

**English 475-02/WMST 490-01: Virginia Woolf**

Spring 2013, Wednesday 3.30-5.50

Tyler 318E

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E-mail: [sxrait@wm.edu](mailto:sxrait@wm.edu)Course description

In the sixty years since her death – and even during her own lifetime – Virginia Woolf has been one of the most controversial and contested writers of the modernist era. She has been celebrated as an experimental writer of genius, a feminist heroine (or martyr), a lesbian icon, a devoted wife, and a courageous survivor of mental illness and sexual abuse. She has also been vilified as a writer of ephemera, a snob, an anti-Semite, and an unresponsive friend and lover. While we will spend some time discussing Woolf’s biography, the editorial history of her novels, and the debates that have raged over interpretations of her writing and of her life, we will focus on developing close, well-informed readings of her literary texts, and on understanding why and how she has become such a central figure in discussions of literary modernism and feminism.

This course is intended for senior English majors who are already fairly experienced in studying and writing about literature, and the assignments are designed to deepen students’ understanding and experience of what it means to be a literary scholar. You will explore a range of ways of approaching and writing about a literary text and an author – as a biographer, as an editor, and as a researcher/literary critic. You will write a few pages of a biography of Virginia Woolf, focusing on her relationship with her brothers; you will provide explanatory annotations for five pages of one of her novels for a scholarly audience; in pairs, you will introduce a novel to the class, as if you were preparing to write an introduction to that novel for a general audience; and you will complete a brief bibliographical/research assignment. The main assignment for this course is an extended research paper, on a topic of your choice, 15-20 pages. You will write a 5-page paper in preparation for this final paper. This 5-page paper can be incorporated into your final paper, if you wish. The final paper will be submitted to me in draft, you will meet with me to discuss it, and then you will submit a final version revised in response to my suggestions. All assignments will be submitted electronically through Safe-Assign on the Blackboard site.

Required texts

Virginia Woolf, *Jacob’s Room* (Norton)  
 Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (Oxford)  
 Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Oxford)  
 Virginia Woolf, *Orlando* (Oxford)  
 Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One’s Own* and *Three Guineas* (Oxford)  
 Virginia Woolf, *Between the Acts* (Oxford)  
 Virginia Woolf, *Moments of Being* (Oxford)  
 Virginia Woolf, *The Years* (Oxford)

Course description

\*Texts marked with an asterisk are available in the “Course Documents” section of the Blackboard site.

W 16 Jan.: Introduction

W 23 Jan.: “A Sketch of the Past” (1939-40), in *Moments of Being*

“Old Bloomsbury” (1921-2), in *Moments of Being*

\*Suzanne Raitt, “Biographical Case Study: Virginia Woolf and Childhood Sexual Abuse” [available in the “Course Documents” section of the Blackboard site]

- W. 30 Jan.: Virginia Woolf, “The Mark on the Wall,” “Kew Gardens,” and “A Woman’s College from Outside,” repr. in *Jacob’s Room* (Norton Edition)  
 \*“Monday or Tuesday,” repr. in *The Complete Shorter Fiction of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Susan Dick (2<sup>nd</sup> edn. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1989)  
 \*Virginia Woolf, “Character in Fiction” (1924), and “Modern Fiction” (1925), in *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie, Vols 3 and 4 (New York: Harvest, 1988, 1994)  
**Brief chapter on Virginia Woolf’s relationship with her brothers by 3 pm**
- W 6 Feb.: *Jacob’s Room* (1922)
- W 13 Feb.: Virginia Woolf, *Mrs Dalloway* (1924)
- W 20 Feb.: **Workshop on editing and researching Virginia Woolf (meet in Learning Center at Swem Library with librarians Alan Zoellner and Mary Molineux)**  
 W.W. Greg, “The Rationale of Copy-Text,” *Studies in Bibliography*, 3 (1950-1), 19-36 [online through Swem]  
 Edward L. Bishop, “Mind the Gap: Editing *Jacob’s Room*,” 2004, in *Jacob’s Room* (Norton Edition)  
 \*Ian Small, “The Editor as Annotator as Ideal Reader,” in *The Theory and Practice of Text-Editing*, eds. Ian Small and Marcus Walsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 186-209  
 G. Thomas Tanselle, “Some Principles for Editorial Apparatus,” *Studies in Bibliography*, 25 (1972), 41-45 [ie. not the whole article] [online through Swem]  
 J.H. Stape, “The Cambridge Woolf,” *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 55:3 (2012), 409-416 [online through Swem]  
 Jane Goldman and Susan Sellers, “Rejoinder,” *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 55:4 (2012), 533-35 [online through Swem]  
 J.H. Stape, “Reply to Rejoinder,” *English Literature in Transition, 1880-1920*, 56:2 (2013), 269-271 [online through Swem]  
 \*Comparison of excerpts of explanatory and textual notes from various editions of *Orlando* (World’s Classics, Penguin, Shakespeare Head, Cambridge Edition)
- W 27 Feb.: Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (1927)  
**Bibliographical/research exercise by 3 pm**
- W 6 Mar.: **Spring break**
- W 13 Mar.: *Orlando* (1928)
- W 20 Mar.: *A Room of One’s Own* (1929)  
**Editing exercise by 3 pm**
- W 27 Mar.: *The Years* (1937), to p.204 (the beginning of the “1913” section)
- W 3 Apr.: *The Years*  
**Short paper by 3 pm**

