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ENG 3808-001: Modern British Literature

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English 3808
 Fall 2013
 e-mail: rhoberman@eiu.edu
 Office hours: Monday 2-3, Tuesday 3:15-5, Wednesday 3-5
 Modern British Literature

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Texts:

Broadview Anthology of British Literature, vol 6: 20th C and beyond
 Christie, *ABC Murders*
 Joyce, *Dubliners*
 Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*
 Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*
 Waugh, *Vile Bodies*
 West, *Return of the Soldier*
 Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

Goals

By the end of the semester I hope a number of things will have happened:

1. We will have talked about a number of texts, in the process getting acquainted with the themes and techniques most characteristic of the modern British period (dated, for our purposes, 1898-1950).
2. We will have talked about the period itself: the historical events and cultural forces that shaped and were in turn shaped by these texts and their authors
3. We will have talked about the theoretical issues raised by these texts: why experiment with style or narrative technique? How do the economic and technological changes associated with modernity change the way people talk about the self, gender, sexuality, national identity, and the meaning of life?
4. We will have talked about how literary texts intersect with other cultural productions such as visual art, advertising, movies, and music.

Requirements:

3 one-page imitations (with additional 1-page analysis, 10%)
 One long essay, 8-10 pp., to be handed in in two separate drafts (25%)
 Midterm (take-home essay, 15 %)
 Final exam (during exam week, 20%)
 Participation/involvement (based on a combination of attendance and quality of class contributions, 20%)
 On-line discussion posts (10%)

Adopt an alter-ego: select a writer on whom we spending 2 or more classes (West, Joyce, Woolf, Yeats Lawrence, Waugh, Rhys, Christie) and throughout the semester, learn as you much as you can about this writer by reading diaries, letters, autobiographies, and biographies as available and as time permits. In some shape or form, your final paper should grow out of your understanding of this writer.

On-line postings: Because much of the reading for this class is difficult, it's important that you spend time thinking it through before class. For this reason, I am requiring that you post a response to D2L, generally once a week. To gain credit for your response, there are 3 requirements:

1. You must post your response to assigned reading *at least one hour before it is to be discussed in class*.
2. Unless you are the first to post in response to a given text, begin by responding to what one of your classmates has written. Then focus on some issue that strikes you (using questions on syllabus to get you started if you're stuck. Quote a brief passage from the reading in the course of your response.
3. You must be in class to talk about the text you have commented on in order to receive full credit for your posting. I will grade responses weekly, on a 10-point scale.

I base essay grades on Guidelines for Evaluating Writing Assignments in EIU's English Department
Grading scale: 91-100: A; 81-90: B; 71-80: C; 65-70: D; below 65 = F

Policies

Attendance: Attendance at every class is expected. Note that a large portion of the grade is based on class participation and discussion posts--both of which require keeping up with the reading and being in class. **Excessive absences will result in a grade of 0 for the participation portion of your grade.** If illness or personal emergency keeps you from class, let me know; when you return, ask about hand-outs and reading assignments you may have missed.

Preparation: When you face a challenging text, don't give up. Take notes as you read, jotting down what you do understand in one column, posing questions in another. Use post-it notes to mark passages in the book that you want to quote or ask about in class.

Late work: Discussion responses must be posted at least one hour before the class for which they're due. If difficulties in making a deadline arise, talk to me ahead of time. NO assignment will be accepted more than a **week after the due date.** Take advantage of my office hours, but feel free to stop by my office any time, or to email. If I can, I'll help.

English Department Statement Concerning Plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including the immediate assignment of a grade of F for the assigned essay and the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

In other words, if you're using a source—whether you're borrowing an idea or quoting directly—make that clear. Don't present someone else's work as your own. Be especially careful with the internet. If you read it on-line and you want to use it, you need to cite your source. If you're using someone else's words, put quotation marks around them.

If you have a documented **disability** and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Syllabus (tentative)

I. The Transition: late Victorian/Edwardian period

TuAug20: introduction to course. Hand-out: excerpts from Shelley, Wordsworth; Hardy, "Nature's Questioning," "The Imprecipient," "Hap," "The Darkling Thrush."

Th22: Hardy in *Broadview*, "The Ruined Maid," "Neutral Tones," "Convergence of the Twain," "During Wind and Rain." (*Broadview* 1-5); Conrad, "An Outpost of Progress" (1897) pp. 50-61 in *Broadview*.

Response #1 due.

II. War and Modernism: 1910-1918

Tu27: Conrad, "The Secret Sharer" (1912) in *Broadview*, pp 64-83. Post response #2 for Tu or Th.

Th29: Read "Eliot, Pound, and the Vortex of Modernism": in *Broadview*, pp. 477-8 as well as poems by Hulme, Pound, H.D. and Loy (pp. 479-80) and "Imagism and Vorticism," pp. 482-485. Also: go to <http://www.modjournal.org/> and click on BLAST, then click again on BLAST, and click on VIEW PDF. Scroll through the magazine, reading particularly Manifesto I, p. 11. Tell me your selected alter-ego.

