

Syllabus

English 360 B, Two by Three: Henry James, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf

Spring, 2021

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Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. and by appointment (in person or via Teams)

Overview

In this seminar, we will follow a central bloodline of the high modernist novel from Henry James (*The Portrait of a Lady* and *The Golden Bowl*) to James Joyce (*A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*) and Virginia Woolf (*Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*). We will look at these works in and of themselves; in relation to epochal developments in psychology and philosophy, the social sciences (notably anthropology and sociology), and science and technology; in the context of pivotal turns in the course of empire, colonialism, and global war; in relation to their place in the development of each of the authors; in the context of contemporary theories of fiction (including those set forth influentially by James and Woolf); through the lens of current narrative theory; and as points on a trajectory in the evolution of the novel from realism and naturalism through symbolism to the rich fusion of all those modes in the high modernist novel.

Required Texts

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, ed. Michael Gorra (W. W. Norton), ISBN 978-0393938531

Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, ed. Ruth Bernard Yeazell (Penguin), ISBN 978-0-141-44127-6

James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, ed. Jean Paul Riquelme (W.W. Norton), ISBN 978-0-393-92679-8

James Joyce, *Ulysses*, ed. Han Walter Gabler (Vintage), ISBN 0-394-74312-1

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (Harcourt), ISBN 978-0-156-03035-9

Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, ed. Mark Hussey (Harcourt), ISBN 978-0156030472

Class Policies and Requirements

- Always attend, always prepared (reading completed as assigned).
- Actively participate, including taking responsibility for two instigations (see below)
- **For graduate credit:** complete a term paper of 6,500 to 8,000 words, with an extended prospectus (approximately half the length of the finished paper) due on March 15 and the finished paper due on May 3. **For undergraduate credit:** complete a term paper of 4,000

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Grading

Components of final grade: seminar participation, 20%; seminar reports (instigations), 25%; term paper, 55%.

Instigations

Instigations are a technique for inciting and provoking discussion and engagement with issues central to our exploration of our texts and their contexts. Instigations frame issues and pose questions on the primary texts while drawing on secondary sources to define and locate their concerns within ongoing critical and scholarly debates (see the example appended to this syllabus). Each instigation will entail:

- Preparation of a single-spaced single-page provocation to discussion, to be copied for distribution to all seminar participants and to be read aloud by its author;
- Reference to one or more secondary sources, including, as appropriate, critical and scholarly essays that have been assigned to everyone;
- Strict observation of the one-page limit (but supplemental handouts with exemplary quotations from the secondary literature and illustrative images via PowerPoint are permitted).

Course Schedule (subject to adjustment in the light of how classes unfold over the course of the semester; secondary literature will be added week by week throughout the semester)

- 1/18 Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady*, chapters I-XVIII (15-134)
- 1/25 Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady*, chapters XIX-XXXIX (134-277)
- 2/1 Henry James, *Portrait of a Lady*, chapters XL-LV, and HJ's Preface to the novel (277-403 and 3-13)
- 2/8 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, Book First, ch. I to Book Third, ch. I (27-219)
- 2/15 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, Book Third, ch. II to Book Fourth, ch. VI (220-412)
- 2/22 Henry James, *The Golden Bowl*, Book Fourth, ch. III to Book Sixth, ch. III, and HJ's Preface to the novel (413-595 and 3-22)
- 2/?? James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (provisional class session, subject to everyone's availability)

- 3/15 James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
- 3/22 James Joyce, *Ulysses*
- 3/29 James Joyce, *Ulysses*
- 4/5 James Joyce, *Ulysses*
- 4/12 James Joyce, *Ulysses*
- 4/19 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
- 4/26 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse*
- 5/3 Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*

A Sample Instigation

In the final, eighteenth episode of *Ulysses* we see Molly Bloom's thoughts as she lies in bed with Leopold Bloom. Unlike episode seventeen, which seems to move in starts and stops, Molly's thoughts move in what James Heffernan describes as a "waterfall" and a "roaring stream" (40). Similarly, James Maddox compares Molly's episode to the "sea's formlessness" (208). Hugh Kenner writes that in "Penelope" there is "for once, no style" (148). For Maddox, Molly both embodies "the dissatisfied housewife of 7 Eccles Street" and represents "Nature" (208). Both Maddox and Marilyn French focus their readings of the "Penelope" episode on the contradictions within Molly's character. Like Bloom, Molly says almost nothing that she does not later contradict. She is both fertile and represents infertility. She speaks up for and insults women. Her urge to hurt Bloom comes from her longing for him, her urge to stir his desire for her, and her knowledge of Bloom's guilt and craving for punishment.

But if we read this episode as formless instead of as a mixture of forms, we risk viewing Molly as a conventional character instead of as a dynamic one (or as a changing or complicated one). She can be opened up much more if we read the episode not as an absence of style but as a collage of multiple voices and styles like "Oxen of the Sun." According to James Van Dyck Card, fifty-four percent of "Penelope" was added after the first draft over the course of nine proofs. In a letter to Robert McAlmon on October 10, 1921, Joyce wrote of his method that he was "trying to revise and improve and connect and contrive and create all at the same time" (Gilbert 173). He continues this project throughout the whole book and especially in "Penelope," demonstrating that writing and character are dynamic. Just as Stephen and Bloom transform into other bodies and times, Molly's voice changes as she moves through the language of love poetry, of a gothic novel, and of a romance, to name just a few.

Does Molly's character represent fixed ideas of femininity? Or do the multiple voices contradict each other enough to make notions of stable gender attributes impossible? Perhaps the house represents the style in this episode. Kenner points out that this is the only episode that takes place completely inside. Is Molly trapped in her house just as we feel trapped by multiple voices that leave no room for punctuation?

Does this episode confirm or refute any of the information we have had to piece together and imagine about Molly from the previous episodes? In what ways is Molly like Bloom? Because the wanderer returns home, can we surmise that Molly will succeed in her seduction and that Bloom and Molly will return to each other sexually?

Molly's affirmation (Kenner argues with that word choice), "yes," at the beginning and end of the episode seems to give a clearer sense of her motivation. Yet we are left with an absence of decisive answers at the end of the novel. Have any of the characters actually achieved anything by the end? We do not know what will happen in the morning between Leopold and Molly, if Stephen will ever find a profession, and, perhaps more importantly, where he will even sleep for the night.

Maddox claims that "Penelope" is a coda, but does it actually bring the book to a convincing end and create a sense of balance as a coda does for a musical movement? Or does it announce the end of patterns established throughout the other 17 episodes?