- W 10 Apr.: *Three Guineas* (1938)
- W 17 Apr.: *Between the Acts* (1941)  
**Drafts of final papers by 3 pm**
- W 24 Apr.: Individual conferences, no class
- Th 2 May.: **Final papers by 4 pm**

### Course policies

1. Since this is a seminar, there will be a heavy emphasis on discussion and it will be difficult for you to “make up” classes that you have missed. I will, of course, excuse absences on grounds of illness, family emergency, and religious holidays, but repeated unexcused absences will affect your grade, and could lead to failing the course. If possible, let me know in advance if you have to miss class. E-mail is a good way to communicate information like this, or to set up appointments, but it is not usually very constructive to try to have intellectual discussion over e-mail (for example if you are confused about something, or if you have questions about your papers or the reading, or if you want to talk through something you are working on). For this reason, I encourage you to come to my office hours, call me, or e-mail me to set up an appointment if there is something – anything! – you would like to talk about. Please do not hesitate to call my cell phone with questions: 202-262-7356.
2. **I do not accept late work, unless you have discussed the matter with me in advance of the due date. You must complete and pass all assignments, written and oral, to pass the course.** I should note that I am usually very flexible if you need an extension.
3. Plagiarism and the Honor Code: I take violations of the Honor Code very seriously, and you should make sure you are familiar with its conditions, especially Section 2, which states that plagiarism is an infraction of the Honor Code. Plagiarism is defined as follows: “Plagiarism occurs when a student, with intent to deceive or with reckless disregard for proper scholarly procedures, presents any information, ideas or phrasing of another as if they were his or her own and does not give appropriate credit to the original source.” In all your assignments, secondary material must be fully acknowledged. Whenever you quote from another source (article, book, web page etc) make sure you include full details of the text you are quoting from (author, title, publisher, date of publication of your edition, if applicable, and page number, or, in the case of a web page, the full URL and page number, if there is one). Please use MLA style. The Purdue Online Writing Lab (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/>) is a great resource for learning more about how to cite correctly, so please use it. Please note also that copying and pasting from any online source – including Wikipedia – is bad practice in academic papers, and constitutes a clear violation of the Honor Code, unless you are quoting an academic article from an online periodical and you give full acknowledgement.
4. Multiple submission and the Honor Code: You should also note that you may not turn in the same assignment for more than one course (see Honor Code, Section 2, Number 4, which notes that the following is an infraction of the Honor Code: “the acts of using any material portion of a paper or project to fulfill the requirements of more than one course unless the student has received prior permission to do so”).

### Assignments

More detailed instructions will be given for some of the assignments as they are due. Assignments will be graded according to a number of specific criteria and a rubric will be provided for each assignment so you can see what I am looking for.

1. **Preparation, participation and attendance (no formal grade)**

Much of the work for this course will take place in between classes, as well as during them: for example, careful preparation for class, participation while we are together, and active engagement in discussion. You do not have to say brilliant things: rather, I encourage you to read carefully, ask questions, share difficulties and work with others to improve our collective understanding of texts and issues. I understand that speaking in class is easier for some people than for others, and that a lot of learning takes place through active listening, but I also want to make sure that everyone feels comfortable participating, so please come and talk to me if you feel inhibited or constrained in any way. Try challenging yourself to wait for someone else to speak first if you are a frequent contributor, or make an effort to speak at least once during class if speaking in public is difficult for you. You will be surprised how quickly it ceases to seem intimidating.

