Spring 2004

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ENG 3808-002: Twentieth-Century British Literature

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Course requirements:
I. Class attendance and participation: I call roll regularly and can disregard only two unexcused absences during the semester. If you accumulate more than two "unexplained" absences, your grade will suffer (1/2 point for each unexcused absence). If you are ill or have to leave campus because of family emergency, please call my office and let me know. I expect you to raise questions, respond to queries, and engage in discussions about the texts assigned.
II. Papers:
You will write two papers; the first one has to be five pages long, the second, a research essay, at least eight pages in length. I'd like you to turn in polished, interesting essays, but if you think you need to revise your paper after getting it back, let me know. I'll work with you to help you improve your writing, but only if you are willing to do the extra hard work. This is a writing-intensive course. If you wish to submit one of your essays to your Electronic Writing Portfolio, you may do so.
III. Extra credit:
To get extra (bonus) credits, you can do one of the following: a) Keep a journal and turn it in the last week of classes. You need to write at least 2 pages per week (30 pages total for the semester). The journal entries must be related to the class material; b) Read a text not assigned in class and prepare either a written (1-2 typed pages) or oral report (15 minutes). Let me know in advance if you'd like to do an oral presentation; c) Attend a lecture or performance related to the course material and prepare a 1-page report on it. (Hint: The Charleston Alley Theatre will be giving a performed reading of Yeats's poetry, Feb. 6-9.)
IV. Exams: The midterm exam will be held on March 11; the date of the final will be announced later.
Grading Policy:
Paper #1: 10% Paper #2: 25% Midterm: 25% Final: 30% Participation: 10%
Conferences:
Please stop by my office to discuss your paper or any problem or question related to the course. You can also make an appointment if my regular office hours are inconvenient for you.
The English Department policy on 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 responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

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.

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Required Texts:
Barker, Regeneration
Byatt, Matisse Stories
Coetzee, Disgrace
Damrosch, The Longman Anthology of British Literature, vol. 2c, 2nd ed.
Frayn, Copenhagen
Joyce, The Portable Joyce
Martel, Life of Pi
Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway

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Class meetings and assignments:
(Please read the biographies of the authors before reading the selected works in Damrosch, The Longman Anthology.)

1/13: Introduction to the course.

1/15: Damrosch, "The Twentieth Century" (pp. 1991-2014) and Conrad, Heart of Darkness (2013-2041)

1/20: Heart of Darkness (continued) and Achebe, "An Image of Africa" (hand-out) (Video on Africa)

1/22: Hardy, "Hap" "The Convergence of the Twain" "Channel Firing"; Damrosch, "The Great War" (p. 2167); Rupert Brooke, "The Soldier" (p. 2185)

1/27: Poems by Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, and Isaac Rosenberg (pp. 2186-2195). (We'll discuss as many as possible.)

1/29: Barker, Regeneration (read half of the novel)

2/3: Regeneration (continued)

2/5: Barker Regeneration (final thoughts); Damrosch, "Speeches on Irish Independence" pp. 2232-2234; Yeats, "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" "Easter 1916"

2/10: Yeats, "The Second Coming" "Sailing to Byzantium" "Among School Children"
2/12: Joyce, "Araby"; "Clay"; *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (first two chapters)

2/17: Joyce, *Portrait*

2/19: *Portrait* (concluded); Eliot, "The Waste Land"

2/24: Eliot (concluded); Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

2/26: *Mrs. Dalloway*

3/2: *Mrs. Dalloway* (concluded); Woolf, from *A Room of One's Own* (Chapter 3; pp. 2497-2503 in Damrosch); Mansfield, "The Daughters of the Late Colonel"  
First Essay is due.

3/4: Jean Rhys, "Mannequin"; Carter, "Penetrating to the Heart of the Forest"

3/9: Lawrence, "Odour of Chrysanthemums"; Greene, "A Chance for Mr. Lever"

3/11: Midterm Exam

Spring Break

3/23: Damrosch, "World War II and the End of Empire" (pp. 2698-2699); Bowen, "Mysterious Kor"; Beckett, *Krapp's Last Tape*

3/25: Auden, "In Memory of W.B. Yeats"; "September 1, 1939"; Thomas, "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night"; Smith, "How Cruel is the Story of Eve"; Larkin, "High Windows"

3/30: Byatt, "Medusa's Ankles" and "Art Work" (in *The Matisse Stories*)

4/1: Heaney, "The Toome Road"; from "Station Island"; Boland, "Miss Eire"; Muldoon, "Cuba"


4/8: Frayn, *Copenhagen*

4/13: *Copenhagen*; begin reading Coetzee, *Disgrace*

4/15: *Disgrace*

4/20: *Disgrace* (concluded); Martel, *Life of Pi*
4/22: Life of Pi

4/27: Life of Pi
Research paper is due.

