

## Principles of Literary Study: Fiction

<http://sp13-plsf.blogs.rutgers.edu>

MTH 2 (Mondays and Thursdays, 9:50 a.m.–11:10 a.m.) in Scott 203

Professor Andrew Goldstone

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Office hours: Mondays 2:30–4:30 p.m.

### Overview

This course introduces the skills and concepts of the study of fiction, focusing on the novel in English since 1800. Class sessions and assignments concentrate on identifying and interpreting the components of fiction: plot, setting, character, point of view, genre, and narrative voice. The course also introduces key critical debates about the novel and history, narrative and cognition, and the status of genre. The goal of the course is for every student to make the transition from talking about *what it says* or *what happens* to making interpretive arguments about *how it works* and *what its meanings are*. Readings include novels, short stories, and exemplary scholarly essays as well as textbook selections.

### Learning goals

1. Master key concepts necessary to the analysis of fictional narrative in terms of form, genre, and style.
2. Develop proficiency in using analysis to support the interpretation of fictional narrative.
3. Master the conventions of written scholarly argument in literary studies.
4. Develop proficiency in making convincing written interpretive arguments about fictional narrative.

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.

## Requirements

### Participation (5%)

This course emphasizes active learning. I believe we learn most effectively if we use the skills and knowledge we are acquiring as we acquire them, so each class session will include whole-group discussion and small-group discussion as well as short topic lectures. For this to work, every student must participate seriously. You are expected to attend every class on time, with the assigned texts in hand, prepared to discuss the assigned readings.

Grading: zero to two absences or equivalent, 4.0; three to four absences or equivalent, 2.0; more than five absences or equivalent, 0. Repeated lateness, lack of preparation, or disruptive behavior will count as equivalent to an absence. Absences will be excused only for documented medical reasons.

### Commonplacing (5%)

Students will be required to contribute to a coursewide blog on a weekly basis. This blog will be a *commonplace book*—that is, a collection of lightly annotated excerpts from the readings. Each student will record at least one excerpt from every one of the week's readings. To receive credit, the commonplacing assignment for the week must be completed on time, by 11 p.m. on Wednesdays. This assignment is detailed at [sp13-plsf.blogs.rutgers.edu/commonplacing-guide/](http://sp13-plsf.blogs.rutgers.edu/commonplacing-guide/).

Grading: zero to two entries missing, 4.0; three to four entries missing, 2.0; five or more entries missing, 0.

### Exercises (10%)

Multiple short writing assignments will require students to develop mastery of the concepts introduced in class. The typical assignment will be a one-page paper answering a specific question with textual evidence, but there will be some variation.

Grading: assignments will be graded using only integers and half-integers between 0 and 4.

### Paper 1 (30%)

5–6 pages on a single text. Topics distributed in advance.

### Paper 2 (30%)

6–7 pages on a single text, citing a secondary source from class appropriately. Topics distributed in advance.

### Final exam (20%)

Short-answer questions on key concepts from the course, plus one essay question.

## Grading policies

### No incompletes

Except for reasons of documented serious illness at term end, disability, or other major extenuating circumstance, I will not assign “incomplete” or T grades. Students who do not complete both papers and the final exam in time for me to submit their final grades will receive a grade of F.

### Late assignments

### Late exercises

Up to two exercises may be turned in late, any time until the last class, without penalty. Any further late exercises will be penalized at the rate of 2.0 points per day, with no fractional penalties.

### Late papers

One paper may be turned in up to three days late without penalty. The other paper must then be on time. Past these deadlines, the rate of penalty is 0.4 points per day, with no fractional penalties.

## Grading standards

Students cannot pass the course unless they complete both papers and the final exam.

Grades will be given on the four-point scale as specified [in the Undergraduate Catalog](#). For the purpose of converting the final score to a letter, the numerical equivalents in the Catalog will be 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; I have used mathematical open/closed interval notation:

A (3.5, 4.0]: Outstanding. The student’s work demonstrates thorough mastery of course materials and skills.

B/B+ (2.5, 3.5]: Good. The student’s work demonstrates serious engagement with all aspects of the course but incomplete mastery of course materials and skills.

C/C+ (1.5, 2.5]: Satisfactory. The student’s work satisfies requirements but shows significant problems or major gaps in mastery of course material.

D (0.5, 1.5]: Poor or minimal pass. The student completes the basic course requirements, but the student’s work is frequently unsatisfactory in several major areas.

F [0, 0.5]: Failure. Student has not completed all course requirements or turns in consistently unsatisfactory work.

**Academic integrity**

We, the students and the instructor, 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. For more information, please consult the Office of Disability Services on the web at [disabilityservices.rutgers.edu](http://disabilityservices.rutgers.edu) or by phone at 848-445-6800.

## Schedule

### Introduction. Story, narrative, fiction

Thursday, January 24.

Fables: Aesop, Kafka (in class).

Plot. *Sjužet* and *fabula*

(Saturday, January 26.)

**Blogging assignment.** Make a trial commonplace-book entry by 11 p.m.

Monday, January 28.

Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in Bohemia," in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*.

Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb," in *Adventures*.

H. Porter Abbott, "Story, plot, and narration," in *CCN* [*The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*].

Genre (1)

Thursday, January 31.

Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band," in *Adventures*.

Heta Pyrhönen, "Genre," in *CCN*.

Narrative discourse, irony

Monday, February 4.

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

**Exercise due.** Conan Doyle, *sjužet*, *fabula*.

Thursday, February 7.

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

Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality."

Gallagher's challenging essay needs time.

Character

Monday, February 11.

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

Uri Margolin, "Character," in *CCN*.

**Exercise due.** "Fiction" in the *OED*.

## Style

**Thursday, February 14.**

*Pride and Prejudice*, complete.

