

Fall 2015

## ENGL 6900

L. White  
*University of New Orleans*

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**English 6900-476: Modernist British Fiction (1900-1925)**

Dr. White: LA 335

Office Hours: 8-1050, 12-1250 MWF; 8-1050 TTH

And by appointment

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“Modernity is the transient, the fleeting, the contingent; it is one half of art, the other being the eternal and the immovable.”—Baudelaire

“Modernity exists in the form of a desire to wipe out whatever came earlier. . .”—Paul De Man

Our primary focus in this seminar will be on the period of “high modernism” (emphasizing roughly the first two-and-a-half decades of the twentieth century) when writers, in the wake of waning Victorian/Edwardian certitude, often challenged traditional conceptions of narrative form, point of view, time, and subject matter, as well as accepted notions of “reality,” the “self,” and “truth.” Much of the fiction of this period examines ways in which identity is constructed. It explores developing, complex artistic sensibilities struggling against societal constraints, and probes more universal existential crises born of attempts to locate new versions of/alternatives to what many regarded as oppressive class divisions, moribund belief systems, and outworn social and cultural values.

**AUGUST**

August 19-September 2—Conrad, Heart of Darkness

**SEPTEMBER**

September 3-11—Conrad, The Secret Sharer

September 12-27—Forster, Howards End

September 28—**OCTOBER** 12—Joyce, from Dubliners  
“The Sisters,” “Araby,” “Clay,” “Eveline,” “The Dead”

October 13-27—Lawrence, Sons and Lovers

October 28-**NOVEMBER** 6—from The Garden Party and Other Stories  
(stories TBA)

November 7-22—Ford, The Good Soldier

November 23-**DECEMBER** 6—Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway

## TEXTS

Conrad, Heart of Darkness and The Secret Sharer (NAL/Signet Classics)  
Forster, Howards End (Penguin)  
Joyce, Dubliners (Signet Classics)  
Lawrence, Sons and Lovers  
Mansfield, The Garden Party and Other Stories  
Ford, The Good Soldier (Oxford University Press)  
Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway (HBJT)

## COURSE OBJECTIVES AND CLASS FORMAT

Probably, there are 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.

Though I will occasionally write at some length on this or that topic and post informational background material, our class will obviously be driven primarily by what happens on the discussion board. At least half of the responsibility for making the course successful is yours. My role is to try to pose provocative questions and to respond to your ideas, comments and questions so that the discussion moves along in an organized, lively, and timely fashion. Yours is to read carefully and think about and respond meaningfully to our material, my questions, and the questions and ideas of your colleagues.

### **By the end of the semester, English 6900 students will be able to:**

- Write about the formal and thematic developments in the genre in an era when many writers of prose fiction were departing from traditional realist models.
- explain social, political, philosophical, and aesthetic contexts from which these texts emerge and to which many of them respond
- identify a number of the themes and characteristics that concerned writers of the late-Victorian, Edwardian, and Georgian periods.
- cite several major critical and biographical works exploring the writers and period under consideration in the course.

**DISCUSSION BOARD:** For each week's readings, I will post a few prompts to initiate conversation among us. You should read everything on the discussion board, including my comments and of course your colleagues' as well, and respond to them in a serious, respectful manner. Obviously, your responses and interactions constitute the "class participation" component of the course. Visit the discussion area at least twice a week to remain current and post substantial, well-developed responses to discussion questions and

to other students' posted responses. **You should post in a timely fashion. Please do not fall behind.** More specific instructions for posting and responding will come in e-mails to you preceding the opening of a forum. **DISCUSSION BOARD ACTIVITY COUNTS FOR 20% OF YOUR GRADE.**

**EXAMS:** Both the mid-term and final exams will consist of questions and quotations which require responses ranging from 250-word paragraphs to short essays of 750-1000 words. The mid-term will cover material through Joyce. I will post the exam with full explanation and instruction around the end of September, and the tentative due date will be something like October 20, submitted via e-mail attachment.

The final will cover the remainder of the material, and though it will not be comprehensive in a strict sense, I do expect you to draw on the fundamental ideas we have dealt with all semester in your responses. As for format, it will be similar to the mid-term in that you will be asked to discuss significant quotations in substantial paragraphs and perhaps to write a short essay. **EACH EXAM IS WORTH 30% OF YOUR GRADE.**

**THE ESSAY:** Because the discussion board and exams involve a significant amount of writing, we will write only one essay this semester—a research essay of approximately 12-15 pages. Specific instructions and prompts for the paper are forthcoming. **THE TENTATIVE DUE DATE FOR THE ESSAY IS DECEMBER 5 AND COUNTS FOR 20% 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**

The University of New Orleans (UNO) is committed to providing for the needs of enrolled or admitted students who have disabilities under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

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.**

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