Fall 8-15-2007

ENG 3808-001

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English 3808
Fall 2007
e-mail: rhberman@eiu.edu
Office hours: MWF 2-3, Tu 10-11

Texts:
Longman Anthology of British Literature, 2C
Forster, Room with a View
Harrington, Modern Irish Drama
Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
Waugh, A Handful of Dust
West, The 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
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 does a writer’s gender, social class, sexual orientation or racial identity affect
his or her work? What is the relationship between literature and the sociopolitical context out of which
it emerge?

Requirements:
Two formal papers, one short (4-6 pp.), and one long (6-8 pp.), the second paper revised at least once (10/20)
Midterm and final (10/20)
On-line postings and occasional brief at-home writing assignments (20)
In-class writing and participation (10)
Project: (10)

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 WebCT at least
once a week. To gain credit for your response, there are 3 requirements:
1. You must post your response to an 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 quote a brief passage from the reading that interests you and talk about how it
relates to the reading as a whole, what puzzles you about it, and whatever other questions you have about the
text under discussion.
3. You must be in class to talk about the text you have commented on.
I will grade responses weekly, on a 10-point scale, responding to you via your WebCT email. While I
encourage you to post as often as you like, extra responses later will not make up for missing responses week
by week.

Project: You all have interests and talents which may not be mobilized by traditional academic assignments.
This is your chance to create your own way of exploring the course material. Projects are due on or before
the final class day. Possibilities include but are not limited to: paintings, cartoons, short films, collages,
performances, class presentations, musical compilations, foods, performances, recitations, creative writing...
The project may be done individually or with others. The only requirements are that it relate to one or more assigned texts; that you hand in a one-paragraph explanation of your plan, and that you give me ample time to plan if it involves class-time.

I base essay grades on Guidelines for Evaluating Writing Assignments in EIU’s English Department. Note that because I grade on a 100-point scale, missing assignments affect your grade tremendously.

Grading scale: 91-100: A; 81-90: B; 71-80: C; 65-70: D; below 65 = F

Policies

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.

Attendance: This class involves a heavy reading load; plan your time so that you can keep up with the reading. Attendance at every class is expected. Note that a portion of the grade is based on class participation, in-class writing, and on-line postings, all 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.

Late work: Writing assignments handed in late or by students who are not in class will not be accepted, unless you have spoken to me ahead of time about your situation. In the case of serious illness or personal emergency, talk to me, and I’ll see that you’re not penalized. NO assignment will be accepted more than a week after the due date. If you’re having problems with a writing or reading assignment, come see me. Stop by my office any time; if I’m there, I’ll be happy to talk to you, even if it’s not my office hour. I’m also a compulsive e-mail checker.

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.

EWP: this is a writing-intensive course; your final paper may be used in your electronic writing portfolio.

Syllabus (tentative)

I. The Transition: The Edwardian period


W22: Hardy, in Longman, “Hap,” “The Darkling Thrush,” “Neutral Tones,” “The Convergence of the Twain,” “Channel Firing” (2156-2157; 2159-60). Response #1 due W or F.


M27: Conrad (2041-2058). Response #2 due M or W.

W29: Conrad (2058-2074).

F31: Achebe on Conrad (hand-out)

MSeptember 3: Labor day. No class.
W5: Forster, *Room with a View* part 1. Response #3 due W or F
F7: Forster. 81-137.

M10: Forster. Finish. Response #4 due M, W, or F.

II. World War I

M17: Essay #1 due. Come prepared to give brief summary of what you’ve learned to the class.
W19: West, Return of the Soldier, chapters 1-3. Response #5 due W or F.
F21: West, finish.

III. Ireland
W 26: Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.
F 28: Joyce. Hand in cartoon of single page or moment from Part II.

