

ENL 4273, Section 19E2
Twentieth Century British Literature:
Conrad, Joyce, Woolf
and the Modernist Revolution

Professor Phillip Wegner
MWF 4 (10:40.-11:30 a.m.)
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In one of her best-known interventions in the literary debates of the first half of the twentieth century, Virginia Woolf claims “that in or about December, 1910, human character changed.” As a consequence of this change, Woolf goes on to suggest, “All human relations have shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature.” It would be the project of the variety of artistic and cultural movements that we now describe as *modernism* to give voice to the experience of these and many other of the explosive social and cultural changes of the new century. In this course, we shall investigate some of the issues surrounding the modernist revolution, while also considering modernism itself as a kind of revolution, as they are raised in the work of three of the most important “British” authors of the first half of the twentieth-century: Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf. In addition to exploring the rich aesthetic and formal issues raised by these writers’ work—what, for example, did T. S. Eliot mean when he wrote that Joyce’s masterpiece *Ulysses* (1922) is “not a novel?”—we shall look at the way that these writers’ works respond to and help us understand the cultural and social histories in which they unfold. Indeed, one of the first questions these writers force us to confront is what is “British” about British literature in this moment—after all, Conrad is the child of exiled Polish patriots and only learns English as an adult; Joyce is Irish, writing in a language that is always for him, as his character Stephen Dedalus puts it, “an acquired speech;” and Woolf tirelessly interrogates the status of the woman artist in relationship the traditional centers of English cultural power. Similarly, these works will lead us into an investigation of

the relationship between literature and the fundamental realities of the new century: British imperialism; the creation of a global culture; industrial technology; the rise of mass culture; the experience of the city; the proximity of social revolution; new media, such as radio and film; the threat of fascism; and the changing place of women in culture and society. Finally, all of these works will ask us important questions about the roles of the artist and the work of art in this newly emerging world.

Texts

Joseph Conrad, *Youth*

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

James Joyce, *Ulysses* (Gabler edition)

Harry Blamires, *The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide Through Ulysses*

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*

As we will be doing a good deal of close reading during the course of the semester, I ask that you get copies of the editions ordered for our course. Some additional readings, primarily short essays, may be made available on the Canvas site during the course of the semester.

Requirements, Grading, and Related Matters

1) One of the central aims of this course is to expand your horizons to encompass new approaches and new questions. However, for such a journey to have any meaning, you first need an intellectual home, a disciplinary base, from which to begin. This means there are some basic requirements for participation in this course. This is an *upper-division* English major course, and thus assumes you have completed, at least, the requirements for a lower-division composition *and* English major courses. During the semester, you will be asked to demonstrate, in both your oral *and* written contributions to the class, proficiency in the kinds of critical, analytical, writing, and reading skills expected of advanced literary and cultural studies majors. These minimally would entail some experience in reading literary fictions critically, an ability to ascertain the thematic and formal textures of the work, a familiarity with some of the technical devices deployed by writers (point-of-view, metaphor, irony, and so forth), some broad sense of modern literary history, and a willingness to think about the intimate connections between these works and the historical contexts in which they unfold. At the same time, this is not a history course; hence, I will not assume that you have any familiarity with the various

historical issues we will also be discussing. If you have any questions about whether this course is right for you, or want suggestions on how you might brush up on some of the basics, please come and speak with me soon.

2) Attendance and participation in class discussion are indispensable parts of our work. It is vitally important that you arrive on time and attend the entire course meeting. If you will have any difficulty in doing so, or have an obligation that will force you to miss, be late, or depart early from any class meeting, I ask that you come and speak with me. Repeated non-emergency or non-medical absences, not cleared in advance, will result in a lowering of the final course grade. Moreover, if you miss an excessive number of class hours, whatever the reason, you will have been considered not to have completed the requirements of the course, and hence will not receive a passing grade. Finally, late arrivals and/or early departures from class meetings will be counted as absences. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

3) Students may use computers or other electronic platforms for accessing readings and/or taking notes. However, Wi-Fi connections should be turned off unless otherwise instructed, and students are not allowed to surf the web, work on other assignments, read novels, play games, view other pages, or engage in any other such activities during course discussion. Cell phones also should be turned off or silenced as soon as class begins. Violations of this policy will be counted as unexcused absences for that class meeting, and will result in lowering of the participation grade. If you have any questions about appropriate use of these devices please come and see me.

