

ENC 1145 | TOPICS IN COMPOSITION

Beauty, Consciousness, Reality & Time in the Work of Virginia Woolf

Instructor: William Iffland

Class Time: M, W, F from 12:50 – 1:40 PM (Period 6)

Location: MAT 0118

Office Hours & Location: TBD | Turlington Hall, Room 4343

... so afraid one is of loneliness: of seeing to the bottom of the vessel. That is one of the experiences I have had here in some Augusts; & got then to a consciousness of what I call 'reality': a thing I see before me; something abstract; but residing in the downs or sky; beside which nothing matters; in which I shall rest & continue to exist. Reality I call it. And I fancy sometimes this is the most necessary thing to me: that which I seek. But who knows—once one takes a pen & writes? How difficult not to go making 'reality' this & that, whereas it is one thing.

from the diary of Virginia Woolf
September 10, 1928

What is meant by 'reality'? It would seem to be something very erratic, very undependable—now to be found in a dusty road, now in a scrap of newspaper in the street, now a daffodil in the sun. It lights up a group in a room and stamps some casual saying. It overwhelms one walking home beneath the stars and makes the silent world more real than the world of speech—and then there it is again in an omnibus in the uproar of Piccadilly. Sometimes, too, it seems to dwell in shapes too far away for us to discern what their nature is. But whatever it touches, it fixes and makes permanent. That is what remains over when the skin of the day has been cast into the hedge; that is what is left of past time and of our loves and hates. Now the writer, as I think, has the chance to live more than other people in the presence of this reality. It is his business to find it and collect it and communicate it to the rest of us. So at least I infer from reading LEAR or EMMA or LA RECHERCHE DU TEMPS PERDU. For the reading of these books seems to perform a curious couching operation on the senses; one sees more intensely afterwards; the world seems bared of its covering and given an intenser life. Those are the enviable people who live at enmity with unreality; and those are the pitiable who are knocked on the head by the thing done without knowing or caring. So that when I ask you to earn money and have a room of your own, I am asking you to live in the presence of reality, an invigorating life, it would appear, whether one can impart it or not.

from *A Room of One's Own*
Virginia Woolf

1. Course Description

The focus of this course will be the writings of Virginia Woolf, famed British author (novelist, short-fiction writer, essayist, lecturer, literary critic—not to mention diarist and letter-writer) of the so-called "Modernist" movement in literature (1901-1945). More particularly, during our time together we will focus on the following six works of hers: *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927), *A Room of One's Own* (1929), *The Waves* (1931), *The Years* (1937), and *Between the Acts* (1941). Our class discussions will center around the conceptual relationship(s) between the ideal of beauty, the nature of consciousness, and the perception of "reality," as well as time, within her work. Further, we will consider the relation between all these things and Woolf's philosophy of the relation between the "feminine" and the "masculine"—the title of the course simply had to end, at some point! And let me say that I think people of **all political inclinations** will find something of exceptional interest and value here (i.e., especially with respect to this last consideration of the course)!

Our primary goal as a class will be to experience a combination of intellectual and sensuous-aesthetic enjoyment in discovering what elements of these texts "still speak" to our experience today, affording us greater insight into the historical present we inhabit, here, at the edge of recorded time. On the other hand, we will also ask what (if anything) about these texts strikes us as outdated or archaic. Reciprocally: what elements (if any) do we find ourselves still registering as compellingly beautiful, profound, or poetic today? How do these works alter our sense of such aesthetic categories as beauty, the profound, the poetic, and the sublime? Do these texts transform (or, again, enhance in any way) our perception of the historical present in which we live—i.e., our perception of ourselves? Society? Reality? The trees? The sky? The universe? As your friend and humble guide on this exciting and thoroughly mind-bending literary adventure, my primary goal will be to help you develop your skills as readers, writers, and thinkers, and to support the fertilization and cultivation of your own interests and ideas.

