

## 358:345 Early Twentieth Century American Literature

01 MTH2 CAC 17010 KERNAN SC-203

The Lost Generation: Joyce, Fitzgerald, Hemingway

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Office Hours: Thursday 12:00-2:00 and by appointment

It is Paris, 1925, and you are seated in *La Dome*, a popular Parisian café situated on the Left Bank with a fellow exchange student from New Jersey. It is a time of malaise and a time of great cultural change, and the old mores of society are undergoing enormous change at an exhilarating pace. Europe, devastated by the Great War, struggles to rebuild all around you. One U.S. dollar buys you twenty-two French francs, and allows you to live cheaply in the French capital where cultural attractions abound and a variety of European avant-gardes that will later form the backbone of European Modernism have begun to flourish. You hear the raucous sounds of the new age, the Jazz Age, coming over the wireless. You and your friend linger over your coffee, discussing a novel that, although banned in the U.S. and England, has nevertheless set the literary world both on fire and on its ear. That novel is *Ulysses*, and its pages drip with an eroticism and a zest for experimentation too powerful for any budding writer to ignore. You look up, and see a familiar face from your childhood in New Jersey entering the café with a man whose gait betrays the fact that his eyesight is failing him. The familiar face belongs to Sylvia Beach, the visionary responsible for publishing the very novel that you and your friend have been discussing. A quiet frenzy grips the room. People begin to point in her direction, and the couple seated next to you stirs with excitement. You overhear their loud whispering: "C'est lui! L'homme de l'Irlande qui a écrit *Ulysses*!" You notice two other Americans. They don't look like friends, but they are seated together. They seem irritated that the room is in a twitter, but their faces betray an enormous respect for (and maybe even a jealousy of) the man on Beach's arm, the man with the bad eyesight who your friend now recognizes as none other than James Joyce. Slowly, he makes his way over to the table where the two Americans are seated. They exchange pleasantries, and you hear more whispers: "L'homme à la barbe est nommé Ernest Hemingway et la plus petite est nommé F. Scott Fitzgerald." Your friend is star struck, but you've been to this café before and know that this is nothing unusual. In fact, you are used to seeing the faces of people like Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky, and Gertrude Stein. This is where they hang out. The Americans will soon be known to the French as part of the "Generation de Feu," and, back home, they will become famous as part of "The Lost Generation."

This course serves as an introduction to both James Joyce and to two of the most popular and influential American novelists of the twentieth century, F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway. We will begin the course by focusing great care on selections from Joyce's *Ulysses* and then shift our attention to four novels that helped to usher in a new era in American literature known as Modernism: Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925). We will situate these works in terms of Joyce's influence, but also in light of short works by (and about) other members of "The Lost Generation." We will explore issues of aesthetics, politics, sexuality and much more. We will occupy our own seats in *La Dome*, and investigate this flowering of American culture (and English-language literature) that, for some reason, could only take place in Paris.

In addition to their engaged participation, students will be expected to complete two take-home essay exams over the course of the semester. Periodic pop-reading quizzes will also be given using Sakai.

### **Learning Goals (Departmental Website)**

1. knowledge of literatures in English, their historical, cultural, and formal dimensions and diversity
2. strategies of interpretation, including an ability to use critical and theoretical terms, concepts, and methods in relation to a variety of textual forms and other media
3. the ability to engage with the work of other critics and writers, using and citing such sources effectively \_\_\_\_\_
4. the ability to write persuasively and precisely, in scholarly and, optionally, creative forms.

### **Close Reading**

This is the “meat and bones” of what we’ll be focusing on all quarter. A close reading pays detailed attention to the particular elements of a text’s language and relates those elements of language to the larger issue of how the text conveys complex meanings to the reader. The elements we will look at include word choice, sentence construction, imagery as well as several other poetic devices and figures of language. Examining these elements helps us to arrive at a deeper understanding of a text and helps us to explore the text’s crucial issues (social, political, philosophical, familial, etc.).

