

# Twentieth-Century Fiction I

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# Goals of this course

1. Engage critically with important works from 1900–1950.
2. Understand how these works participate in history:
  - a. in terms of their literary horizons;
  - b. in terms of their more-than-literary horizons.

# The question

...S

What happened to fiction in English 1900–1950?

How was it different from before 1900?

How was it different from what's happened since?

# Once upon a time

and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo . . . .

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.

James Joyce,  
*A Portrait of the Artist as  
a Young Man* (1916)



# Modernism

1. self-conscious break with traditions
2. aesthetic disruption
3. difficulty
4. ...

# Discussion

Which are modern?

What do you notice that makes you say so?

What are the criteria of literary modernity?

# Discussion

1. E.M. Hull, *The Sheik* (1919)
2. Dorothy Sayers, *Whose Body?* (1923)\*
3. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925)\*
4. William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (1930)\*
5. Georgette Heyer, *Regency Buck* (1935)
6. R.K. Narayan, "An Astrologer's Day" (1944)\*

# Literary Modernity

What happened to fiction in English 1900–1950?

Not just a single transformation in form or content  
 (“modernism” is only part of the story)

Most important, historically distinctive features:

sheer quantity, leading to...

breadth of circulation (many kinds)

**diversity of production (many kinds)**



# Literary Modernity

Quantity

Year	1750	1800	1900	1950	2000
New UK book titles (approx.)	100	600	6000	10000	125000

# Literary Modernity

Quantity

Year	1880	1890	1900	1910	...	2003
New US fiction titles	292	1118	1278	1539	...	≈25000

# Literary Modernity

Breadth of circulation

Books get much cheaper

More people can read and want to

“Reading culture” (1890–1960?)

**More kinds of people read more for pleasure**

# Literary Modernity

Diversity of production

a literary field of relations

(alliances, rivalries, movements, generations, subcultures)

our task: think of each fiction writer in relation to all the others

# Literary Modernity

Diversity of production



James



Conrad



Stein



Joyce



Sayers



Hemingway



Woolf



Faulkner



Anand



Hurston



Barnes



Narayan

# Requirements

1. Two 5–7 pp. papers (due 10/7 and 11/25, 30% each)
2. Take-home final (12/16–17, 30%)
3. Attendance and participation (5%)
  - a. 0–2 absences: full credit
  - b. 3–4 absences: half credit
  - c. disruptive behavior, lateness: 1 warning, then counts as absence
4. Informal writing (5%) ...

# Commonplacing

Main course website

<http://20fic-fl3.blogs.rutgers.edu>

Click “Commonplacing guide” or visit

<http://20fic-fl3.blogs.rutgers.edu/commonplacing>

# Commonplacing

**First entry due: this Sunday, 5 p.m.**

Commonplace from

Henry James, "The Art of Fiction"

Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying"

E-mail Prof. Goldstone right away if you have trouble



# The Reading

See also

<http://20fic-fl3.blogs.rutgers.edu/buying-books/>

# Two course sites

**Main site**

**[20fic-f13.blogs.rutgers.edu](http://20fic-f13.blogs.rutgers.edu)**

## 20th-Century Fiction I

*350:355:02, Fall 2013*

[Commonplacing](#)

[Syllabus](#)

### Welcome!

★ Sticky   ■ Meta

This is the main course site for Twentieth Century Fiction I, taught by Prof. **Andrew Goldstone**. The latest version of the **syllabus** will always be available on this site. Before beginning to blog, please read the **commonplacing guide** carefully.

*Meta*

[Log in](#)

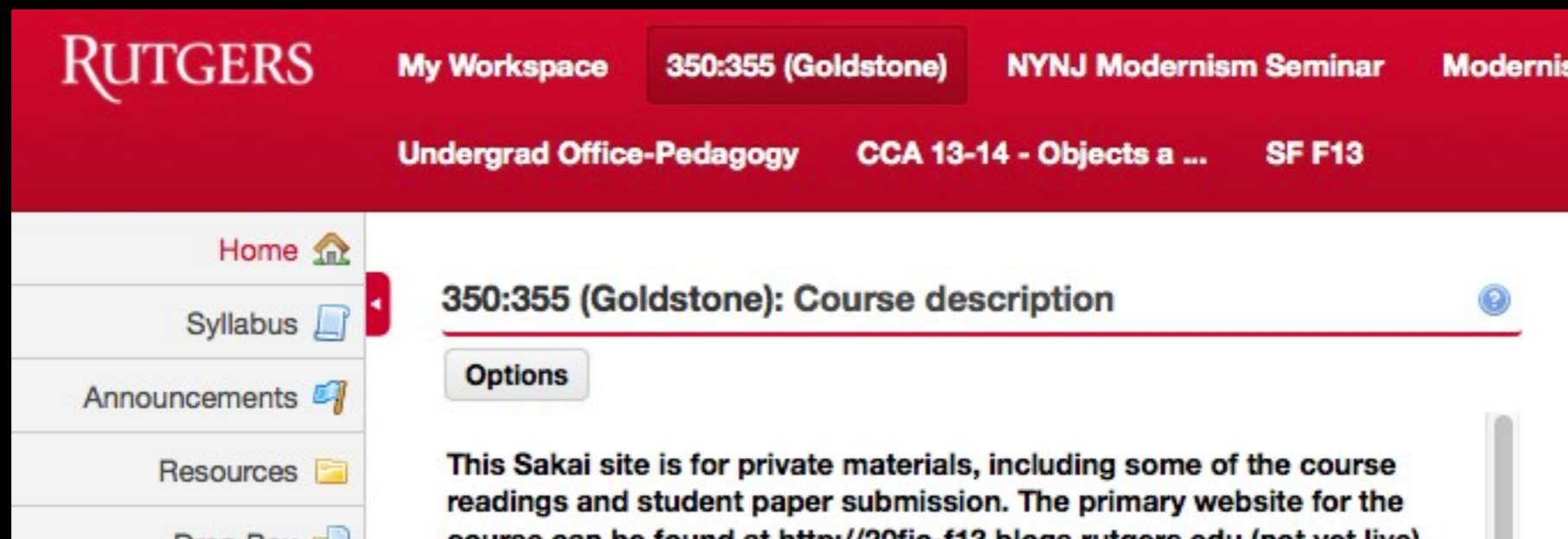
[Entries RSS](#)

[Comments RSS](#)

[WordPress.org](#)

# Two course sites

Sakai site with private materials  
sakai.rutgers.edu



The screenshot shows the top navigation bar of a Sakai course site. The Rutgers logo is on the left. The navigation menu includes 'My Workspace', '350:355 (Goldstone)' (highlighted), 'NYNJ Modernism Seminar', and 'Modernis'. Below this, there are links for 'Undergrad Office-Pedagogy', 'CCA 13-14 - Objects a ...', and 'SF F13'. The main content area has a left sidebar with 'Home', 'Syllabus', 'Announcements', and 'Resources'. The main heading is '350:355 (Goldstone): Course description'. Below the heading is an 'Options' button and a paragraph of text: 'This Sakai site is for private materials, including some of the course readings and student paper submission. The primary website for the course can be found at <http://20fic-f13.blogs.rutgers.edu> (not yet live)'.

# By the way

Suggested twitter hashtag

#355f13

(I'll be using it)

# Discussion

## The Uses of Fiction



Oscar Wilde, “A Preface to *Dorian Gray*” (1891)

“There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.”