

Principles of Literary Study: Prose

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MTH 2 (Mondays and Thursdays, 9:50 a.m.–11:30 a.m.) in Scott 102

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Office hours: Mondays, 11:30–1:30 in Murray 019 or by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Why do we read fiction? How does fiction work? This course introduces students to the ways the modern discipline of English studies addresses these questions. Students develop a strong foundation in the formal analysis of fiction, learning to identify and analyze the components of narrative, including genre, plot, character, point of view, and narrative voice. But formal analysis matters only in connection with arguments about the meanings of fiction; in discussion and in written assignments, we practice the techniques of presenting literary interpretations systematically and convincingly. Students also consider some of the central issues in contemporary literary study, including the relation between fiction and history, the cognitive foundations of fiction, and the status of genre.

It is a luxury of the introductory course that readings can be chosen from across the history of fiction in English. Selections include writings by Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, Charles Dickens, Arthur Conan Doyle, Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and Toni Morrison, together with scholarship on these major figures and some material on the theory of narrative. The major assignments are two short papers and in-class midterm and final exams.

LEARNING GOALS

1. Master key concepts necessary to the analysis of fictional prose narrative in terms of form, genre, and style.
2. Develop proficiency in using detailed analysis of texts to support the interpretation of fictional narrative.
3. Become adept at effective, thoughtful participation in academic discussion.
4. Master the conventions of written scholarly argument in literary studies.
5. Make convincing written interpretive arguments about fictional narratives.

This course satisfies the following Core Curriculum goals:

1. Arts and Humanities (AHP): Analyze arts and/or literatures in themselves and in relation to specific histories, values, languages, cultures, and technologies.
2. Writing and Communication (WCd): Communicate effectively in modes appropriate to a discipline or area of inquiry; evaluate and critically assess sources and use the conventions of attribution and citation correctly; and analyze and synthesize information and ideas from multiple sources to generate new insights.

REQUIREMENTS

PARTICIPATION (10%)

Attendance and active, thoughtful participation in discussion are required. 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 instructors. 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. To receive full credit for participation, you should speak thoughtfully in every class.

Laptops, smartphones, tablets, and smartwatches are not permitted in class, except for students who require accommodation for a disability. The potential uses of these devices do not outweigh their power to distract from discussion.

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 3.0; if you miss four, 2.0. Missing more than four meetings without an excuse will normally result in a failing grade for the course.

SHORT EXERCISES (5%)

Occasional written exercises will be assigned, for practice in key ideas and skills from class.

PAPER 1 (20%)

1500–1800 words on a single text.

PAPER 2 (25%)

1800–2100 words on one or two primary texts, making appropriate use of secondary sources.

MIDTERM EXAM (15%)

Short-answer questions. Given in class.

FINAL EXAM (25%)

Short-answer questions on key concepts from the course, plus one essay question. Three hours, given in exam period.

GRADING STANDARDS

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.

The final grade will be based on a numerical score but is subject to my discretion. Unsatisfactory work in all areas of the course will result in an F even if the numerical score corresponds to a passing grade. It is not possible to pass the course without turning in both papers and completing both the midterm and the final.

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 me at the start of the semester. You may also contact the Office of Disability Services (ods.rutgers.edu; 848-445-6800).

SCHEDULE

Readings are to be completed by the day they are listed under. The schedule may change as term goes on. The most up-to-date syllabus will always be available via pls18.blogs.rutgers.edu/syllabus. Unless otherwise noted, readings are required and should be completed before class. You are expected to have the reading, in print form, with you in class. If a reading is distributed digitally, you may either print it out or bring your written notes on it instead.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18. INTRODUCTION.

Readings for discussion distributed in class:

Aesop, "The Ant and the Cricket" and "The Fox and the Grapes."

Franz Kafka, "A Little Fable" and "Before the Law."

MONDAY, JANUARY 22. PLOT.

Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia."

Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle."

Bal, *Narratology*, 75–98.

(TUESDAY, JANUARY 23.)

Last day to drop the course without a "W."

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25. GENRE.

Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," continued.

Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band."

Pirkis, "The Redhill Sisterhood."

Frow, *Genre*, 6–19, 134–41.

MONDAY, JANUARY 29. NARRATIVE DISCOURSE.

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, vol. 1.

Bal, *Narratology*, 15–29.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 1.

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, through vol. 2, chap. 11.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5. CHARACTER.

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, through vol. 3, chap. 5.

Exercise due. "Ironic."

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8.

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, complete.

Woloch, *The One vs. the Many*, 56–58, 62–82. The rest of chap. 1 is highly recommended but optional.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12. FRAMES.

Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 3–68.

Bal, *Narratology*, 56–71.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15.

Shelley, *Frankenstein*, 3–118.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19. TEXTUALITY.

Shelley, *Frankenstein*, complete, and appendices A and B.
Exercise due. The principled essay introduction.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 22.

Shelley, *Frankenstein*, continued.

Mellor, “Choosing a Text of *Frankenstein* to Teach.”

Poovey, “My Hideous Progeny.”

(SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24.)

Paper 1 due.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 26. ADAPTATION AND MEDIUM.

Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*.

THURSDAY, MARCH 1.

Dickens, *A Christmas Carol*.

Davis, *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*, chap. 1.

MONDAY, MARCH 5. POINT OF VIEW.

James, *What Maisie Knew*, chaps. 1–8.

Exercise due. The medium of prose.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8. THEORY OF MIND.

James, *What Maisie Knew*, chaps. 1–15.
Zunshine, *Why We Read Fiction*, 6–12, 16–36.

