**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/.

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.

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 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, “The Adventure of the Engineer’s Thumb,” in Adventures.

Genre (1)

Thursday, January 31.

Heta Pyrhönen, “Genre,” in CCN.

Narrative discourse, irony

Monday, February 4.

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.

It is essential to read this in book form.
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.

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.

Thursday, April 11.


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.*


Space (2)

Monday, April 22.


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.

Required texts


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**Acknowledgments**

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