



LIT2010: Introduction to Fiction- “The City in Literature”

Instructor: Adam R. McKee

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Office: Williams 321

Classroom: Bellamy 048

Office Hours: TR 12:30-2:00

Time: TR 9:30-10:45 & 11:00-12:15

Course Description:

From the time of Paris’s remodeling in the mid-19th century, the city has been perhaps *the* central preoccupation of the artist and writer. This course will document this subject matter throughout three key metropolitan centers in the 20th century: London, New York City, and Prague. By reading John Dos Passos, Saul Bellow, Franz Kafka, Milan Kundera, Virginia Woolf, and Sam Selvon, we will see the cities of New York, Prague, and London from multiple perspectives and at different times.

In addition to the novelists we will read throughout the semester, we will also familiarize ourselves with modernism and postmodernism (the two literary periods that dominate the 20th century) and we will read secondary sources in both literary studies and urban studies.

Required Texts:

Novels

- Dos Passos, John. *Manhattan Transfer*. (1925).
- Bellow, Saul. *Seize the Day*. (1956).
- Kafka, Franz. *The Trial*. (1914).
- Kundera, Milan. *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*. (1984).
- Woolf, Virginia. *Mrs. Dalloway*. (1925).
- Selvon, Sam. *Lonely Londoners*. (1956).

Additional PDFs on Blackboard

- Williams, Raymond. “Metropolitan Perception and the Emergence of Modernism”. (1989).
- Simmel, Georg. “The Metropolis and Mental Life”. (1903).
- Tester, Keith. From *The Flaneur*. (1994).

- Additional scholarship available under “Course Library.”

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is grounds for suspension from the university as well as for failure in this course. It will not be tolerated. Any instance of plagiarism must be reported to the Department and the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Plagiarism is a counterproductive, non-writing behavior that is unacceptable in a course intended to aid the growth of individual writers. Plagiarism is included among the violations defined in the Academic Honor Code, section b), paragraph 2, as follows: "Regarding academic assignments, violations of the Academic Honor Code shall include representing another's work (or your own) or any part thereof, be it published or unpublished, as one's own."

Civility:

I will tolerate neither disruptive language nor disruptive behavior. Disruptive language includes, but is not limited to, violent and/or belligerent and/or insulting remarks, including sexist, racist, homophobic or anti-ethnic slurs, bigotry, and disparaging commentary, either spoken or written (offensive slang is included in this category). While I do not disagree that you each have a right to your own opinions, inflammatory language founded in ignorance or hate is unacceptable and will be dealt with immediately. Disruptive behavior includes the use of cell phones or any other form of electronic communication during the class session (e-mail, web-browsing). Disruptive behavior also includes whispering or talking when another member of the class is speaking or engaged in relevant conversation (remember that I am a member of this class as well). This classroom functions on the premise of respect, and you will be asked to leave the classroom if you violate any part of this statement on civility.

ADA:

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations should in the FIRST WEEK OF CLASS 1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) and 2) bring a letter to the instructor from SDRC indicating the need for academic accommodations. This and all other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

Gordon Rule / W courses and syllabus statement:

This is a "Gordon Rule" course (also known as a course with a "W" designation). Gordon Rule courses are designed to fulfill the statewide Gordon Rule requirement, which requires students to take and pass a course that is writing-intensive: officially, this means that students must write 3000 words during the semester.

In order to fulfill FSU's Gordon Rule "W" Designation (writing) credit, the student must earn a "C-" or better in the course, and in order to receive a "C-" or better in the course, the student must earn at least a "C-" on the required writing assignments for the course. If the student does not earn a "C-" or better on the required writing assignments for the course, the student will not earn an overall grade of "C-" or better in the course, no matter how well the student performs in the remaining portion of the course.

Attendance:

Attendance is mandatory and accruing more than four absences is grounds for failure. Regardless of the reason for your absence, it is still an absence. Understandably, you may miss some classes due to illness or unforeseen circumstances. In order for me to allow an absence, I need to see some form of documentation.

