

Early Twentieth-Century Fiction

Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00–3:20 p.m., in Murray 213
Professor Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)
Office hours: TBA
TA: Cassie Schiffman (cassie.schiffman@rutgers.edu)
Office hours: TBA
<http://andrewgoldstone.com/e2ofic25>

This course tells two stories about the revolutionary period in twentieth-century literature in English beginning around 1890 and running to the start of the Second World War in 1945. The first story is the story of the modernist breakthrough, when radical innovators transformed how the novel could be written: we will read writers like James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and William Faulkner for their singular experiments in form and content. The second story is the story of the radical expansion of literary production and consumption to new populations, giving rise to new literatures as different as specialized genre fiction, the Indian English novel, and the African-American novel. We will read exemplary works from each of these bodies of writing. Students will learn to analyze what is and is not shared across the radically varied field of early twentieth-century fiction, and to understand the variety of these fictions as a result of social contestation and collaboration.

BOOKS TO BUY

You are required to bring printed texts to class. ISBNs are included to help students ordering books online. The course texts are available at Barnes & Noble. The library has multiple copies of our readings as well. Other editions are usually fine, but please check with me.

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. London: Penguin, 2014. ISBN: 9780141393605.

Barnes, Djuna. *Nightwood*. New York: New Directions, 2006. ISBN: 9780811216715.

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

Hurston, Zora Neale. *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. 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.

Larsen, Nella. *Passing*. Mineola, NY: Dover, 2004. ISBN: 9780486437132.

Woolf, Virginia. *To the Lighthouse*. Edited by Mark Hussey. Orlando: Harvest, 2005. ISBN: 9780156030472.

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.

SCHEDULE

Readings are to be completed by the day they are listed under. The schedule may change as term goes on.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3.

Introduction.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 8.

James, “The Figure in the Carpet.” If you can read this one, you can do anything.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chap. 1.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chaps. 1–3.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17.

Joyce, *Portrait*, chaps. 1–4.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22.

Joyce, *Portrait*, complete.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24.

Padmini, “Vasantica: A Story.”

Rosehill, “When Is a Woman ‘Too Old?’”

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 29.

Schalk, "Love in a Penthouse."
Heyer, "Lady, Your Pardon."

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 1–85.
Woolf, "Modern Fiction."

MONDAY, OCTOBER 6.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 1–126.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 8.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, 1–165.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 13.

Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, complete.
Auerbach, *Mimesis*, 525–53.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15.

Larsen, *Passing*, part 1.

(THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16.)

Paper 1 due at 10 p.m.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 20.

Larsen, *Passing*, complete.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22.

Larsen, *Passing*, continued.
Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 3–67.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, 3–165.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29.

Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*, complete.
Lester, "As They Lay Dying," 35–49 (the opening pages of this essay are optional).

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 3.

Midterm exam in class.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 5.

Narayan, "A Night of Cyclone."

Anand, *Untouchable*, 3–25.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10.

Anand, *Untouchable*, 3–102.

Rao, "The Cow of the Barricades."

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12.

Anand, *Untouchable*, complete.

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

Gandhi, "Mr. Gandhi and the Suppressed Classes," parts 1 and 2.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 17.

Barnes, *Nightwood*, 3–54.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 19.

Barnes, *Nightwood*, 3–83.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 24.

Barnes, *Nightwood*, complete.

(WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 26. FRIDAY CLASSES MEET TODAY.)

MONDAY, DECEMBER 1.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, 1–109.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, 1–128.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 8.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, complete.

(TUESDAY, DECEMBER 9.)

Paper 2 due at 10 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10.

Hurston, *Their Eyes*, continued.

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

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, AT 12 P.M.

Final exam (90 minutes).

GRADING

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{grade} = & 0.1(\text{participation}) + 0.15(\text{midterm}) \\ & + 0.2(\text{paper 1}) + 0.30(\text{paper 2}) + 0.25(\text{final}) \end{aligned}$$

Each grade is 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 used as follows:

$3.5 < \text{grade} \leq 4.0$	A
$3.0 < \text{grade} \leq 3.5$	B+
$2.5 < \text{grade} \leq 3.0$	B
$2.0 < \text{grade} \leq 2.5$	C+
$1.0 < \text{grade} \leq 2.0$	C
$0.5 < \text{grade} \leq 1.0$	D
$\text{grade} \leq 0.5$	F

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 taking the final exam.

PARTICIPATION

Attendance and active, thoughtful participation in discussion are required. Lateness, lack of preparation (including coming to class without the assigned text in printed form), and disruptive behavior affect the participation mark.

If you miss three classes without excuse, the *maximum* participation mark you can receive is 3.0 out of 4.0; 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.

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. For the purposes of this course, I will also consider any use of so-called “AI” tools for generating text for assignments as a violation of academic integrity. 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.

OTHER READINGS AVAILABLE VIA CANVAS

- 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).
- Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Translated by Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953. Excerpt available on Canvas.
- 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. 1990. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Excerpt available on Canvas.
- Gandhi, M.K. "Mr. Gandhi and the Suppressed Classes." *Young India*, April 27–May 4, 1921, 135–36, 143–44. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uva.x030554462>.
- Heyer, Georgette. "Lady, Your Pardon." *Australian Women's Weekly*, April 3, 1937, 5, 34–36. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article52245189>.
- James, Henry. "The Figure in the Carpet." In *Embarassments*. London: Heinemann, 1896. HathiTrust, 2025. <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/nnc1.cu58354093>. Available on Canvas.
- Lester, Cheryl. "As They Lay Dying: Rural Depopulation and Social Dislocation as a Structure of Feeling." *Faulkner Journal* 21, nos. 1–2 (Fall 2005/Spring 2006): 28–50. <https://muse-jhu-edu.proxy.libraries.rutgers.edu/article/708817/pdf>.
- Narayan, R. K. "A Night of Cyclone." In *Lawley Road and Other Stories*. Delhi: Hind Pocket Books, 1972. Available on Canvas.
- Padmini [pseud.]. "Vasantika: A Story." *Indian Ladies' Magazine*, November 1917, 71–84. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/saoa.crl.24284996>.
- Rao, Raja. "The Cow of the Barricades." In *The Cow of the Barricades and Other Stories*. Madras: Geoffrey Cumberlege/Oxford University Press, 1947. Available on Canvas.
- Rosehill, Amenias. "When Is a Woman 'Too Old'?" *Love Story Magazine*, July 17, 1926, 57–66. <https://archive.org/details/love-story-magazine-v-39-n-02-1926-07-17/page/56/mode/2up>.
- Schalk, Gertrude. "Love in a Penthouse." *Love Story Magazine*, April 11, 1931, 24–35. <https://archive.org/details/love-story-magazine-v-080-n-03-1931-04-11/page/24/mode/2up>.
- 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.

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