4/29: Review and evaluation

Date of the final will be announced later.
Paper topics for essay # 1 (due 3/2)

1. Focus on Marlow's encounter with the Intended in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. In your essay discuss how the meeting synthesizes various themes or images working all through the text. Examples include colonialism and its politics, innocence, knowledge and its acquisition (by men vs. women), enlightenment, deception (and self-deception), history (how it's made and preserved), as well as images of the sky, sea, ivory, darkness, light, etc.

2. Dr. Rivers is perhaps one of the most fascinating figures portrayed in Pat Barker's *Regeneration*. In your essay study the subtle evolution of his character. Focus on his encounters with--or "treatments"--of the various patients. What do we learn in the process of studying the man about psychology, or war, or friendship, or love, or sanity....?

3. Write an essay focusing on modern poetry as practiced by Hardy and T.S. Eliot. Define the modernist features of their poetry--how they respond to but also resist historical, philosophical, and artistic changes and developments in the early decades of the twentieth century.

4. "The Second Coming" is Yeats's vision of a moment of apocalypse in Western civilization. What does the speaker offer us in terms of "revelation" or enlightenment? Study the nuances of the language, the words, the particular ways in which this speaker addresses you, the rhetorical positions he takes to engage and interest you in imagining the coming of the "rough beast."

5. Study and analyze Yeats's "Easter 1916" in the context of "Speeches on Irish Independence." How does Yeats's poem respond to these speeches? How does his poem treat the martyrs and their cause? What does the poem convey to us about Yeats's possible attitudes towards Irish independence?

6. In *A Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man*, Stephen Dedalus goes through various stages of evolution and change. Focus on the stage you find most intriguing (perhaps a single passage in the novel) and analyze this specific period in Stephen's life to show its significance in his gradual metamorphosis into an artist.

7. Virginia Woolf says that in *Mrs. Dalloway*, she intended to provide a critique of British society and its workings. Focus on a single issue Woolf highlights and explore the subtle (and not so subtle) ways in which she focuses our attention on this problem.

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Paper topics for the research paper (due 4/27)

1. Choose a specific genre--fiction, poetry, drama, autobiography, etc. Your purpose is to explore and understand the main features of your chosen genre as practiced in the twentieth (or 21st?) century. Focus on a certain "period" within the century. For example, you can write an essay in which you examine poetry written after WWII by writing about
W.H. Auden, or you can introduce postmodern drama by highlighting and exploring its main characteristics in the context of *Copenhagen*.

2. Choose a 20th/21st-century British/Irish/Canadian author you'd like to know better. Your purpose is to acquire a (small) degree of "specialization" in the works of your favorite writer. (Pretend you are on your way to graduate school and plan to write your master's essay on this author. This paper might offer you the chance to do the groundwork.) Read as much as you can of his/her fiction, poetry, plays, letters, critical essays, memoirs, etc. First, introduce your writer by focusing on what you find to be of significant value in his/her work (what makes this writer unique, wonderful, interesting). Second, *concentrate* on one (at most two) *specific* works by your author and do a *scholarly, critical analysis* of the text.

3. Choose a critical perspective (psychoanalytic, marxist, feminist, etc.) and offer a reading of a novel, selected poems, short stories, or a play studied in class. Briefly define your critical approach. In writing your paper, you need to mention why you find this specific critical perspective appropriate for your chosen text.

4. Write a paper in which you establish connections between the work of an author you've read for this course and in another course. The purpose of your exploration is to see how writers speak to one another, how they learn from one another. Here are some suggestions: You can also choose to write on how your reading of George Eliot, for example, has helped you understand Virginia Woolf; or how having read Woolf, you can read/understand Jane Austen better. Or, you can examine the authors' different takes on similar issues (social, political, artistic, etc.). Please be specific! It's better to focus on one idea and analyze it well instead of writing on a range of ideas and just scratching the surface.

5. Write an essay that explores one 20th/21st-century British/Irish/Canadian writer's response to a critical issue of social, political, philosophical, or historical importance. You need to establish the writer's deep awareness of this issue by looking at both his/her literary works but also other sources such as his/her biography (or autobiography), essays, interviews, etc. Once you've clarified the argument, then analyze a specific text to examine the ways in which the writer responds to this problem or concern.

6. If you wish to work on a special topic of your own choosing, please see me as soon as possible to discuss the project.

*If the instructions are not clear, please don't hesitate to ask questions or arrange for a conference in my office.*