Because this is a four-credit course and a capstone research experience, with high expectations of its students, the reading and writing demands are heavy, so plan ahead! This is a once-a-week course, so you can expect twice as much reading for each class than you would have if we were meeting twice a week. If you see a week coming up when there is reading that you know you will not be able to complete that week, start reading early. Always read with a pencil or highlighter in hand. Underline or mark phrases or passages that seem particularly important, or that interest you, and take notes. Try to think about the text as you read. What are its significant themes? Are there any words or concepts that keep cropping up? Does a particular passage remind you of a passage elsewhere, either in the same text or in a different one? If there is a part of the text that you don't understand, mark it with an interrogation point so that you remember to ask about it in class. If you prepare carefully for each class, it will be much more interesting than if you come along knowing nothing about the text we are discussing.

This aspect of your responsibilities in the class does not formally contribute to your grade, although repeated unexcused absences will adversely affect your grade (see "Course Policies," above), and in some cases may result in your failing the course. Also, if your final grade based on written and oral assignments is on the border between two grades, the energy with which you participated and the thoroughness of your preparation for the class will be decisive in assigning your final grade.

2. **Section from a biography of Virginia Woolf (5-10 pages, 10%)**

This assignment is linked to our reading and discussion of primary evidence about Woolf's relationship to her half-brothers, especially their possible sexual abuse of her, and interpretations of that evidence by a range of biographers and critics. The primary evidence comes from letters and memoirs by Woolf herself. As you read the different interpretations – and they vary widely – you will want to think how you yourself might handle the issue. Once you have thoroughly explored the document I created, plan and write the relevant pages from your own biography of Woolf. In the case study, I have excerpted only the sections from the biographies in which the authors reflect on the significance of what happened and explain it to their readers. But of course their understanding of what went on and their opinions about it also affect the way they tell the story of what happened, although for reasons of length I have not included these sections from the cited texts. In your assignment, however, I would like you to tell the story – briefly if you prefer – and offer some reflection on it. You do not need to do any research beyond what is presented in the case-study and in the other readings I have assigned for that week, though of course you may, if you wish, read more widely in the excerpted biographies and/or in other works.

3. **Editing exercise: annotating a text by Woolf (at least 7 pages, 10%)**

Have you ever been frustrated when there was a reference in a novel to something you didn't recognize – a place, an event, a person? Editors write contextual material for novels and other literary texts which assist readers in understanding and sometimes in interpreting what they see. Editions are designed for specific audiences: the general reader, reading for fun; the undergraduate student, who might benefit from additional information and some pointers towards interpretation; or the literary scholar, who wants to know as much as possible about the text to arrive at an accurate and well-informed interpretation of it. Editions can include one or more of the following: an introduction; explanatory notes (more or less

thorough, detailed, and lengthy); a list of textual variants (showing the differences between the successive versions of the text from manuscript to proof to first and subsequent editions); a discussion of the most significant textual variants; supporting materials such as other works (by the same author or by others); a selection of critical essays on the work; a chronology of the life and works of the author; a bibliography; a note on the text (explaining which version is being used, and describing any silent emendations); and a note on the editing process itself. In our workshop on editing, we will discuss some articles about textual editing and annotating, and explore a number of different editions of Woolf's novels for various audiences, with a special focus on *Orlando* (which I am co-editing for the Cambridge Edition of Virginia Woolf). The assignment is to provide explanatory annotations for five or more pages of a Woolf text of your choice for a scholarly audience.

4. **Research/bibliographical exercise** (variable length, 10%)

This exercise is designed to help you hone your research skills and begin to research your final paper. You will be asked to locate a number of different types of sources in a variety of formats (digital, print etc); to assess the quality of these sources; to write entries for an annotated bibliography for two critical articles; and to summarize and compare two additional critical articles relevant to your chosen topic.

5. **Short paper** (5 pages, 10%)

This paper, on a topic of your choice, allows you to begin to think about your long final paper. For example, if you know you want to write about Virginia Woolf and war in your long paper, you might write your short paper about Septimus Smith in *Mrs Dalloway* as a way of focusing your preliminary research and thinking. You should cite at least two critical sources in your short paper. You may use extracts from this short paper in your final draft if you wish.

