

EARLY TWENTIETH-CENTURY FICTION

<http://ezofic14.blogs.rutgers.edu>

MTH 3 (Mondays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.–12:50 p.m.) in Scott 216

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of novels and stories in English from the 1890–1950 period. The goal of the course is to understand fiction’s many ways of being modern in a period marked by rapid changes in social life. The course emphasizes the social significance of literary style, the changing uses of genres like the coming-of-age novel, and the transformation of English into a global literary language. Texts include novels or stories by Henry James, James Joyce, Joseph Conrad, William Faulkner, Zora Neale Hurston, Virginia Woolf, Dorothy Sayers, Mulk Raj Anand, R. K. Narayan, and Djuna Barnes. Though the enormous breadth of the production of fiction in English in this period makes any comprehensive survey inconceivable, the readings are chosen to indicate the *range* of that production. This range—this diversity, in all senses, stylistic, thematic, generic, geographic, socioeconomic—is the most important aspect of this period’s fiction. We will read fictions from the U. S., England, Ireland, and India; we will read avant-garde writing aimed at a self-consciously elite audience and genre fiction shooting for bestseller status; novels that document social and political conflict and novels that reject documentation altogether; texts with a global horizon and texts with a scrupulously local purview.

The format of the class will be mixed lecture and discussion. Normally each eighty-minute period will have two mini-lectures, each followed by small group discussion, during which the instructors will visit several groups.

LEARNING GOALS

1. Develop the skills of interpreting and explaining individual fictions in the context of a range of historical possibilities.
2. Learn to analyze how the course texts participate in twentieth-century history.
3. Understand the concepts of “modernism” and “modernity” and join the academic conversation about how those concepts fit or fail to fit the fictions we study.
4. Gain substantial knowledge of early twentieth-century fiction in English through broad reading.

REQUIREMENTS

5% PARTICIPATION IN CLASS

This class emphasizes active learning. Every class session will require you to discuss the readings with your peers and with the instructors. You will be graded according to whether you come to class, on time, with the reading done and the texts in hand; during the small group discussions, instructors will visit groups and take careful note of who is contributing thoughtfully and actively. Disruptive behavior during either lecture or discussion—including non-class use of computers or phones, inappropriate talking, multiple or group bathroom breaks, loud eating—harms everyone's learning and will damage your participation mark.

All this is meant to encourage you to engage seriously with the ideas and ways of thinking we are developing in this course. You aren't supposed to know all the answers in advance—but you are required to make your best effort to figure things out as we go along, and to work with your classmates to help them do so as well.

Grading: two or fewer absences or equivalent, 3.5–4.0; three absences or equivalent, 3.0–3.5; four absences or equivalent, 2.0–3.0; more than four absences or equivalent, 0.

5% REGULAR INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

The other aspect of course participation consists in informal writing outside of class. Every week each student will add to an electronic *commonplace book*; occasionally further analytic writing, on the basis of your own or others' commonplace-book entries, will also be required and graded on a pass-fail basis. Each student will also be required to visit either the professor or the CA in office hours at least once during the term.

Grading: two or fewer blog entries missing or late, 4.0; three or four entries missing or late, 2.0; five or more entries missing or late, 0.

30% PAPER 1

An interpretive essay (5–7 pp.) making an argument about one text by James, Conrad, or Stein. Choice of topics distributed in advance.

30% PAPER 2

An interpretive essay (5–7 pp.) making an argument about one text by Joyce, Sayers, Hemingway, Woolf, Faulkner, or Hurston. Choice of topics distributed in advance.

30% TAKE-HOME FINAL

Essay questions, open book, no collaboration.

GRADING

N.B. You cannot pass the course unless you complete both papers and the take-home final.

Grades will be given on the four-point scale as specified in the [Undergraduate Catalog](#). In converting the final numerical score to a letter, the equivalents in the Catalog are taken as the *maxima* of intervals open on the left and closed on the right. Thus A corresponds to scores strictly greater than 3.5 and less than or equal to 4.0, B+ to scores greater than 3.0 and less than or equal to 3.5, B to scores greater than 2.5 and less than or equal to 3.0, and so on. There are no “minus” grades. The general standards for grades are as follows:

A range (3.5, 4.0]: Outstanding. The student’s work demonstrates thorough mastery of course materials and skills.

B range (2.5, 3.5]: Good. The student’s work demonstrates serious engagement with all aspects of the course but incomplete mastery of course materials and skills.

C range (1.5, 2.5]: Satisfactory. The student’s work satisfies requirements but shows significant problems or major gaps in mastery of course material.