4) Readings should be completed before the class meeting in which they are to be discussed. This means that from our first meeting, you should be reading continuously, getting well ahead of our discussions. Moreover, I do expect lively participation on everyone's part in the class discussion. If conversation lags, expect occasional quizzes or other short in-class writing assignments.

This course will require you to do a good deal of reading, some of which you may find challenging in that they may lead to questions about deeply ingrained assumptions and uninterrogated "common sense" expectations. If you approach these works with an open mind, a spirit of adventure, and a willingness to expand your horizons, I think you will find the effort required well worth it. However, this will also mean that you need to work on developing in your reading skills new levels of attentiveness, concentration, and listening. The first step in becoming a stronger critical reader is to become a more active, engaged one. If you do not already do so, start reading with a pencil or pen in hand, marking passages that seem especially important or intriguing to you, and jotting insights and questions in the book's margins or on a near-by note pad. At the same time, you should try as much as possible to inhabit the intellectual and cultural contexts of the work's author. Ask

yourself these questions of the readings: What are the writer's goals? What things does she or he challenge or call into question? What are the writer's own expectations and assumptions? How does she or he work to achieve both their stated and implicit goals? And most importantly, in what ways does this work enable you to think in new ways?

5) The major writing assignment will consist of three formal papers, ranging in length. Presentation will count toward the grade of the paper: for example, each paper is expected to be double-spaced, with one-inch margins, printed in a reasonable 12-point or smaller font, and use a consistent bibliographic and reference format. You will also be required to present specific supporting evidence for your claims, in the form of citations from the work, with page numbers included. Each paper will focus on the course readings and will address a set of questions, issues, and themes we develop together in our class discussions. These papers will be your best opportunity to demonstrate your skills as an advanced prose writer and your grasp of both the readings and our discussions in class. Approximately two weeks before each paper is due, I will provide you with questions that will help frame your discussion, and you will be required to develop each of your papers in response to them. Any paper that does not meet the basic requirements listed above—including, but not limited to, using a consistent format; meeting at least the minimum length requirement; including specific citations from the readings; and making explicit connections to and engaging specifically with the prompts and class discussions—will be seen as not fulfilling the assignment, and will be returned for revision and a late grade.

Papers are due on the dates noted; late papers, including any returned to the student for revision, will receive lowered grades, unless other arrangements have been made in advance.

6) No final or midterm examinations.

7) Grades will be based on the conscientious completion of all of the above requirements. Please feel free to ask any questions in class or on an individual basis. Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

8) Finally, communication is crucial to everything we are going to do in the next four months. Thus, if you are unsure about any of the course requirements, or run into any kind of difficulty, academic or otherwise, as the semester progresses, please come and speak with me as soon as you can. I will try to be as accommodating as possible, but I cannot help you if you do not convey to me what is going on. Also if you have any general questions, or even just feel like continuing the discussion begun in class, I encourage you to drop by during my scheduled open office hours, or to make an appointment to see me.

Once again, welcome – I look forward to an exciting and rewarding semester!

Grading Criteria

Attendance (see above)

Participation and any secondary short assignments: 35 %

Three papers: 65 %

UF Policy Statements

1. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

2. UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty. For more about UF policies regarding harassment, see: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/policies-2/sexual-harassment/>

3. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states, "We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor in this class.

4. Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

5. Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Tentative Schedule

August 22 – August 27

Introduction: Modernism, Revolution, and “English” Literature

August 29 — September 28

Joseph Conrad: Truth telling

Preface (1897)

Youth (1898)

Heart of Darkness (1899)

Lord Jim (1900)

NO CLASS September 3 (Labor Day)

Paper #1 Due October 3

October 1 — November 9

**James Joyce: Education, Empire, Delirious Dublin, and the
“Revolution of the Word”**

A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man (1917)

Ulysses (1922)

NO CLASS October 31 and November 2 (Homecoming)

Paper #2 Due November 16

November 14 — December 5

**Virginia Woolf: Gender and Class, Revolt and Reform, Endings and
Beginnings**

To the Lighthouse (1927)

The Waves (1931)

NO CLASS November 12 (Veteran’s Day)

NO CLASS November 21 ad 23 (Thanksgiving)

Final Paper Due: Friday, December 7, 5 p.m.