Miller, *Jane Austen, or the Secret of Style*, chap. 2.

**Frames. The first person**

**Monday, February 18.**

Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (book form).

It is essential to read this in book form.

**Exercise due.** Austen, character. Use commonplace book.

**Paper 1 topics distributed.**

## Seriality

**Thursday, February 21.**

Conrad, "Heart of Darkness" (serial form).

You need not reread the whole novella, but you should look closely at each of the three parts of the magazine version.

## Point of View

**Monday, February 25.**

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

**Exercise due.** The essay introduction, PLSF style.

**Thursday, February 28.**

*What Maisie Knew*, through chap. 15.

Manfred Jahn, "Focalization," in *CCN*.

## Theory of Mind

**Monday, March 4.**

*What Maisie Knew*, through chap. 22.

(Wednesday, March 6.)

**Paper 1 due at 5 p.m.** No commonplacing this week.

**Thursday, March 7.**

*What Maisie Knew*, complete.

**Irony**

**Monday, March 11.**

Joyce, "The Dead."

**Space (1)**

**Thursday, March 14.**

Joyce, "The Dead."

Teresa Bridgeman, "Time and Space," in *CCN*.

Also bring: Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*.

**In-class exercise.** Joyce, Conrad, setting.

(March 16–22. Spring recess.)

**Stream of consciousness**

**Monday, March 25.**

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, part 1.

David Herman, "Cognition, emotion, and consciousness," in *CCN*.

**Thursday, March 28.**

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, part 1.

Auerbach, "The Brown Stocking."

**The novel, history**

**Monday, April 1.**

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, parts 1–2.

**Exercise due.** Engaging Auerbach. Use commonplace book.

**Paper 2 topics distributed.**

**Thursday, April 4.**

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, complete.

**Monday, April 8.**

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, 3–158.

**Thursday, April 11.**

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, 3–195.

Jorge Luis Borges, “[Pierre Menard, Author of the \*Quixote\*.”](#)”

**The magic real****Monday, April 15.**

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, complete.

Portelli, “[Beloved \(Toni Morrison, United States, 1987\).](#)”

**Thursday, April 18.**

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*.

**Exercise due.** Argument strategies: Portelli.

**Space (2)****Monday, April 22.**

Nadine Gordimer, *July's People*, 1–101.

Also bring: Conrad, Joyce.

**The novel, the future**

(Wednesday, April 24.)

**Paper 2 due.** No commonplacing this week.

**Thursday, April 25.**

Nadine Gordimer, *July's People*, complete.

**Monday, April 29.**

William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*, complete.

**Exercise due.** Gordimer, style.

**Genre (2)****Thursday, May 2.**

William Gibson, *Pattern Recognition*.

**Monday, May 6.**

Summing up. And: what next?

(May 7–8. Reading days.)

(May 9–14. Exam period.)

Friday, May 10, 8 a.m.–11 a.m.

Final exam. Terms and one essay.

## Readings

### Buying the books

Readings are on order at Barnes & Noble or online on Sakai. They will also be placed on reserve at Alexander Library. I have listed online texts, but *online texts are a vastly inferior alternative* to the suggested printed texts. Your learning will be hampered and your work in the course damaged if you rely on online texts. For a more extended discussion by Prof. Goldstone of the question of managing the expenses of course books and the pros and cons of online texts, see [sp13-plsf.blogs.rutgers.edu/buying-books](http://sp13-plsf.blogs.rutgers.edu/buying-books).

### Required texts

Auerbach, Erich. “The Brown Stocking.” In *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Trans. Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. Excerpt online on [sakai](#).

Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*. Edited by Fiona Stafford. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2008. Or (much worse) *The Novels and Letters of Jane Austen*, ed. R. Brimley Johnson (New York: Holby, 1906), 2 vols: [vol. 3](#), [vol. 4](#).

Borges, Jorge Luis. “Pierre Menard, Author of the *Quixote*.” In *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York: Penguin 1998), 88–95. Online via [sakai](#).

Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. In *Heart of Darkness and Other Tales*. Edited by Cedric Watts. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Or [in online text of \*Youth, A Narrative, and Two Other Stories\* \(Blackwood, 1902\)](#).

Conrad, Joseph. “Heart of Darkness.” 3 pts. *Blackwood's* 165 (February–April 1899): [193–220](#), [479–502](#), [634–57](#). Online via [Joseph Conrad Periodical Archive](#).

Conan Doyle, Arthur. *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. New York: Dover, 2009. Or [online scan of 1902 Harper edition](#).

Gallagher, Catherine. “The Rise of Fictionality.” In *The Novel*, edited by Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1:336–63. Online via [Princeton University Press](#) or [Sakai](#).

Gibson, William. *Pattern Recognition*. New York: Penguin Putnam, 2005.

Gordimer, Nadine. *July's People*. New York: Penguin, 1982.

Herman, David, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

James, Henry. *What Maisie Knew*. Edited by Adrian Poole. Cambridge: Oxford University Press, 2009. Or [online scan of 1908 New York edition \(Scribner\)](#). (Earlier versions of this syllabus provided a link to the first American edition: [online scan of 1897 Stone edition](#). James revised this text and added an important preface for the New York edition, which is also the copy-text for the Oxford University Press edition.)

Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. Edited by Jeri Johnson. New York: Oxford University Press, 2008. Or [online scan of 1914 Grant Richards edition](#).

Miller, D. A. *Jane Austen, or The Secret of Style*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003. Online via [sakai](#).

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Vintage, 2004.

Portelli, Alessandro. "Beloved (Toni Morrison, United States, 1987)." Translated by Michael F. Moore. In *The Novel*, edited by Franco Moretti (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 1:336–63. Online via [Sakai](#).

Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. New York: Harcourt, 1989.

## Acknowledgments

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