Now for some logistics. This course satisfies the 6000-word University Writing Requirement. Students will be asked to write three, 2000-word papers of literary analysis, each of which should advance an interpretation of—and be supported by textual evidence from—one or more of the texts we have read in class. A successful paper, therefore, will present a well-formatted, well-supported, persuasive essay that advances a clear and focused interpretation of the text(s) you opt to write about. My goal is that you will emerge from this course with a deepened fascination and knowledge of Virginia Woolf's literary corpus, as well as with improved skills of critical reading and literary analysis.

2. General Education Objectives

This course confers General Education credit for either Composition (C) or Humanities (H). This course also fulfills 6,000 of the university's 24,000-word writing requirement (WR).

Composition courses provide instruction in the methods and conventions of standard written English (grammar, punctuation, usage), as well as the techniques that produce effective texts. Composition courses are writing-intensive.

Students should learn to organize complex arguments in writing using thesis statements, claims, and evidence, as well as to analyze writing for errors in logic.

The University Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning. To receive Writing Requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing-component of the course. This means that written assignments must meet minimum word requirements totaling 6000 words.

3. General Education Learning Outcomes

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the following learning outcomes in content, communication, and critical thinking:

- Content: Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the academic discipline.
- Communication: Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline. Students will participate in class discussions throughout the semester to reflect on assigned readings.
- Critical Thinking: Students analyze information carefully and logically from multiple perspectives, using discipline-specific methods, and develop reasoned solutions to problems.

4. Required Texts to Purchase

There are no required texts for this course. While I recommend—for your heightened enjoyment as a reader—that you acquire physical copies of the texts we will be reading in class, it is entirely at your discretion whether you choose to read a digital copy of a given text or a physical one.

5. List of Assignments

Assignment	Points	WC	Due Date
Participation	200	n/a	n/a
Attendance	200	n/a	n/a
3 Critical Essays	200 each	2000 each	TBD (Let's discuss in class.)
Total	1000	6000	n/a

1) 3 Critical Essays (2,000 words / 200 points)

For this course I am asking you to write three essays (of 2,000 words or more) in which you make a sustained argument—advancing an interpretation of or one or more texts we've read in class—through a particular theoretical, historical, or critical lens. In these papers, you must support your thesis with textual evidence. My hope is that you will find enjoyment in writing these and in working through your ideas, and that you will feel free and uninhibited to be daring with your arguments and interpretations! Most importantly: show me what fascinates and/or moves you about a text, and I will be moved and/or fascinated too!

2) Attendance (100 points)

(See course policy #2.)

3) Daily Participation

To run our class discussion smoothly and vibrantly, please complete not only the reading assigned for each class, but also come with your own critical observations and questions.

6. Course Policies

- 1) You must turn in work for all assignments in order to receive credit for this course.
- 2) *Attendance:* You must attend class to succeed in this course. You have 3 penalty-free absences. However, from the fourth time onwards, your overall grade will be penalized by 20 points per each additional absence after the first four. After three absences, therefore, you will have a lower, final grade for the course. If you miss 2 weeks of class (i.e., six periods total), you will automatically fail the course. If you are 20 minutes late or more for a class period, I will consider you absent.

- 3) If you miss class, so long as you have not exceeded your 3 penalty-free absences, you are not required—nor should you feel obligated—to explain to me the reason you cannot attend. It may be that you have the flu, or it may be that you need to prioritize studying for an exam in another class, or you're having lunch with Charlie XCX, or you're just simply exhausted, or feeling down, and your life—both academically and otherwise—would benefit greatly from taking a day to focus on your physical and mental health and catch up on your sleep. In my eyes you are all adults! As Charles Bukowski once wrote: "Your life is *your* life!" Now, on the other hand, if you *have* already used up your first 3 absences, you will need to submit formal documentation justifying any additional times you miss class. After your first 3 absences, the only excusable reasons to miss class will be if you (1) are suffering from a (medically-documented) illness, or (2) are required to attend a university-sponsored event, such as those pertaining to athletics, band, and religious holidays. Absences related to university-sponsored events should be discussed with me prior to the date that will be missed. You should consult with me if you have any documented, extenuating circumstances for your absence.
- 4) *Paper Format & Submission:* All papers should be submitted as MS Word (.doc) documents to E-learning/Canvas. Papers should be polished and presented in a scholarly manner. All papers should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and with pages numbered. Papers should have a title and list your name, my name, the assignment title, and the title of the course—all listed at the top of the paper. I'll review this in class in more detail.
- 5) *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities.* Keep duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course. Save all returned, graded work until the semester is over.
- 6) *Academic Honesty and Definition of Plagiarism.* Plagiarism violates the Student Honor Code and requires reporting to the Dean of Students. All students must abide by the Student Honor Code: <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>
- 7) Students with *disabilities* who are requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/), which will provide appropriate documentation to give the instructor.

