

Twentieth-Century Fiction I

September 6. Introduction

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<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~ag978/355/>

Goals of this course

1. Engage critically with important works from 1900–1950.
2. Understand how these works participate in history:
 - a. in terms of their literary horizons;
 - b. in terms of their more-than-literary horizons.

The question

...S

What happened to fiction in English 1900–1950?

How was it different from before 1900?

How was it different from what's happened since?

Once upon a time

and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo

His father told him that story: his father looked at him through a glass: he had a hairy face.

James Joyce,
*A Portrait of the Artist as
a Young Man* (1916)



Modernism

1. self-conscious break with traditions
2. aesthetic disruption
3. difficulty
4. ...

Discussion

Which are modern?

What do you notice that makes you say so?

What are the criteria of literary modernity?

Discussion

1. Dorothy Sayers, *Whose Body?* (1923)
2. Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925)
3. Mary Webb, *Precious Bane* (1924)
4. R.K. Narayan, "An Astrologer's Day" (1944)
5. Gertrude Stein, "Melanctha" (1909)
6. William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying* (1930)
7. E.M. Hull, *The Sheik* (1919)

Literary Modernity

What happened to fiction in English 1900–1950?

Not just a single transformation in form or content
 (“modernism” is only part of the story)

Most important, historically distinctive features:

sheer quantity, leading to...

breadth of circulation (many kinds)

diversity of production (many kinds)

Literary Modernity

Quantity

Year	1750	1800	1900	1950	2000
New UK book titles (approx.)	100	600	6000	10000	125000

Literary Modernity

Quantity

Year	1880	1890	1900	1910	...	2003
New US fiction titles	292	1118	1278	1539	...	≈25000

Literary Modernity

Breadth of circulation

Books get much cheaper

More people can read and want to

“Reading culture” (1890–1960?)

More kinds of people read more for pleasure

Literary Modernity

Diversity of production

a literary field of relations

(alliances, rivalries, movements, generations, subcultures)

our task: think of each fiction writer in relation to all the others

Literary Modernity

Diversity of production



James



Conrad



Stein



Joyce



Sayers



Hemingway



Woolf



Faulkner



Anand



Hurston



Barnes



Narayan

Requirements

1. Two 5–7 pp. papers (due 10/8 and 11/19, 30% each)
2. Take-home final (30%)
3. Attendance and participation (5%)
 - a. 0–2 absences: full credit
 - b. 3–4 absences: half credit
 - c. disruptive behavior, lateness: 1 warning, then counts as absence
4. Informal writing (5%) ...

Commonplacing

Main course website

<http://www.rci.rutgers.edu/~ag978/355>

Resources → Commonplacing introduction

Commonplacing

First entry due: this Sunday, 5 p.m.

Commonplace from

Henry James, "The Art of Fiction"

Oscar Wilde, "The Decay of Lying"

E-mail Prof. Goldstone or Mr. Gonzalez right away if you have trouble

The Reading

See also

www.rci.rutgers.edu/~ag978/355/book-buying.html

Two course sites

Main site

www.rci.rutgers.edu/~ag978/355

Rutgers University, New Brunswick > Department of English

Twentieth-Century Fiction I

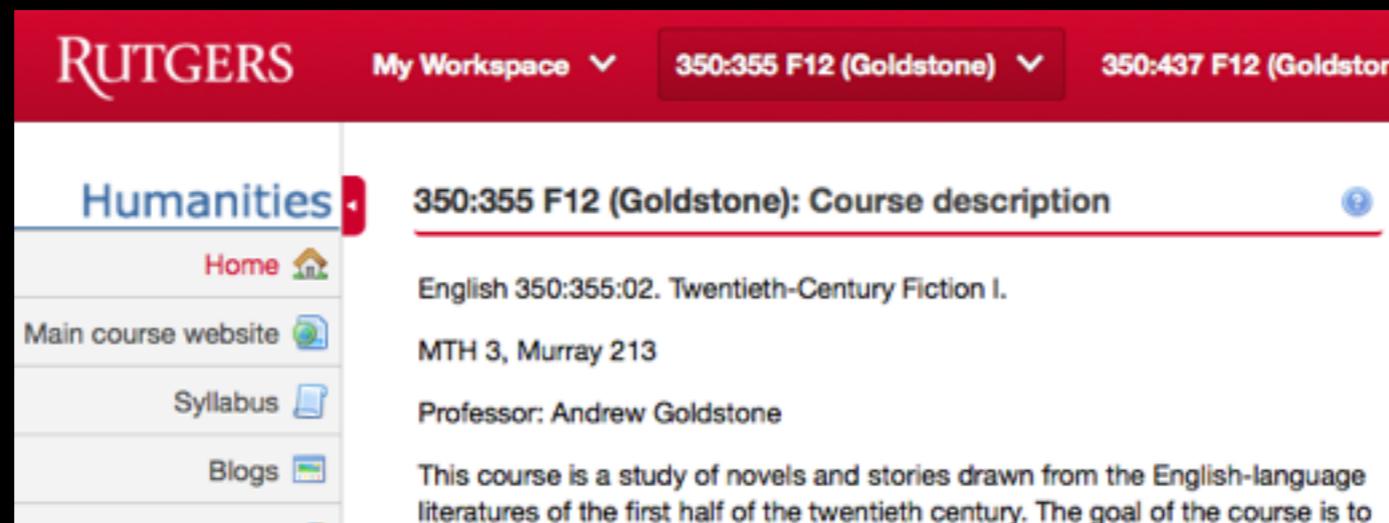
[Home](#) [Schedule](#) [Requirements](#) [Readings](#) [Buying Books](#) [Resources](#)

350:355:02, MTH 3, Fall 2012
Mondays and Thursdays, 11:30 a.m.–12:50 p.m., Murray 213
Professor Andrew Goldstone (andrew.goldstone@rutgers.edu)
CA: Octavio R. Gonzalez (octavio@eden.rutgers.edu)
Office hours TBA

[Printable Syllabus \(PDF\)](#)
[Course Reserves](#)
[Sakai Site](#)

Two course sites

Sakai site with private materials
sakai.rutgers.edu



The screenshot displays a Sakai course site interface. At the top, the Rutgers logo is on the left, and navigation links for 'My Workspace', '350:355 F12 (Goldstone)', and '350:437 F12 (Goldstone)' are on the right. A left-hand navigation menu is visible, with 'Humanities' selected. The main content area shows the course title '350:355 F12 (Goldstone): Course description' and the following details:

- English 350:355:02. Twentieth-Century Fiction I.
- MTH 3, Murray 213
- Professor: Andrew Goldstone
- This course is a study of novels and stories drawn from the English-language literatures of the first half of the twentieth century. The goal of the course is to

By the way

Suggested twitter hashtag

#355f12

(I'll be using it)

Discussion

The Uses of Fiction



Oscar Wilde, “A Preface to *Dorian Gray*” (1891)

“There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book. Books are well written, or badly written. That is all.”