D (0.5, 1.5]: Poor or minimal pass. The student completes the basic course requirements, but the student’s work is frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F [0, 0.5]: Failure. Student has not completed all course requirements or turns in consistently unsatisfactory work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students and instructors have a duty to each other and to our community to abide by norms of academic honesty and responsibility. To present something as your own original writing when it is not is plagiarism. Plagiarism and other forms of cheating are serious violations of trust. Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, will have severe consequences, in accordance with the University Policy on Academic Integrity and the Code of Student Conduct. For details about the University’s academic integrity policies, please see academicintegrity.rutgers.edu.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

All reasonable accommodation will be given to students with disabilities. Students who may require accommodation should speak with the professor at the start of the semester. You may also contact the Office of Disability Services (disabilityservices.rutgers.edu; 848-445-6800).

SCHEDULE

When commonplace-book entries are due, they are to be posted by 5 p.m. on *Sunday*.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4.

Introduction. What happened in fiction in English between 1900 and 1950?
Course books; requirements; grading.

(SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7.)

Make a first commonplace book entry by 5 p.m.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8.

“Fiction” and aestheticism.
James, “[The Art of Fiction](#).”
Wilde, “[The Decay of Lying](#).”

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 11.

Realism or its aftermath.
James, “[The Jolly Corner](#).”

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15. COMMONPLACE.

What could it mean to be “modern”?
Woolf, “[Modern Fiction](#).”
Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, 47–54.
Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters*, 91–96.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18.

Imperial adventure and writerly craft.
Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, pts. 1–2.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22. COMMONPLACE.

Race, empire, modernity.
Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*.
Paper 1 topics distributed: James, Conrad, or Stein.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25.

What makes a modernist text difficult.
Stein, “[Melanctha](#).” Focus on the first half for today.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29. COMMONPLACE AND ANALYZE.

Race and the dialect of modern writing.
Stein, “*Melanctha*,” continued.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2. GUEST LECTURE BY EVAN DRESMAN.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chaps. 1–2.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6. PAPER 1 DUE. NO COMMONPLACING.

Orchestrating discourses; epiphany.
Joyce, *Portrait*, chaps. 3–4.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9.

Structure and arrested development. Exile.
Joyce, *Portrait*, complete.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 13. COMMONPLACE AND ANALYZE.

Not modernism: a detective novel.
Sayers, *Whose Body?*

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16. NO CLASS.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20. COMMONPLACE.

Craft, minimalism, masculinity, the postwar.
“On the Quai at Smyrna,” all the interchapters, “L’Envoi,” and “Big Two-Hearted River” (both parts), in Hemingway, *In Our Time*. Also read: “Indian Camp,” “Soldier’s Home.” The rest of the collection is optional.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23.

Interior life. Woolf and Sayers compared.
Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.
Focus on the first half of the novel, up through the tolling of twelve o’clock (p. 94).

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27. COMMONPLACE AND CONVERSE.

Gender, the postwar.
Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 30.

Consciousness and the social world.

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*.

Woolf, "Modern Fiction."

Zwerdling, "Mrs. Dalloway and the Social System."

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3. COMMONPLACE.

Multiple perspectives and social status.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*. Focus on the first half, through Tull's chapter beginning "When I told Cora how Darl jumped out of the wagon."

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6.

The grotesque; the significance of regionalism.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*. Read the whole novel.

Paper 2 topics distributed: Joyce through Hurston.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10. COMMONPLACE.

Indian writing in English; comparative colonial fiction; dialect of modern writing again.

Anand, *Untouchable*. Read the whole novel.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13.

Consciousness and status revisited; the social problem novel.

Anand, *Untouchable*.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17. COMMONPLACE.

Harlem Renaissance (late phase); dialect of modern writing once more.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*. Focus on the first half (through p. 99).

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20.

Respectability and gender.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*. The whole novel.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24. PAPER 2 DUE. NO COMMONPLACING.

Environmental disaster, a social experience.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25. (THURSDAY CLASSES MEET TODAY.)

Hurston, *Their Eyes*.

Recommended: Bone, “The (Extended) South of Black Folk.”

(THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 27. THANKSGIVING RECESS.)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1. COMMONPLACE: HISTORICAL LINE.

Expatriation and the interwar period.

Barnes, *Nightwood*. Focus on the first half, through “The Squatter” (3–83).

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4.

Queer narrative, style, community.

Barnes, *Nightwood*. The whole novel.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8. COMMONPLACE.

Indian English writing: another path.

Narayan, *Malgudi Days*, selections. Please read in the following order, which tracks the order of publication rather than the order Narayan chose much later for the collection:

1. “Father’s Help” (66–72) (1942)
2. “Out of Business” (91–96) (1942)
3. “Attila” (97–101) (1942)
4. “The Axe” (102–7) (1942)
5. “Forty-five a Month” (85–90) (1943)
6. “Engine Trouble” (78–84) (1943)
7. “Iswaran” (53–60) (1944)
8. “Fellow-Feeling” (40–46) (1944)
9. “Gateman’s Gift” (26–33) (1944)
10. “An Astrologer’s Day” (9–13) (1944)
11. “The Doctor’s Word” (21–25) (1944)
12. “The Missing Mail” (14–20) (1944)
13. “Lawley Road” (111–17) (1956)

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 11. READING DAY; NO CLASS.

