

## Early Twentieth-Century Fiction

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<http://e2ofic17.blogs.rutgers.edu>

Mondays 2:50 p.m.–4:10 p.m. in Scott 119

Wednesdays 2:50 p.m.–4:10 p.m. in Scott 106

Professor Andrew Goldstone ([andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu](mailto:andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu))

Office hours: Mondays 1:00–2:30 in Murray 019

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is a study of novels and stories in English from 1890 to 1950, a period of extraordinary variety and expansion in fiction—and of upheaval in society at large: wars, depressions, migrations, mass social movements. Fiction does not simply respond to these upheavals; it participates in them, whether through political advocacy, artistic transformation, or even, at times, a willful refusal to engage. The course traces four linked developments in English-language fiction: the elevation of fiction in literary modernism; the specialization of popular literature; the contestation of racial conventions in U.S. writing; and the globalization of literary English.

### 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

#### 10% PARTICIPATION IN CLASS

Attendance and active, thoughtful participation in class are required. There will be both small-group and large-group discussion in every class. Discussion requires every student to take the intellectual risk of offering observations, ideas, and arguments in class in response to one another and to the instructor. You aren't supposed to know all the answers in advance, but you are required to come to class prepared to join in a communal effort to figure things out. Lateness, lack of preparation, and disruptive behavior will affect the participation mark.

I do not permit the use of laptops, smartphones, tablets, or smartwatches in class. Their potential uses do not outweigh their power to distract from discussion. I will make exceptions for students who require accommodation for a disability.

If you fall ill or miss class for a family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible; you can make up for an excused absence. If you miss three classes without excuse, the *maximum* participation mark you can receive is 3.5; if you miss four, 3.0. Missing more than four meetings without an excuse will normally result in a failing grade for the course (not just a zero for participation).

#### 5% REGULAR INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

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.

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.

#### 25% PAPER 1

An interpretive essay (5–7 pp.) making an argument about one text. Choice of topics distributed in advance.

#### 30% PAPER 2

An interpretive essay (6–8 pp.) making an argument about one text. 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 work, demonstrating thorough mastery of course materials and skills.

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

C range (1.5, 2.5]: Satisfactory work, meeting requirements but indicating significant problems mastering the course materials and skills.

D (0.5, 1.5]: Poor or minimally passing work, meeting the basic course requirements, but frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F [0, 0.5]: Failure due to unmet course requirements or 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](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu).

#### STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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

#### SCHEDULE

Readings are to be completed by the day they are listed under and brought to class in print format. When commonplace-book entries are due, they are to be posted by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6.

Introduction.

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 11. ELEVATING FICTION.

James, "The Middle Years."

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13.

James, "The Middle Years."

James, "The Art of Fiction."

Woolf, "Modern Fiction."

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18.

Woolf, *Monday or Tuesday*, selections:  
“A Haunted House.”  
“Monday or Tuesday.”  
“The Mark on the Wall.”

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20.

Woolf, “The Death of the Moth.”  
Woolf, “Street Haunting.”  
Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, chap. 3.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 25.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–2.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 27.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–3.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 2.

Joyce, *Portrait*, complete.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4.

Joyce, *Portrait*, complete.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 9.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, through 104.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 11.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, through 155.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 16.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, complete.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18. SPECIALIZING POPULAR LITERATURE.

Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, selections:  
“A Scandal in Bohemia.”  
“The Red-Headed League.”  
“The Engineer's Thumb.”

(FRIDAY, OCTOBER 20.)

Paper 1 due.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23.

Sayers, *Whose Body?*, at least through chap. 5.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25.

Sayers, *Whose Body?*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 30.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, at least through chap. 13.  
(Last day to withdraw with a "W.")

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, complete.  
Chandler, "The Simple Art of Murder."  
Hammett, "Suggestions to Detective Story Writers" (optional).

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6. CONTESTING RACIAL CONVENTION.

Toomer, *Cane*.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8.

Toomer, *Cane*.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 13.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 15.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 20.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*.

(WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 22. FRIDAY CLASSES MEET.)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27. GLOBALIZING LITERARY ENGLISH.

Tagore, "The Postmaster."

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29.

Tagore, "The Hungry Stones."

MONDAY, DECEMBER 4.

Anand, *Untouchable*.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6.

Anand, *Untouchable*.

(FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8.)

Paper 2 due.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11.

R.K. Narayan, selected stories (first publication date in parentheses):

1. "Father's Help" (1942)
2. "Out of Business" (1942)
3. "Attila" (1942)
4. "The Axe" (1942)
5. "Forty-five a Month" (1943)
6. "Engine Trouble" (1943)
7. "Fellow-Feeling" (1944)
8. "Gateman's Gift" (1944)
9. "An Astrologer's Day" (1944)
10. "Lawley Road" (1956)

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13.

Narayan, continued.  
Course conclusion.

DECEMBER 22. FINAL EXAM DUE AT 3 P.M.

The final exam is a take-home. It will be due at the end of the scheduled exam time for the course and may be submitted electronically *on Sakai only*. Late exams will result in a failing grade for the course.

## READINGS

ISBNs are included to help students ordering books online. For my general advice about buying course books, see [andrewgoldstone.com/book-buying](http://andrewgoldstone.com/book-buying).

- Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. London: Penguin, 1935. ISBN: 9780140183955. At the bookstore.
- Chandler, Raymond. "The Simple Art of Murder." *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1944. Available on Sakai.
- Conan Doyle, Arthur. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. 1892. Reprint, Dover, 2009. ISBN: 9780486474915. At the bookstore. Other printed Sherlock Holmes collections are fine, so long as they include the assigned stories.
- Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage, 1990. ISBN: 9780679732259. At the bookstore.
- Hammett, Dashiell. "Suggestions to Detective Story Writers." In *Crime Stories and Other Writings*, 914–16. New York: Library of America, 2001. Available on Sakai.
- . *The Maltese Falcon*. 1929. New York: Vintage, 1957. ISBN: 9780679722649. At the bookstore.
- Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013. ISBN: 9780060838676. At the bookstore.
- James, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." In *Partial Portraits*. New York: Macmillan, 1894. Internet Archive. <http://archive.org/details/partialportraitsoojameiala>. Available on Sakai.
- . "The Middle Years." *Scribner's* 13, no. 4 (April 1893): 609–20. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015010702721?urlappend=%3Bseq=629>. Available on Sakai.
- Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Edited by Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. ISBN: 9780199536443. At the bookstore. Online texts are *bad*.
- Narayan, R.K. *Malgudi Days*. New York: Penguin, 2006. ISBN: 9780143039655. Recommended; at the bookstore. An alternate text, lacking one story, is available on Sakai.
- Sayers, Dorothy. *Whose Body?* 1923. Reprint, New York: Dover, 2009. ISBN: 9780486473628. At the bookstore. There is also a Harper edition (same text, different pagination).
- Tagore, Rabindranath. "The Hungry Stones." In *Hungry Stones and Other Stories*. London: Macmillan, 1916. Hathitrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015030386992>. Available on Sakai.
- . "The Postmaster." In *Mashi, and Other Stories*. London: Macmillan, 1918. Hathitrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t1khoh31j>. Available on Sakai.
- Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. 1923. New York: Liveright, 2011. ISBN: 9780871402103. At the bookstore.
- Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own*. In *"A Room of One's Own" and "Three Guineas"*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992. Excerpt on Sakai.
- . "Modern Fiction." In *The Common Reader*, 146–54. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, 1925. Available on Sakai.
- . *Monday or Tuesday: And Other Short Stories*. London: Hogarth, 1921. Hathitrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo1.ark:/13960/t05x2w944>. Excerpts on Sakai.
- . "Street Haunting." In *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. Available on Sakai.
- . "The Death of the Moth." In *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. Available on Sakai.
- . *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays*. Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 1942. Excerpts on Sakai.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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