

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction

Mondays and Thursdays, 9:50–11:10 a.m.

Professor Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)

Office hours: Mondays, 2 p.m.

<http://e2ofic21.blogs.rutgers.edu>

What do James Joyce, Dashiell Hammett, Mulk Raj Anand, and Zora Neale Hurston have in common? All significant writers of English-language fiction, all active in the first half of the twentieth century, these writers lived through an epoch of global social upheaval—world wars, revolutions, mass migrations, the rise and decline of empire—and their work registers and responds to a world of crisis. Yet Joyce, the Irish experimentalist, writes nothing like Hammett, the pioneer of hard-boiled detective fiction; Anand, the committed Indian leftist, adopts very different perspectives from Hurston, the supreme Harlem Renaissance novelist. This course is a study in what is and is not shared in the fiction of these four writers and others of their era. Students will learn to analyze the forms and themes of exemplary fictions of the early twentieth century and to understand the variety of these fictions as a result of social contestation and collaboration. Readings include case studies in literary modernism, detective fiction, Harlem Renaissance fiction, and Indian writing in 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

1/7 PARTICIPATION

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.

Remote learning. The pandemic forces us to hold our meetings via videoconference. We will use the Zoom platform and take full advantage of its capacity for both small-group and large-group interaction. In order to participate and learn effectively over Zoom, students must make every effort to be present in discussion. Every student is expected to be fully visible for the full class period, and to do whatever they need to do to limit distractions, especially distractions on the computer itself. I will make sure to introduce variety, and breaks, into every class session.

Technical problems are probably inevitable; I only expect students to get in touch with me as soon as possible if technical issues are seriously interfering with full participation in class.

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. If you sign in to a virtual class session but are neither visible nor audible for the entire time, I will mark you absent.

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.

0.5/7 REGULAR INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students will add to an electronic commonplace book, selecting a passage from the reading with an *interesting or surprising relation* to the theme given on the syllabus and writing one to two sentences of commentary on it. Students will be assigned to do this on alternating weeks. Entries, due Sundays at 5 p.m., will be 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.

2.5/7 PAPER 1

An interpretive essay making an argument about one text. Choice of topics distributed in advance.

3/7 PAPER 2

An interpretive essay making an argument about one text. Choice of topics distributed in advance.

GRADING

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 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 contact the Office of Disability Services (ods.rutgers.edu; 848-445-6800) and speak with me at the start of the semester.

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 e2ofic21.blogs.rutgers.edu/syllabus.

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 21.

Introduction.

MONDAY, JANUARY 25. ELEVATING FICTION.

James, "The Middle Years."

Commonplacing: both groups. All students should choose a *single sentence* and comment on its use of *observation*.

(TUESDAY, JANUARY 26.)

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

THURSDAY, JANUARY 28.

James, "The Middle Years."

James, "The Art of Fiction."

Woolf, "Modern Fiction."

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 1.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–2.

Commonplacing: group A. Theme: Joyce's treatment of childhood.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–3.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 8.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–4.

Commonplacing: group B. Theme: art and artistry.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11.

Joyce, *Portrait*, complete.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15.

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 3–92 (twelve o'clock).
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: pasts.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18.

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, complete.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22.

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, continued.
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: only connect.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 3–81.

MONDAY, MARCH 1.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 3–179.
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: limits of vision.

THURSDAY, MARCH 4.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, complete.

(SATURDAY, MARCH 6.)

Paper 1 due.

MONDAY, MARCH 8. SPECIALIZING POPULAR LITERATURE.

Sayers, *Whose Body?*, at least through chap. 5.
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: mysteries and social problems.

THURSDAY, MARCH 11.

Sayers, *Whose Body?*, complete.

(SATURDAY, MARCH 13. SPRING BREAK.)

MONDAY, MARCH 22.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, complete.
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: the moral code of the novel?
(Last day to withdraw with a “W.”)