Remember, part of your grade is based on classwork and quizzes, and if you are not here, you cannot complete these! Furthermore, missed quizzes cannot be made up. Thus, all absences have the ability to negatively impact your grade.

If you miss a class meeting, it is your responsibility to obtain all information covered in that class. In other words, I will assume that you, a responsible, legal adult, have gotten the information about the class that you missed. Students who arrive after attendance has been taken will be given a tardy. Three tardies will result in an absence.

Students who come to class without the text or who have not done the reading may be counted absent if they cannot effectively participate in class.

Participation:

Students are expected to come to class and participate regularly, having read each assignment entirely before arriving to class. Here are four ways to be a good participator: (1) ask questions and make comments that further the discussion in a meaningful manner, (2) actively take notes, (3) bring the required text to every class meeting, and (4) participate in all classroom activities/exercises (including homework and/or discussion board posts). Consistently doing these things will demonstrate your engagement with the material and maximize your experience in the course.

Assignments:

Essays

Throughout the semester there will be three, 4-5 page essays due at dates specified on the course schedule. Students will be required to write one essay per section (New York City, Prague, and London), but the author and the paper topic are largely up to the students.

A basic grading rubric will be distributed to the class, but I expect a few things generally from these papers. First, papers must be submitted both via hardcopy and via Blackboard. Second, papers must be submitted in MLA formatting; this includes an MLA formatted heading, page numbers, a clever title, stapled, and 12 point Times New Roman font.

Lastly, papers must engage a topic in an interesting (and scholarly) fashion. However, there are a few things to avoid in the essays.

- Do not use unreliable sources. By this I mean that all of your sources should be scholarly and credible in nature. When in doubt, stick to academic journal

- articles and educational webpages (.edu's). Additionally, your tuition helps to maintain the library, so you should feel free to use it.
- Avoid moralizing arguments within your essays. You may morally disagree with the text, but arguing that Tomas is a “man-whore” in Kundera isn't a paper topic.
 - Avoid authorial intent-based arguments. This exemplifies the intentionally fallacy which argues that we cannot project an author's intentions into the text. The text is a product of a writer who provides a text but doesn't explain it. See Roland Barthes for further clarification.
 - Make sure that your essay is thesis-driven and that every single paragraph functions to support what it is that the thesis is trying to state. For example, “Virginia Woolf does interesting things with Big Ben in *Mrs. Dalloway*”, is not a thesis, but “Virginia Woolf uses Big Ben as a way of connecting her seemingly disparate characters in much the same way that she uses the figure of the airplane and motorcar”, is a thesis. See Blackboard page for suggestions on “close readings” and “research essays”.
 - Make sure to integrate quoted material in your essays. Every essay should contain a certain level of quoted materials even if it is not necessarily a research essay. Don't use drop quotes.
 - Assume that the reader has read the work in question. Do not waste your time summarizing the novel. I welcome paraphrasing and/or brief description, but don't spend much time telling me what has happened in the text. It will be highly detrimental to your grade if you spend more time rehashing the novel than writing a detailed, smart essay.

Critical Article Explication

At the beginning of the semester, students will sign-up for a text on which to write a critical explication. I will provide several critical essays on each text on the Blackboard page and you are highly encouraged to use these for this project, but in the event that they don't particularly strike you as interesting, I will allow for additional essays to be used with my approval.

This explication should be 2-3 pages in length and should briefly summarize the argument of the essay and then explain perhaps how this changes your understanding of the text. One thing these should all do is critique the argument set forth by the author.

Final Exam

During exam week we will have a comprehensive final exam. The exact format of the exam will be discussed at a later date in the semester, but expect to see an exam that consists of multiple choice, short answer, fill-in-the-blank, longer essays, and perhaps matching.

Quizzes

Throughout the semester, I will give random quizzes based on the day's readings. How frequent these quizzes are will be largely determined by the class's performance on reading discussions, discussion board posts, and general observation. In other words, do the readings, finish the assignments on time, and participate in class and the number of quizzes will be dramatically decreased.