6. **Oral introduction to a Woolf text (in pairs)** (twenty minutes/two pages, 15%)

During the editing workshop, we will spend some time discussing the function and style of introductions to novels and other literary texts in preparation for this assignment. For this assignment, you will research and plan an introduction to an edition of a Woolf for a general audience, and you will present your introduction orally, in no more than twenty minutes. You will want to make sure you give your classmates/prospective readers any relevant context about the book (when was it written, what did Woolf say about it in her diaries and letters, how was it received and so on). You will also introduce and briefly discuss the most important themes of the book, giving your classmates/readers some ideas to inform our discussion. You will consult a minimum of two sources (one of which will be an introduction of your choice to the text you are presenting, from a reputable print edition, and the second of which might be Hermione Lee's *Virginia Woolf*, which discusses each text in some detail, or any other biographical or critical source). You may provide a handout if you wish, or use Powerpoint or other presentation software. At the class during which you give your presentation, you will each turn in a separate two-page reflection on how you approached the assignment, the sources you used and how you made decisions about what to include and what to leave out of your presentation.

7. **Draft of final paper** (15-20 pages, 20%)

The draft of your final paper should be just that: a complete, full-length draft that is as good as you can make it without extra advice from me. Before you turn in your draft to me, you will have worked on it and revised it at least once yourself. Very, very few people produce flawless pieces of writing the first time round: almost everyone needs to re-write, revise and reorganize in order to make the paper as good as it can possibly be.

5. **Final paper** (15-20 pages, 25%)

Your final paper should be thoroughly revised in response to my feedback on your draft. You should include an MLA-style bibliography of works cited (at least six distinct sources, some of which may be the sources you cited in your short paper and/or in your bibliographical exercise).

## Very selective bibliography

### A Sketch of the Past

- Benstock, Shari. "Authorizing the Autobiographical," pp. 10-33. Benstock, Shari (ed.). *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Women's Autobiographical Writings*. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1988
- Johnston, Georgia. "Virginia Woolf Revising Roger Fry into the Frames of 'A Sketch of the Past'." *Biography: An Interdisciplinary Quarterly*, 20:3 (1997 Summer), pp. 284-301
- McCracken, LuAnn. "'The Synthesis of My Being?': Autobiography and the Reproduction of Identity in Virginia Woolf." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 9:1 (1990 Spring), pp. 59-78
- McCord, Phyllis Frus. "'Little Corks That Mark a Sunken Net': Virginia Woolf's 'Sketch of the Past' as a Fictional Memoir." *Modern Language Studies*, 16:3 (1986 Summer), pp. 247-254

### Jacob's Room

- Flint, Kate. "Revising *Jacob's Room*," 1991, repr. *Jacob's Room* (Norton Edition)
- Wall, Kathryn. "Significant Form in *Jacob's Room*: Ekphrasis and the Elegy," 2002, repr. *Jacob's Room* (Norton Edition)
- Zwerdling, Alex. "*Jacob's Room*: Woolf's Satiric Elegy," 1981, repr. *Jacob's Room* (Norton Edition)

### Short stories

- Benzel, Kathryn N. "Verbal Painting in 'Blue & Green' and 'Monday or Tuesday,'" pp. 157-74. Benzel, Kathryn N. (ed. and introd.); Hoberman, Ruth (ed. and introd.); and Dick, Susan (foreword). *Trespassing Boundaries: Virginia Woolf's Short Fiction*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004
- Hoberman, Ruth. "Collecting, Shopping, and Reading: Virginia Woolf's Stories about Objects," pp. 81-98. Benzel, Kathryn N. (ed. and introd.); Hoberman, Ruth (ed. and introd.); and Dick, Susan (foreword). *Trespassing Boundaries: Virginia Woolf's Short Fiction*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004
- Staveley, Alice. "Conversations at Kew: Reading Woolf's Feminist Narratology," pp. 39-62. Benzel, Kathryn N. (ed. and introd.); Hoberman, Ruth (ed. and introd.); and Dick, Susan (foreword). *Trespassing Boundaries: Virginia Woolf's Short Fiction*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004. xx, 223 pp