8) For information on UF Grading policies, see:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

9) *Grade Appeals.* In 1000- and 2000-level courses, students may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, in the Department office (4008 TUR). Grade appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

10) *Course Evaluations.* Toward the end of the semester, you will receive email messages asking you to go online and evaluate this course:
<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/Default.aspx>

11) Students who face difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help may call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352) 392-1575, or contact them online:
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>

12) *Classroom Behavior:* Please keep in mind that students come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified student backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own.

13) *UF's policy on Harassment:* UF provides an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment for its students, staff, and faculty: <http://hr.ufl.edu/manager-resources/recruitmentstaffing/institutional-equity-diversity/resources/harassment/>

7. Schedule of Classes and Assignments

This schedule is subject to change. Unless otherwise indicated, assignments and readings are due the day they are listed on the syllabus.

Week 1 | January 12 - 16

M	Syllabus Overview & Introductions	
W	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> (Day 1)	
F	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> (Day 2)	

Week 2 | January 19 - 23

M	NO CLASS—MLK DAY	
W	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> (Day 4)	
F	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> (Day 5)	

Week 3 | January 26 - 30

M	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Day 1)	
W	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Day 2)	
F	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Day 3)	

Week 4 | February 2 - 6

M	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Day 4)	
W	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Day 5)	
F	<i>To the Lighthouse</i> (Day 6)	

Week 5 | February 9 - 13

M	<i>A Room of One's Own</i> (Day 1)	
W	<i>A Room of One's Own</i> (Day 2)	
F	<i>A Room of One's Own</i> (Day 3)	

Week 6 | February 16 - 20

M	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 1)	
W	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 2)	
F	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 3)	

Week 7 | February 23 - 27

M	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 4)	
W	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 5)	
F	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 6)	

Week 8 | March 2 - 6

M	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 7)	
W	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 8)	
F	<i>The Waves</i> (Day 9)	

Week 9 | March 9 - 13

M	<i>The Years</i> (Day 1)	
W	<i>The Years</i> (Day 2)	
F	<i>The Years</i> (Day 3)	

Week 10 | SPRING BREAK (March 16-20)

M	NO CLASS	
W	NO CLASS	
F	NO CLASS	

Week 11 | March 23 - 27

M	<i>The Years</i> (Day 4)	
W	<i>The Years</i> (Day 5)	
F	<i>The Years</i> (Day 6)	

Week 12 | March 30 - April 3

M	<i>The Years</i> (Day 7)	
W	<i>The Years</i> (Day 8)	
F	<i>The Years</i> (Day 9)	

Week 13 | April 6 - 10

M	<i>Between the Acts</i> (Day 1)	
W	NO CLASS	
F	<i>Between the Acts</i> (Day 2)	

Week 14 | April 13 -17

M	<i>Between the Acts</i> (Day 3)	
W	<i>Between the Acts</i> (Day 4)	
F	<i>Between the Acts</i> (Day 5)	

Week 15 | April 20 - 22

M	TBD	
W	TBD (FINAL CLASS)	
F	NO CLASS	

Grading Scale

A	4.0	93-100	930-1000	C	2.0	73-76	730-769
A-	3.67	90-92	900-929	C-	1.67	70-72	700-729
B+	3.33	87-89	870-899	D+	1.33	67-69	670-699
B	3.0	83-86	830-869	D	1.0	63-66	630-669
B-	2.67	80-82	800-829	D-	0.67	60-62	600-629
C+	2.33	77-79	770-799	E	0.00	0-59	0-599