

Fall 2015

## ENGL 4915

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*University of New Orleans*

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## **English 4915: The Modern Novel**

**Fall 2015**

Dr. White

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LA-335; 280-6690

Office Hours: 8-1050 MWF; 8-1050 TTH

And most anytime by appointment

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

A study of the novel from 1900 to 1945. During this period many writers challenged traditional conceptions of narrative form, point of view, time, subject matter, and of course the absolutes of “reality” and “truth.” More traditional realist texts certainly still appeared, and we will study a few, but we will also give extensive attention to more thematically and formally experimental fiction—that which examines, among other important subjects, the construction of self, developing artistic sensibilities struggling against societal constraints, and more general existential crises born of attempts to locate new versions of/alternatives to moribund belief systems and cultural imperatives. Much of the fiction of this period, regardless of mode, explores the complex interactions between subjectivity and authority, and this will be a special emphasis of ours. We will look at representative English, American, and Continental texts. Originally, Kafka’s The Metamorphosis was on the list, but time constraints necessitated removal.

There are probably no real surprises on the syllabus; these are all canonical selections. Perhaps many of you will have read and/or studied one or more of them. I attempted to choose books that represent in various ways prominent aspects of literary modernism—i.e. that reflect several crucial aesthetic, social, and cultural concerns of the period under consideration.

### **AUGUST**

19—James, The Aspern Papers, chapters 1-3

21--AP, chapters 4-6

24—AP, chapters 7-9

26—finish AP

28—Conrad, Heart of Darkness, chapter I

31—HD, chapter II

### **SEPTEMBER**

2—HD, chapter III

4—finish HD

7—LABOR DAY

9—Forster, Howards End, chapters 1-12

11—HE, chapters 13-16

14—HE, chapters 17-30

16—HE, chapters 31-37

18—HE, chapters 38-44  
21—finish HE

23--Mann, Death in Venice, chapters 1 and 2  
25—DV, chapter 3  
28—DV, chapter 4  
30—DV, chapter 5

## OCTOBER

2, 5—finish DV

7--Wharton, The Age of Innocence, chapters 1-8  
9—AI, chapters 9-14  
12—AI, chapters 15-24  
14--NO CLASS  
16—Midesemester Break  
19—AI, chapters 25-34  
21, 23—finish AI

26--Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby, chapters 1-4  
28—GG, chapters 5-6  
30—GG, chapter 7

## NOVEMBER

2—GG, chapters 8-9  
4—finish GG

6--Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, pp. 3-36  
9—MD, pp. 36-102  
11, 13—MD, pp. 102-34  
16—MD, pp. 134-94  
18—finish MD

20--Faulkner, Light in August, chapters 1-3  
23—LA, chapters 4-8  
25—LA, chapters 9-11  
27—THANKSGIVING  
30—LA, chapters 12-17

## DECEMBER

2—LA, chapters 19-21  
4—finish LA

**FINAL EXAM: Friday, December 11, 1230-230**

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

**By the end of the semester, English 4915 students will be able to:**

- analyze, discuss, and write about several major works of literary modernism.
- discuss the formal and thematic developments of fiction in an era when many writers were departing from traditional realist models.
- articulate the social, political, philosophical, and cultural contexts from which these texts emerge and to which many of them respond
- more effectively write essays and exams.

## EXAMS

The first exam will be a take-home exam covering James, Conrad, Forster, and Mann. The format for the exam will involve some combination of the following: applying important terms and concepts to the works we've discussed, responding to short answer questions, and analyzing representative quotations. I will post the exam to Moodle two or three weeks before it is due; it will include topics and full instructions for a short essay as well.

The final will be a two-hour in-class exam covering Wharton, Fitzgerald, Woolf, and Faulkner and will be similar in format to the short-answer questions/responding to quotations part of the mid-term. Forthcoming are sample exam questions and responses. **Each exam is worth 30% of your grade.**

## THE ESSAY

Undergraduates will write a ten-page research essay, incorporating meaningfully at least four critical sources. I will provide a few prompts (and note possible topics as they arise during our class discussions). It is never too early to begin examining the subjects and themes that interest you, looking at the criticism, meeting with me when you're ready, working out your ideas. You are to generate your own thesis and argument, of course, but I expect you to consult relevant scholarly material as well and incorporate it into your essay. If you are interested in a subject not covered in my suggestions, or if you know or think you might want to explore a writer we are covering later in the semester but want to get started early, let's discuss it. The essay is worth 25%.

## PARTICIPATION AND CLASS FORMAT

I will lecture infrequently; we will emphasize discussion, so, obviously, participation and preparedness are crucial. Come to class having read the assigned material and with questions and comments. We will probably not be able to adhere rigidly to the syllabus; changes will likely happen from time to time. We will get behind; we will get ahead. It is your responsibility, if you must miss a class, to stay abreast of these changes.

**Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory. Make it a goal to attend every class. Punctuality is also very important. Circumstances sometimes make us miss class or arrive a couple of minutes late, but multiple absences and chronic lateness are unacceptable. Should you amass four unexcused absences, you will incur a half letter grade reduction in the final course grade, a fifth a full letter grade, and so on. Three tardies constitute one unexcused absence. I will strictly enforce this policy. Attendance and participation count for 10% of your grade.

### **GRADING SCALE**

**90-100=A**

**80-89=B**

**70-79=C**

**60-69=D**

**BELOW 60=F**

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. It includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the UNO Judicial Code for further information. The Code is available online at [http://www.uno.edu/~stlf%Manual/judicial\\_code\\_pt2.htm](http://www.uno.edu/~stlf%Manual/judicial_code_pt2.htm)

### **UNIVERSITY COMMITMENT**

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In general, University policy calls for reasonable accommodations to be made for students with documented disabilities on an individualized and flexible basis. It is the responsibility of students, however, to seek available assistance at the University and to make their needs known.

**For more information, please contact the Office of Disability Services.**