his first novel.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td>DeLillo’s third novel, <em>Great Jones Street</em>, is published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>1974</td>
<td>Richard Nixon resigns as President of the USA on August 8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>DeLillo marries Barbara Bennett; USA withdraws from Vietnam.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>DeLillo’s fourth novel, <em>Ratner’s Star</em>, is published.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>DeLillo wins a Guggenheim Fellowship that allows him to spend the next two years in Greece, which forms the setting for his next novel, <em>The Names</em>. DeLillo publishes a short play, <em>The Engineer of Moonlight</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td><em>White Noise</em> wins the National Book Award. DeLillo’s play <em>The Day Room</em> is published.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>DeLillo’s ninth novel, <em>Libra</em> is published; it is a main selection of the Book of the Month Club.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>DeLillo’s tenth novel, <em>Mao II</em>, is published in the USA; DeLillo completes the screenplay for <em>Game 6</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>DeLillo’s novella “Pafko at the Wall” (which becomes the Prologue to <em>Underworld</em>) is published in <em>Harper’s Bazaar</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>DeLillo is awarded the Jerusalem Prize at the Jerusalem International Book Fair; DeLillo’s play <em>Valparaiso</em> is published and premières at the American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>The American Academy of Arts and Letters awards DeLillo the Howells Medal for <em>Underworld</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>DeLillo’s thirteenth novel, <em>Cosmopolis</em>, is published.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHRONOLOGY OF DELILLO’S LIFE AND WORK

2005  Game 6 (directed by Michael Hoffman) premières at the Sundance Film Festival.

2006  DeLillo’s play Love-Lies-Bleeding is published and premières in Chicago.

2007  DeLillo’s fourteenth novel, Falling Man, is published on June 5.