### Mrs Dalloway

- Abbott, Reginald. "What Miss Kilman's Petticoat Means: Virginia Woolf, Shopping, and Spectacle." *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*, 38:1 (1992 Spring), pp. 193-216
- Cohen, Scott. "The Empire from the Street: Virginia Woolf, Wembley, and Imperial Monuments." *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*, 50:1 (2004 Spring), pp. 85-109
- Froula, Christine. "Mrs. Dalloway's Postwar Elegy: Women, War, and the Art of Mourning." *Modernism/Modernity*, 9:1 (2002 Jan), pp. 125-63
- Tate, Trudi. "*Mrs Dalloway* and the Armenian Question," pp. 147-170. Trudi Tate, *Modernism, History and the First World War* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998)

### To the Lighthouse

- Beer, Gillian. "Hume, Stephen, and Elegy in *To the Lighthouse*." *Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism*, 34:1 (1984 Jan.), pp. 33-55
- Clewell, Tammy. "Consolation Refused: Virginia Woolf, the Great War, and Modernist Mourning." *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*, 50:1 (2004 Spring), pp. 197-223
- de Gay, Jane. "Behind the Purple Triangle: Art and Iconography in *To the Lighthouse*." *Woolf Studies Annual*, 5 (1999), pp. 1-23
- Flint, Kate. "Virginia Woolf and the General Strike." *Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism*, 36:4 (1986 Oct.), pp. 319-334
- Winston, Janet. "'Something Out of Harmony': *To the Lighthouse* and the Subject(s) of Empire." *Woolf Studies Annual*, 2 (1996), pp. 39-70

## Orlando

- Stape, J. H. "The Changing Shape(s) of Orlando and the Myth of Authorial Control". pp. 158-71. Haule, James M. (ed. and introd.) and Stape, J. H. (ed. and introd.) *Editing Virginia Woolf: Interpreting the Modernist Text* (Basingstoke, England: Palgrave, 2002)
- Taylor, Melanie. "True Stories: Orlando, Life-Writing and Transgender Narratives". pp. 202-18. Stevens, Hugh (ed. and introd.) and Howlett, Caroline (ed. and introd.) *Modernist Sexualities* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 2000)
- Knopp, Sherron E. "'If I Saw You Would You Kiss Me?': Sapphism and the Subversiveness of Virginia Woolf's Orlando". Joseph Bristow (ed.), *Sexual Sameness: Textual Differences in Lesbian and Gay Writing* (London, New York: Routledge, 1992)

## A Room of One's Own

- Kaivola, Karen. "Revisiting Woolf's Representations of Androgyny: Gender, Race, Sexuality, and Nation." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, 18:2 (1999 Fall), pp. 235-61
- Rosenman, Ellen Bayuk. "Sexual Identity and *A Room of One's Own*: 'Secret Economies' in Virginia Woolf's Feminist Discourse." *Signs*, 14:3 (1989 Spring), pp. 634-50

## The Years

- Corbett, Mary Jean. "Virginia Woolf and Victorian 'Incests'", *Family Likeness: Sex, Marriage, and Incest from Jane Austen to Virginia Woolf* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008), 274-200
- Whittier-Ferguson, John. "Repetition, Remembering, Repetition: Virginia Woolf's Late Fiction and the Return of War". *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*: 57.2 ( 2011 Summer), pp. 230-253
- Linett, Maren. "The Jew in the Bath: Imperiled Imagination in Woolf's *The Years*". *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*: 48.2 ( 2002 Summer), pp. 341-61

## Three Guineas

- Wisor, Rebecca. "Versioning Virginia Woolf: Notes toward a Post-Eclectic Edition of *Three Guineas*". *Modernism/Modernity*: 16.3 (2009 Sept.), pp. 497-535
- Pawlowski, Merry. "Virginia Woolf's Veil: The Feminist Intellectual and the Organization of Public Space". *MFS: Modern Fiction Studies*: 53.4 ( 2007 Winter), pp. 722-51
- Black, Naomi. *Virginia Woolf as Feminist*. (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2004)

## Between the Acts

- Adolph, Andrea. "Luncheon at 'The Leaning Tower': Consumption and Class in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, 34:6 (2005 Sept), pp. 439-59
- Delsandro, Erica. "'Myself'-It Was Impossible': Queering History in *Between the Acts*." *Woolf Studies Annual*, 13 (2007), pp. 87-109
- Zwerdling, Alex. "*Between the Acts* and the Coming of War." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*, 10:3 (1977 Spring), pp. 220-36