MOctober 1: Joyce. Response #6 due M, W or F
W3: Joyce
F5: Joyce

M8: Joyce
W10: Midterm
F12: Fall break. No class

W17: Yeats, “The Second Coming,” “Sailing to Byzantium,” “Leda and the Swan”
F19: Yeats, Among School Children,” “Byzantium,” “Crazy Jane Talks with the Bishop”


III. From the Great War to 1950
W24: Lawrence, “Odour of Chrysanthemums” in Longman. Response #8 due W or F.
F26: Lawrence, “The Horse-dealer’s Daughter” in Longman

M29: Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*. Response # 9 due M, W, or F.
W31: Woolf
FNovember 2: Woolf

M5: Woolf
W7: Woolf
F9: No class

M12: Rhys. *Voyage in the Dark*. Response #10 due M, W, or F.
W14: Rhys
F16: Rhys. Hand in proposal for essay #2.
Modernists on Victorianism:

Virginia Woolf in Orlando: Rugs appeared; beards were grown; trousers were fastened tight under the instep. The chill which he felt in his legs the country gentleman soon transferred to his house; furniture was muffled; walls and tables were covered; nothing was left bare. Then a change of diet became essential. The muffin was intervent and the crumpet. Coffee supplanted the after-dinner port, and, as coffee led to a drawing-room in which to drink it, and a drawing-room to glass cases, and glass cases to artificial flowers, and artificial flowers to mantelpieces, and mantelpieces to pianofortes, and pianofortes to drawing room ballads, and drawing room ballads (skipping a stage or two) to innumerable little dogs, mats, and china ornaments, the home—which had becomes extremely important—was completely altered.

... Love, birth, and death were all swaddled in a variety of fine phrases. The sexes flew further and further apart. No pen conversation was tolerated. Evasions and concealments were sedulously practised on both sides. (1928)

Lytton Strachey in Biographical Essays: Victorian era was a time "when gas-jets struggled feebly through the circumambient fog, when the hour of dinner might be at any moment between two and six, when the doses of rhubarb were periodic and givantic... when an antimacassar was on every chair, and the baths were minute tin circles and the beds were full of bugs and disasters."

E.M. Forster 1920: The English are "the people who have built up an Empire with a Bible in one hand, a pistol in the other, and financial concessions in both pockets" --Abinger Harvest
The Impercipient
(At a Cathedral Service)

That with this bright believing band
    I have no claim to be,
That faiths by which my comrades stand
    Seem fantasies to me,
And mirage-mists their Shining Land,
    Is a strange destiny.

Why thus my soul should be consigned
    To infelicity,
Why always I must feel as blind
    To sights my brethren see,
Why joys they have found I cannot find,
    Abides a mystery.

Since heart of mine knows not that ease
    Which they know; since it be
That He who breathes All’s Well to these
    Breathes no All’s-Well to me,
My lack might move their sympathies
    And Christian charity!

I am like a gazer who should mark
    An inland company
Standing upfingered, with, “Hark! hark!
    The glorious distant sea!”
And feel, “Alas, ‘tis but yon dark
    And wind-swept pine to me!”

Yet I would bear my shortcomings
    With meet tranquility,
But for the charge that blessed things
    I’d liefer not have be.
O doth a bird beshorn of wings
    Go earth-bound willfully!

    *   *   *

Enough. As yet disquiet clings
    About us. Rest shall we.

Thomas Hardy, 1898
Nature's Questioning

When I look forth at dawning, pool,
Field, flock, and lonely tree
All seem to gaze at me
Like chastened children sitting silent in a school;

Their faces dulled, constrained, and worn,
As though the master's ways
Through the long teaching days
Had cowed them till their early zest was overborne.

Upon them stirs in lippings mere
(As if once clear in call,
But now scarce breathed at all)--
"We wonder, ever wonder, why we find us here!

Has some Vast Imbecility,
Mighty to build and blend,
But impotent to tend,
Framed us in jest, and left us now to hazardry?

"Or come we of an Automaton
Unconscious of our pains? ...
Or are we live remains
Of Godhead dying downwards, brain and eye now gone?

"Or is it that some high Plan betides,
As yet not understood
Of Evil stormed by Good
We the forlorn Hope over which Achievment strides?"

Thus things around. No answerer I. . .
Meanwhile the winds, and rains,
And Earth's old glooms and pains
Are still the same, and Life and Death are neighbours nigh.