Discussion Boards

Every student will be responsible for posting on the class discussion board twice throughout the semester. These posts will be roughly every other week starting in the third week of the semester (I will indicate these days on the syllabus with a *). At this point students will be divided in half alphabetically and will be responsible for briefly defining literary terms, historical events, geographic elements, and historical figures. Each post should be roughly 100 words and will function as a place of reference for the class throughout the semester.

Grade Breakdown

Article Explication	10%
Essay I	15%
Essay II	15%
Essay III	15%
Final Exam	25%
Quizzes	10%
Discussion Boards	10%

Grading Scale

A (100-92.5)	A- (92.4-89.5)	B+ (89.4-86.5)
B (86.4-82.5)	B- (82.4-79.5)	C+ (79.4-76.5)
C (76.4-72.5)	C- (72.4-69.5)	D+ (69.4-66.5)
D (66.4-59.5)	F (59.4 and below)	

Liberal Studies

The Liberal Studies Program at Florida State University has been designed to provide a perspective on the qualities, accomplishments, and aspirations of human beings, the past and present civilizations we have created, and the natural and technological world we inhabit. This course has been approved as meeting the requirements for Liberal Studies Area IV, Humanities and Fine Arts, and in combination with your other Liberal Studies courses, provides an important foundation for your lifelong quest for knowledge.

Tentative Schedule

Week One:

January 8th Introduction to Course, Syllabus Overview

January 10th **Section I: New York City**
Manhattan Transfer pp. 1-40

Week Two:

January 15th *Manhattan Transfer* pp. 41-93
Keith Tester, from *The Flaneur* (pdf)

January 17th *Manhattan Transfer* pp. 94-142

Week Three:

January 22nd **Manhattan Transfer* pp. 143-200

January 24th *Manhattan Transfer* pp. 201-247

Week Four:

January 29th **Manhattan Transfer* pp. 248-297

January 31st *Manhattan Transfer* pp. 298-342

Week Five:

February 5th *Seize the Day* pp. 1-38

February 7th *Seize the Day* pp. 39-73

Week Six:

February 12th **Seize the Day* pp. 74-114

February 14th Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (pdf)
Raymond Williams "Metropolitan Perception" (pdf)

Week Seven:

February 19th **Section II: Prague**
**The Trial* pp. 1-53

February 21st *The Trial* pp. 54-110

Week Eight

February 26th **The Trial* pp. 111-166 **(Paper One Due)**

February 28 th	<i>The Trial</i> pp. 167-231
<u>Week Nine:</u>	
March 5 th	* <i>The Unbearable Lightness of Being</i> pp. 1-78
March 7 th	<i>The Unbearable Lightness of Being</i> pp. 79-128
<u>Spring Break</u>	
March 11 th - March 15 th	NO CLASS
<u>Week Ten:</u>	
March 19 th	<i>The Unbearable Lightness of Being</i> pp. 129-172
March 21 st	<i>The Unbearable Lightness of Being</i> pp. 173-240
<u>Week Eleven:</u>	
March 26 th	* <i>The Unbearable Lightness of Being</i> pp. 241-278
March 28 th	<i>The Unbearable Lightness of Being</i> pp. 279-314
<u>Week Twelve:</u>	
April 2 nd	Section III: London * <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> pp. 1-48
April 4 th	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> pp. 49-100
<u>Week Thirteen:</u>	
April 9 th	* <i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> pp. 101-150 (Paper Two Due)
April 11 th	<i>Mrs. Dalloway</i> pp. 151-194
<u>Week Fourteen:</u>	
April 16 th	* <i>Lonely Londoners</i> pp. 23-61
April 18 th	<i>Lonely Londoners</i> pp. 61-101
<u>Week Fifteen:</u>	
April 23 rd	<i>Lonely Londoners</i> pp. 101-141
April 25 th	Movement Day/Movie Day
<u>Final Exam Week</u>	
April 29 th – May 3 rd	(Paper Three Due by Wednesday 5pm)