### **Discussion**

Your discussion sections offer you a place for exploration, a space where—if you come prepared—all can benefit from your insights and from those of others. Exploring texts can be difficult, and fascinating discussions depend on a variety of opinions. **You should never be afraid to ask a question. THERE ARE STUPID PROFESSORS, BUT THERE ARE NOT STUPID QUESTIONS.** Discussion is meant to clear up any

confusion you might have about lectures, our texts or the essay writing (or test-taking) we'll be doing. Most of the time, I'll be able to stay after lecture to answer brief questions, and you should also (in all of your classes for the rest of your academic life) take advantage of my office hours! Office hours allow you to get one-on-one help with any difficulties you may encounter, and your visitation keeps professors from getting too lonely and spiteful in their offices. Lastly, your online participation will be a crucial component to your grade, as you will be expected to post weekly contributions to your discussion group.

### **Attendance Policies**

Students are expected to attend all classes; if you expect to miss one or two classes, please use the University absence reporting website <https://sims.rutgers.edu/ssra/> to indicate the date and reason for your absence. An email is automatically sent to me. All absences must be reported through the absence reporting website. Absences must meet Rutgers University standards. Missing beyond two classes or unexcused absences will result in points being deducted from your grade. Extended absences may result in a failing grade.

### **Grading Breakdown**

Attendance-10% Participation - 35% Take Home Exam #1- 20% Take Home Exam #2- 35%

**Reading Schedule-** ALL READINGS ARE TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE RELEVANT LECTURES. READING QUIZZES WILL BE GIVEN, PERIODICALLY, TO TEST YOUR PREPAREDNESS, AND WILL ACCOUNT FOR 15% OF YOUR PARTICIPATION GRADE.

Readings: [Titles that appear in brackets will not be deeply discussed in lecture nor will they be “fair game” for quizzes. I nevertheless, of course, urge you to read them.]

Thursday, January 29 Course Introduction: Myth and Modernism

Monday, February 2 T.S. Eliot “The Burial of the Dead” and “A Game of Chess” in *The Waste Land* as well as “Tradition and the Individual Talent”

Thursday, February 5 T.S. Eliot “The Fire Sermon,” “Death by Water” and “What the Thunder Said” in *The Waste Land* and “Ulysses, Order, and Myth.”

Monday, February 9 [*Hamlet* by W. Shakespeare], “Telemachus” from Ulysses; [*Odyssey* 1-4]

Thursday, February 12 [“Nestor”] and “Proteus” from Ulysses; [*Odyssey* 5-8]

Monday, February 16 “Calypso” and [“Lotus Eaters”] from Ulysses; [*Odyssey* 9-10]

Thursday, February 19 “Hades” from Ulysses; [*Odyssey* 11]

Monday, February 23 “Aeolus” from Ulysses;

Thursday, February 26 “Proteus” from Ulysses

Monday, March 2 “Lestrygonians” from Ulysses

Thursday, March 5 “Scylla and Charybdis” from Ulysses

Monday, March 9 [“Wandering Rocks”] and “Sirens” from Ulysses

Thursday, March 12 ["Cyclops"] and "Nausicaa" from Ulysses

Thursday, March 12 **Take Home #1 Distributed**

(Spring Break)

Sunday, March 22 **Take Home #1 Due**

Monday, March 23 ["Oxen of the Sun"] and "Circe" from Ulysses

Thursday, March 26 "Circe" from Ulysses; [*Odyssey 13-16*]

Monday, March 30 ["Eumaeus"] and "Ithaca" from Ulysses; [*Odyssey 17-24*]

Thursday, April 2 "Penelope" from Ulysses

Monday, April 6 Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Thursday, April 9 Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Monday, April 13 Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Thursday, April 16 Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby

Monday, April 20 Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises

Thursday, April 23 Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises

Monday, April 27 Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises

Thursday, April 30 Hemingway, The Sun Also Rises

Monday, May 4 Class Conclusion and **Take Home #2 Distributed**

(Reading Days Listed May 5 & 6)

Thursday, May 7 (**Take Home #2 Due**)