THURSDAY, MARCH 25.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, continued.
 Chandler, "The Simple Art of Murder."
 Hammett, "Suggestions to Detective Story Writers."

MONDAY, MARCH 29. CONTESTING RACIAL CONVENTION.

Toomer, *Cane*, pt. 1 ("Karintha" through "Blood-Burning Moon").
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: form.

THURSDAY, APRIL 1. SERIOUSLY.

Toomer, *Cane*, further selections from pts. 2–3:
 "Seventh Street."
 "Avey."
 "Bona and Paul."
 "Kabnis."

MONDAY, APRIL 5.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, 1–99.
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: Janie's relation to a social context.

THURSDAY, APRIL 8.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, 1–128.

MONDAY, APRIL 12.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, complete.
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: Hurston's (further) South.

THURSDAY, APRIL 15.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, continued.
 Walker, "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston."

MONDAY, APRIL 19. GLOBALIZING LITERARY ENGLISH.

Tagore, "The Postmaster."
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: the narrator's relation to Ratan.

THURSDAY, APRIL 22. EARTH DAY.

Tagore, "The Hungry Stones."

MONDAY, APRIL 26.

Anand, *Untouchable*.

Commonplacing: group B. Theme: the proletarian subject matter.

THURSDAY, APRIL 29.

Anand, *Untouchable*, complete.

MONDAY, MAY 3.

Anand, *Untouchable*, continued.

Anand, "On the Genesis of *Untouchable*."

Course conclusion.

(SUNDAY, MAY 9.)

Paper 2 due.

BOOKS TO BUY

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.

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. London: Penguin, 1940. ISBN: 9780141393605.

Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage, 1990. ISBN: 9780679732259. An acceptable alternative is the Norton Classics edition, which has lots of notes.

Hammett, Dashiell. *The Maltese Falcon*. 1929. New York: Vintage, 1957. ISBN: 9780679722649.

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 1937. New York: Harper Perennial, 2013. ISBN: 9780060838676.

Joyce, James. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Edited by Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. ISBN: 9780199536443. Online versions are unacceptable. The only acceptable alternative to this edition is the Penguin Classics edition.

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Edited by Bonnie Kime Scott. Orlando: Harvest, 2005. ISBN: 9780156030359. This annotated edition is the best choice, but the edition without notes from Harcourt is fine. Avoid online texts.

OTHER READINGS

Anand, Mulk Raj. "On the Genesis of *Untouchable*." *South Asian Review* 32, no. 1 (March 2011): 133–36. <https://doi-org.proxy-libraries.rutgers.edu/10.1080/02759527>.

2011 . 11932815. Originally published in *South Asian Review* 15, no. 12 (July 1991).

- Chandler, Raymond. "The Simple Art of Murder." *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1944. Available on Sakai.
- Hammett, Dashiell. "Suggestions to Detective Story Writers." In *Crime Stories and Other Writings*, 914–16. New York: Library of America, 2001. Available on Sakai.
- 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." In *Complete Stories 1892–1898*, edited by John Hollander and David Bromwich, 335–55. New York: Library of America, 1996. https://www.loa.org/images/pdf/James_Middle_Years.pdf. Available on Sakai.
- Sayers, Dorothy. *Whose Body?* 1923. Reprint, New York: Dover, 2009. ISBN: 9780486473628. https://www.google.com/books/edition/Whose_Body_A_Lord_Peter_Wimsey_Novel/JVnn7oIDkb4C. The full PDF may be downloaded, but I recommend the inexpensive Dover paperback.
- 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. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015000252448>. Download the full PDF using your Rutgers login. The ISBN is for the print edition I recommend; it is optional. The extensively annotated Norton Classics edition is another option.
- Walker, Alice. "In Search of Zora Neale Hurston." *Ms.*, March 1975, 74–79, 85–89. Available on Sakai.
- Woolf, Virginia. "Modern Fiction." In *The Common Reader*, 2nd, 184–95. London: Hogarth, 1925. HathiTrust, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015026867195>. Available on Sakai.

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