

## Early Twentieth-Century Fiction

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MTH 2 (Mondays and Thursdays, 9:50–11:10) in Scott 201  
Professor Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)  
Office hours: Thursdays 11:30–1:30 in Murray 019  
<http://e2ofic19.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 (Joyce, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner), detective fiction (Dorothy Sayers, Hammett), Harlem Renaissance fiction (Jean Toomer, Hurston), and Indian writing in English (Anand, Narayan).

### 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

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 entries missing or late, 2.0; four 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 contact the Office of Disability Services ([ods.rutgers.edu](http://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 [e2ofic19.blogs.rutgers.edu/syllabus](http://e2ofic19.blogs.rutgers.edu/syllabus). You are expected to have the reading, in print form, with you in class. The bibliography (see below) tells you exactly what edition of each book I expect you to have; in general other versions will not work for this class. If a reading is distributed digitally, you may either print it out or bring your written notes on it instead. When commonplace-book entries are due, they are to be posted by 5 p.m. on Sunday.

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5.

Introduction.

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9. ELEVATING FICTION.

James, "The Middle Years."

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

## (TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10.)

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

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12.

James, "The Middle Years."

James, "The Art of Fiction."

Woolf, "Modern Fiction."

## MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16.

Woolf, *Monday or Tuesday*, selections (commonplace from one of these):

"A Haunted House."

"Monday or Tuesday."

"The Mark on the Wall."

*Commonplacing: group A.* Theme: Woolf's handling of mental life.

## THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19.

Woolf, "The Death of the Moth."

Woolf, "Street Haunting."

Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, chap. 3.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–2. Commonplace.  
*Commonplacing: group B*. Theme: Joyce's treatment of childhood.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1–3.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 30.

Joyce, *Portrait*, complete.  
*Commonplacing: group A*. Theme: art and artistry.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3.

Joyce, *Portrait*, continued.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 7.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, through 104.  
*Commonplacing: group B*. Theme: Faulkner's relation to James, Woolf, or Joyce.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10.

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

MONDAY, OCTOBER 14.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, complete.  
*Commonplacing: group A*. Theme: Faulkner's South.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17. SPECIALIZING POPULAR LITERATURE.

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

(SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19.)

Paper 1 due.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 21.

Sayers, *Whose Body?*, complete.  
*Commonplacing: group B*. Theme: mysteries and social problems.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, at least through chap. 13.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 28.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, complete.

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

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31. BOO.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, continued.

Chandler, “The Simple Art of Murder.”

Hammett, “Suggestions to Detective Story Writers.”

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 4. CONTESTING RACIAL CONVENTION.

Toomer, *Cane*, up through “Bona and Paul.”

*Commonplacing: group B.* Theme: form.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 6.

Toomer, *Cane*, complete.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11. ARMISTICE.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, 1–99.

*Commonplacing: group A.* Theme: Janie’s relation to a social context.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, 1–128.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 18.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, complete.

*Commonplacing: group B.* Theme: the narrator’s relation to Janie.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, continued.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25. GLOBALIZING LITERARY ENGLISH.

Tagore, “The Postmaster.”

*Commonplacing: group A.* Theme: the narrator’s relation to Ratan.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26. (THURSDAY CLASSES MEET).

Tagore, "The Hungry Stones."

(THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28. NO CLASS.)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2.

Anand, *Untouchable*, complete.

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

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5.

Anand, *Untouchable*, continued.

(FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6.)

Paper 2 due.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 9.

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

1. "Father's Help" (1942)
2. "Out of Business" (1942)
3. "The Axe" (1942)
4. "Forty-five a Month" (1943)
5. "Gateman's Gift" (1944)
6. "An Astrologer's Day" (1944)

(SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21.)

Take-home final exam distributed on Sakai.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 23, AT 11 A.M.

Take-home final exam due electronically on Sakai. Late exams will result in a failing grade for the course.

## 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](http://andrewgoldstone.com/book-buying).

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. London: Penguin, 1935. ISBN: 9780140183955.

Faulkner, William. *As I Lay Dying*. New York: Vintage, 1990. ISBN: 9780679732259.

- 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. The only acceptable alternative to this edition is the Penguin Classics edition.
- Sayers, Dorothy. *Whose Body?* 1923. Reprint, New York: Dover, 2009. ISBN: 9780486473628. There is also a Harper edition (same text, different pagination).
- Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. 1923. New York: Liveright, 2011. ISBN: 9780871402103.

## OTHER READINGS

- 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." *Scribner's* 13, no. 4 (April 1893): 609–20. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015010702721?urlappend=%3Bseq=629>. Available on Sakai. James aficionados should look for the Library of America edition of his stories; this one is in *The Complete Stories, 1892–1898*.
- Narayan, R.K. *An Astrologer's Day, and Other Stories*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1947. Excerpts on Sakai. For more Narayan, a good starting point is the collection *Malgudi Days* (Penguin).
- 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.
- 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/to5x2w944>. 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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