Tu Sept 3: Read West, "Indissoluble Matrimony" (hand-out). Also, in *Broadview*, read Brooke, "The Soldier" (106), Sassoon, "Glory of Women" and "They" (102), Owen, "Dulce et Decorum Est" and "Anthem for Doomed Youth" (112), Rosenberg, "Break of Day in the Trenches" (108), McCrae, "In Flanders Field"

(126-7). Post response #3 for Tu or Th.
Th5: West, *Return of the Soldier*.

Tu10: Imitation #1 due (Hardy, Conrad, Pound, Owen, or Sassoon). Attach a one-page explanation of what choices you've made in imitation of your chosen writer. Yeats, *Cathleen ni Houlihan* (1902, hand-out); bring Joyce, *Dubliners*.
Th12: Joyce

Tu17: Joyce. Post response #4 for Tu or Th.
Th19: Joyce

Tu24: Joyce. Response #5 due for Tu or Th.
Th26 Yeats in Finneran (ed), *Collected Poems*: "The Stolen Child," "Lake Isle of Innisfree," "Easter 1916," "Prayer for My Daughter," "Second Coming," "Leda and the Swan." Take-home exam distributed.

Tu Oct 1: Yeats, "Sailing to Byzantium," "Among School Children," "Dialogue of Self and Soul," "Byzantium," "Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop," "Lapis Lazuli." Imitation #2 due: Joyce or Yeats.
Th3: Midterm: bring completed, typed take-home essay to class, along with *Collected Poems*.

III. Gender and sexuality: 1925-1929

Tu8: Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*. Post response #6 due for Tu or Th.
Th10: Woolf

Tu15: Woolf. Response #7 due for Tu or Th.
Th17: Woolf

Tu22: Lawrence. Response #8 due for Tu or Th.
Th 24: Lawrence

Tu29: Lawrence
Th31: Lawrence. Imitation #3 due: Woolf or Lawrence.

IV. The 1930s and the Rise of Totalitarianism

Tu Nov 5: Waugh. Response #9 due for Tu or Th.
Th7: Waugh

Tu12: Rhys. Response #10 due for Tu or Th. Hand in 1-page paper proposal.
Th 14: Rhys.

Thanksgiving Break

Tu26: Christie, *The ABC Murders*. Response #11 due for Tu or Th.
Th28: Christie.

TuDec3: Essay #2 due. Orwell in *Broadview*, "Shooting an Elephant" and "Politics of the English Language" (539-49)
Th5: Auden in *Broadview*, "Spain 1937" (576), "Musee des Beaux Arts" (579), "In Memory of W. B. Yeats" (580), "The Shield of Achilles" (583).

Hand in final version of essay #2 at final exam. There will be a cumulative final exam during finals week

Things to think about as you read and talk about when you come to class (with bookmarked pp. to develop your ideas):

Characterization: What is the main character like (physically, mentally, gestures, speech, values)? What parallels or contrasts do you see between two characters? Focus on a minor character and discuss why he/she's there. How does a character change during the course of the work? Do characters seem divided within themselves? How is the complexity of the self conveyed?

Setting: How is the setting described? Is there a contrast set up between two settings? How much detail does the narrator provide about setting? Physical description of characters?

Plot: What conflicts do you see (within a character? Between characters? Between a character and the environment?) Is there a crucial moment or turning point when someone makes a big mistake or does something right? To what extent does the work's final page or paragraph provide closure?

Narration: What is the narrator's relation to the action? Why is he/she telling the story? How are his/her values shaping what he/she notices? Is the narrator aligned with a particular character? How is consciousness depicted?

Exposition: Significance of title? How does opening paragraph set up key images, themes?

Style, image, symbol: Is there an object or moment that works symbolically, or a pattern of imagery or a key word that recurs?

Context: What historical events would it be helpful to know about? Look up one allusion and explain its significance.

Theme: Is there an authorial mouthpiece? How do you know? What's she/he saying? Is the ending "happy?" For whom? Who gets left out? How does the work depict gender, race, sexuality, or class? To what extent does the work as a whole reinforce values you share or don't share?

For poems: FIRST: read in terms of punctuation, not line breaks. Then look up words you don't know.

Who is the poem's speaker? What is his/her situation? Is the speaker speaking to anyone in particular, on a special occasion, or to make something specific happen?

What is the poem's tone? How do you know? Is there any irony?

Does the poem follow a particular form (sonnet, rhymed couplets, free verse)? If so how does its form relate to its meaning?

Does the poem fall into sections? How do they build on or contrast with each other?

What do you notice about the sounds of words or rhythmic patterns or line breaks and how they relate to the poem's meaning?

Pick a single word that seems significant, look it up in the dictionary, and discuss its significance.

Do the speaker's thoughts change during the course of the poem? Are there two or more viewpoints?

What conflicts do you see in the poem?

Discuss a pattern of images (lots of disease references? Flowers?)

Is there a particularly difficult phrase or line? What ideas do you have about what it means?