

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction

Mondays and Thursdays, 12:10–1:30 p.m., in Frelinghuysen B5
Professor Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)
Office hours: Wednesdays, 12:00–1:00 p.m. in Murray 019 or Zoom by appointment
<http://e2ofic22.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 (Rabindranath Tagore, Anand).

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 literary 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

Attendance and active, thoughtful participation in discussion are required. Lateness, lack of preparation, and disruptive behavior affect the participation mark. To receive full credit for participation, you should speak thoughtfully in every 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 fall ill or miss class for a family emergency, please contact me as soon as possible; you can make up for an excused absence.

5% REGULAR INFORMAL WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

Students will add to an electronic commonplace book, selecting a passage from the reading in 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.

25% PAPER 1

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

30% PAPER 2

An interpretive essay making an argument about one or two texts. Choice of topics distributed in advance.

30% TAKE-HOME FINAL EXAM

Essay questions, each making arguments about several texts. Open-book, no collaboration.

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 e2ofic22.blogs.rutgers.edu/syllabus.

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

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8.

Introduction.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12. 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 13.)

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

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15.

James, "The Middle Years," continued.

James, "The Art of Fiction."

Woolf, "Modern Fiction."

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19.

Joyce, *Dubliners*. Focus on "Araby."

Joyce, *Selected Letters*, 75–79, 81–90.

Commonplacing: group A. Theme: perspective.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 22.

Joyce, *Dubliners*. Focus on "Ivy Day in the Committee Room."

Joyce, *Selected Letters*, 197–99, 202–3, 205–9, 220–21.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 26.

Joyce, *Dubliners*. Focus on "The Dead."

Joyce, *Selected Letters*, 163–67.

Commonplacing: group B. Theme: culture.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29.

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 3–92 (twelve o'clock).

MONDAY, OCTOBER 3.

Woolf, complete.
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: pasts.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6.

Woolf, continued.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 3–81.
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: limits of vision.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 13.

Faulkner, 3–179.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 17.

Faulkner, complete.
Lester, "As They Lay Dying," 35–49 (the opening pages of this essay are optional).
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: inequality.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, continued.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24. SPECIALIZING POPULAR LITERATURE.

Sayers, *Whose Body?*, at least through chap. 5.
Chesterton, "A Defence of Detective Stories."
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: mysteries and social problems.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27.

Sayers, *Whose Body?*, complete.

(SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29.)

Paper 1 due.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31.

Hammett, *The Maltese Falcon*, at least through chap. 5.
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: style.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3.

Hammett, at least through chap. 13.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7.

Hammett, complete.
 Chandler, "The Simple Art of Murder."
 McCann, *Gumshoe America*, 87–91 (optionally, 91–102).
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: (a)morality.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 10. CONTESTING RACIAL CONVENTION.

Toomer, *Cane*, pt. 1 ("Karintha" through "Blood-Burning Moon").

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 14.

Toomer, selections from pts. 2–3:
 "Seventh Street."
 "Avey."
 "Bona and Paul."
 "Kabnis."
Commonplacing: group A. Theme: linkages.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 17.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, 1–99.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 21.

Hurston, 1–128.
Commonplacing: group B. Theme: division.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22. (THURSDAY CLASSES TODAY).

Hurston, 1–128.
 Carby, "The Politics of Fiction, Anthropology, and the Folk: Zora Neale Hurston."

(THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 24. THANKSGIVING RECESS.)

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 28.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, complete.

Commonplacing: group A. Theme: Hurston's (further) South.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 1. GLOBALIZING LITERARY ENGLISH.

Tagore, "The Postmaster."

Tagore, "The Hungry Stones."

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5.

Tagore, continued.

Anand, *Untouchable*.

Commonplacing: group B. Theme: where a narrator stands.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 8.

Anand, complete.

(SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10.)

Paper 2 due.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12.

Anand, continued.

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

(THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22.)

Take-home final due at 3 p.m.

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.

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.

MORE BOOKS TO BUY (DIGITAL ALTERNATIVES AVAILABLE)

Print versions are available at Barnes & Noble. Digital versions cited here will also be available on Canvas. However, students who work from print versions usually do better in the course.

Joyce, James. *Dubliners*. Edited by Jeri Johnson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 9780199536436. I strongly urge you to obtain this annotated edition of a difficult book.

———. *Dubliners*. Grant Richards, 1914. London: HathiTrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/bc.ark:/13960/t5q84bb6g>.

Sayers, Dorothy L. *Whose Body?* In *Dorothy L. Sayers Omnibus [3 Lord Peter Mysteries]*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, [1934]. HathiTrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/inu.30000007086980>.

———. *Whose Body?* 1923. Reprint, New York: Dover, 2009. ISBN: 9780486473628. I recommend this cheap paperback reprint.

Toomer, Jean. *Cane*. 1923. New York: Liveright, 2011. ISBN: 9780871402103. I recommend reading this book in paperback.

———. *Cane*. New York: Liveright, 1923. HathiTrust, 2011. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015000252448>.

Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Edited by Bonnie Kime Scott. Orlando: Harvest, 2005. ISBN: 9780156030359. This annotated edition is the best choice for this challenging book.

———. *Mrs. Dalloway*. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925. HathiTrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015013962207>.

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).

Carby, Hazel V. "The Politics of Fiction, Anthropology, and the Folk: Zora Neale Hurston." In *New Essays on "Their Eyes Were Watching God"*, edited by Michael Awkward, 71–93. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Excerpt available on Canvas.

Chandler, Raymond. "The Simple Art of Murder." *Atlantic Monthly*, November 1944. Available on Canvas.

Chesterton, G. K. "A Defence of Detective Stories." In *The Defendant*, 118–123. London: R. Brimley Johnson, 1902. HathiTrust. <https://>

hdl.handle.net/2027/nco1.ark:/13960/t2g746s5t. Excerpt available on Canvas.

Hammett, Dashiell. "Suggestions to Detective Story Writers." In *Crime Stories and Other Writings*, 914–16. New York: Library of America, 2001. Available on Canvas.

James, Henry. "The Art of Fiction." In *Partial Portraits*. New York: Macmillan, 1894. Internet Archive. <http://archive.org/details/partialportraitsoojameiala>. Available on Canvas.

———. "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 Canvas.

- Joyce, James. *Selected Letters of James Joyce*. Edited by Richard Ellmann. London: Faber and Faber, 1975. Excerpt available on Canvas.
- . “The Postmaster.” In *Mashi, and Other Stories*. London: Macmillan, 1918. Hathitrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uc2.ark:/13960/t1khoh31j>. Available on Canvas.
- Tagore, Rabindranath. “The Hungry Stones.” In *Hungry Stones and Other Stories*. London: Macmillan, 1916. Hathitrust. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015030386992>. Available on Canvas.
- Woolf, Virginia. “Modern Fiction.” In *The Common Reader*, 2nd ed., 184–95. London: Hogarth, 1925. HathiTrust, 2020. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.39015026867195>. Available on Canvas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to Marianne DeKoven and Octavio R. González for suggestions and models.