(MARCH 10–18. SPRING RECESS.)

MONDAY, MARCH 19.

James, *What Maisie Knew*, complete.
Last day to withdraw from the course with a “W.”

THURSDAY, MARCH 22. CONTRADICTIONS AND RESOLUTIONS.

James, *What Maisie Knew*.
Rowe, *The Other Henry James*.

MONDAY, MARCH 26.

Midterm exam in class.

THURSDAY, MARCH 29. STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, pt. 1, chaps. 1–8.
Auerbach, “The Brown Stocking,” excerpt.

MONDAY, APRIL 2. FICTION IN HISTORY.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, pts. 1–2.
Flint, “Virginia Woolf and the General Strike.”

THURSDAY, APRIL 5.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, complete.

(SUNDAY, APRIL 8.)

Exercise due, 5 p.m. Responding to scholarship.

MONDAY, APRIL 9.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*.

THURSDAY, APRIL 12. MEMORY, STORY, HISTORY.

Morrison, *Beloved*, 3–75.

MONDAY, APRIL 16.

Morrison, *Beloved*, 3–124.

THURSDAY, APRIL 19. GENRE AND HISTORY.

Morrison, *Beloved*, 3–195.

Watkins, “The Slave Mother.”

May, *Fugitive Slave Law*, 37–45.

MONDAY, APRIL 23.

Morrison, *Beloved*, 3–235.

Exercise due. Paper 2 draft page.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26. LITERARY POLITICS, PAST AND PRESENT.

Morrison, *Beloved*, complete.

Alexandre, “From the Same Tree.”

(SATURDAY, APRIL 28.)

Paper 2 due.

MONDAY, APRIL 30.

Morrison, *Beloved*.

Berger, “Ghosts of Liberalism.”

Love, “Close but not Deep,” 383–87 (the rest is optional).

MONDAY, MAY 7, 8–11 AM.

Final exam.

READINGS

ISBNs are included to help students ordering books online. The course texts are available at Barnes & Noble. They are also on reserve at Alexander Library. For my general advice about buying course books, see andrewgoldstone.com/book-buying.

Alexandre, Sandy. “From the Same Tree: Gender and Iconography in Representations of Violence in *Beloved*.” *Signs* 36, no. 4 (Summer 2011): 915–40. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/10.1086/658505>. Online via the libraries.

Auerbach, Erich. “The Brown Stocking.” In *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, translated by Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. Online on Sakai.

- Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Edited by James Kinsley. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 9780199535569.
- Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*. 3rd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. Excerpts on Sakai.
- Berger, James. "Ghosts of Liberalism: Morrison's *Beloved* and the Moynihan Report." *PMLA* 111, no. 3 (May 1996): 409–20. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/463165>. Online via the libraries.
- Conan Doyle, Arthur. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Dover, 2009. ISBN: 9780486474915.
- Davis, Paul. *The Lives and Times of Ebenezer Scrooge*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990. Excerpt available on Sakai.
- Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*. New York: Dover, 1991. ISBN: 9780486268651.
- Flint, Kate. "Virginia Woolf and the General Strike." *Essays in Criticism* 36, no. 4 (October 1986): 319–34. Online on Sakai.
- Frow, John. *Genre*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 2015. Excerpt on Sakai.
- James, Henry. *What Maisie Knew*. Edited by Adrian Poole. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. ISBN: 9780199538591.
- Love, Heather. "Close but not Deep: Literary Ethics and the Descriptive Turn." *New Literary History* 41, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 371–91. <http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/article/400855/pdf>.
- May, Samuel. *The Fugitive Slave Law, and Its Victims*. New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1856. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/fugitiveslavelaw1856mays>.
- Mellor, Anne K. "Choosing a Text of *Frankenstein* to Teach." In *Approaches to Teaching Shelley's Frankenstein*, edited by Stephen C. Behrendt, 31–37. New York: Modern Language Association, 1990. Online on Sakai.
- Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Vintage, 2004. ISBN: 9781400033416.
- Pirkis, C.L. "The Redhill Sisterhood." *Ludgate Monthly* 4 (1893). <https://search-proquest-com.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/docview/3713106?accountid=13626>. Online on Sakai.
- Poovey, Mary. "My Hideous Progeny: Mary Shelley and the Feminization of Romanticism." *PMLA* 95, no. 3 (May 1980): 332–47. <http://www.jstor.org.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/stable/461877>. Online via the libraries.
- Rowe, John Carlos. *The Other Henry James*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998. Excerpt available on Sakai.
- Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein, or, The Modern Prometheus: The 1818 Text*. Edited by Marilyn Butler. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993. ISBN: 9780199537150. It is essential that you work from an edition of the 1818 text.
- Watkins, Francis Ellen [Francis Ellen Watkins Harper]. "The Slave Mother: A Tale of the Ohio." In *Poems on Miscellaneous Subjects*, 40–42. Philadelphia: Merrihew & Thompson, 1857. Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/poemsonmiscellanoooharp>.
- Woloch, Alex. *The One vs. the Many: Minor Characters and the Space of the Protagonist in the Novel*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. <http://hdl.handle.net.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/2027/heb.32273.0001.001>. Online via the libraries.
- Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. Edited by Mark Hussey. New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2005. ISBN: 9780156030472. Please acquire this edition, which has good annotations.
- Zunshine, Lisa. *Why We Read Fiction: Theory of Mind and the Novel*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006. Excerpt on Sakai.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Jake Romanow, Nicholas Gaskill, David Kurnick, Brad Evans, Jackie Miller, and Anne DeWitt for models and discussion.

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