Last day to make arrangements to submit the take-home final electronically.

(DECEMBER 15–22. EXAM PERIOD.)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15. TAKE-HOME FINAL DISTRIBUTED.

The exam is designed to be completed in three hours. Spend no more than four hours.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16. TAKE-HOME FINAL DUE BY 3 P.M.

Submit *in person* in Scott 216 between 12 p.m. and 3 p.m. Earlier or electronic submission *by arrangement only*.

READINGS

ISBNs are included to help students ordering books online.

- Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. London: Penguin, 1935. ISBN: 9780140183955. ———. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Norton, 2009. ISBN: 9780393931389. Alternate edition with notes.
- Barnes, Djuna. *Nightwood*. New York: Norton, 2006. ISBN: 9780811216715. Hemingway, Ernest. *In Our Time*. New York: Scribner, 1996. ISBN: 9780684822761. There is no acceptable online alternative.
- Bone, Martyn. “The (Extended) South of Black Folk: Intraregional and Transnational Migrant Labor in *Jonah’s Gourd Vine* and *Their Eyes Were Watching God*.” *American Literature* 79, no. 4 (December 2007): 753–79. <http://dx.doi.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/10.1215/00029831-2007-038>. Recommended. Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013. ISBN: 9780060838676.
- Bürger, Peter. *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Translated by Michael Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. Excerpt on Sakai. James, Henry. *Major Stories & Essays*. New York: Library of America, 1999. ISBN: 9781883011758. Recommended.
- Casanova, Pascale. *The World Republic of Letters*. Translated by M. B. DeBevoise. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004. Excerpt on Sakai. ———. “The Art of Fiction.” In *Partial Portraits*. New York: Macmillan, 1894. Internet Archive. <http://archive.org/details/partialportraits00jameiala>. Print alternative recommended.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. In *Youth: A Narrative; and Two Other Stories*. <http://archive.org/details/youthnarrativetwoconrrich>. The Oxford paperback is preferable. ———. “The Art of Fiction.” In *Major Stories & Essays*. Online alternative available.
- . *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Rev. ed. Edited by Cedric Watts. Oxford University Press, 2002. ISBN: 9780199536016. Recommended. Online alternative available. ———. “The Jolly Corner.” In *The Novels and Tales of Henry James*, vol. 17. New York: Scribner, 1909. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/novelsandtalesho8jamegoog>. Print alternative recommended.
- Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage, 1990. ISBN: 9780679732259. ———. “The Jolly Corner.” In *Major Stories & Essays*. Online alternative available.
- Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. New York: Huebsch, 1918. Internet Archive. <http://archive.org/details/aportraitartisto1joycgoog>. This terrible online text is a last resort for your studies.

- Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Edited by Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. ISBN: 9780199536443. Strongly recommended. Online texts are *bad*.
- Narayan, R.K. *Malgudi Days*. New York: Penguin, 2006. ISBN: 9780143039655. Recommended. Alternate text, lacking one story, on Sakai.
- Sayers, Dorothy. *Whose Body?* 1923. Reprint, New York: Dover, 2009. ISBN: 9780486473628. There is also a Harper edition (same text, different pagination).
- Stein, Gertrude. "Melanctha." In *Three Lives*. New York: Grafton, 1909. Internet Archive. <http://archive.org/details/threelivesstorieosteirich>. Print alternative recommended.
- . "Melanctha." In *Three Lives*. 1909. Reprint, New York: Dover, 1994. ISBN: 9780486280592. Online alternative available.
- Wilde, Oscar. "The Decay of Lying." In *Intentions*. New York: Brentano's, 1905. Internet Archive. <http://archive.org/details/intentionsdecayooowild>. One of two online versions.
- . "The Decay of Lying." In *Intentions*. London: James Mcllvaine, 1891. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1999. http://gateway.proquest.com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&xri:pqil:res_ver=0.2&res_id=xri:lion-us&rft_id=xri:lion:ft:pr:Z000731336:0. One of two online versions.
- Woolf, Virginia. "Modern Fiction." In *The Common Reader*, 146–54. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 1925. Excerpt on Sakai.
- . *Mrs. Dalloway*. San Diego: Harcourt, 1925. ISBN: 9780156628709. Online texts of this title are *unacceptable*.
- Zwerdling, Alex. "Mrs. Dalloway and the Social System." *PMLA* 92, no. 1 (January 1977): 69–82. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/461415>.

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