

English 374-001
U.S. Literature: Modernism
Fall 2021
Professor Bryant Mangum

I. Texts:

Texts: The books listed below (except the Zelda Fitzgerald text, the Faulkner text, and the Hurston text) will be available through Virginia Book Company, 900 W. Franklin, as well as at the VCU Bookstore. See below the list notes about alternate sources of the texts we are reading.

1. Anderson, Sherwood *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919)
2. Cather, Willa *The Professor's House* (1925)
3. Eliot, T.S. *The Waste Land and Other Poems* (1922)
4. Faulkner, William "That Evening Sun" (1931) and "A Rose for Emily" (1930)
5. Fitzgerald, F. Scott *The Great Gatsby* (1925); "Echoes of the Jazz Age" (1931)
6. Fitzgerald, Zelda "Eulogy on the Flapper" (1922)
7. Hemingway, Ernest *The Sun Also Rises* (1926)
8. Toomer, Jean *Cane* (1923)
9. Hurston, Zora Neale. "The Gilded Six-Bits" (1933)

Notes on editions and sources of the texts:

1. *Winesburg, Ohio*: The Norton Critical Edition is the preferred one, but any edition will work. This book is also available as a pdf file at the following address:
<http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/416>
2. *The Professor's House*: Any edition will work. This book is available as an html text at this address: <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200831h.html>
3. *The Waste Land* and "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": full texts are also available under Course Documents on Canvas.
4. *The Great Gatsby*: any hard copy of this text will work.
5. "Eulogy on the Flapper": This text is available on Canvas.
6. *The Sun Also Rises*: Any hard copy of this text will work.
7. *Cane*: The Norton Critical Edition is preferred, but any hard copy of this text will work.

II. Written Assignments:

There will be (a) **three hour tests** (two of which will have close reading and essay sections), the last one of which will be due on the day of the final examination (and which will have only close reading, short answer sections) (b) **a final take-home essay examination** due the day scheduled for the final exam (c) **backboard postings** of two kinds; see separate file and options below (d) **occasional reaction papers** (e) an optional paper (3-5 pages long, typed) **if you choose option 2 below**. The written assignments will be weighted in this way:

Option 1:

Hour Test #1 (objective and essay: take-home): 20%

Hour Test #2 (objective and essay: take home): 20%

Hour Test #3 (objective only: take home; due on day scheduled for final exam): 15%

Canvas Postings (see separate file on how these are counted based on number of posts): 15%

Required Canvas postings: 10%

Final Essay Examination (take-home; email essay in on day scheduled for final exam): 20%

Option 2:

Hour Test #1 (objective and essay): 15%

Hour Test #2 (objective and essay): 15%

Hour Test #3 (objective only; day scheduled for final exam): 10%

Canvas Postings (see separate file on how these are counted based on number of posts): 15%

Required Canvas postings (see separate file on how these are counted and when due). 15%

Optional Essay (due on day scheduled for final exam): 10%

Final Essay Examination (take-home; email essay in on day scheduled for final exam): 20%

Note: Over the course of the semester I will post approximately forty questions on Canvas Five substantial postings (100 words or more each) in response to these are considered the minimum. For a detailed explanation of the way that Canvas postings will be computed into your grade and by when they will be due, check on Canvas. **Note:** There are two types of postings (a) the large number of posts from the 40 or so prompts over the semester and (b) the more limited number of REQUIRED posts (one or two for each novel) that will be due before the day of our discussion of the work, since we will use the prompts and the focal points of our Zoom discussions. There will be an explanation of the way each will be counted and the dates by which each will be due uploaded in a separate document unloaded on Canvas.

III. General Objectives:

The phrase "modern American literature" usually refers to literature published between World War I and World War II. "Modernist" or post-war I writers are those, generally, whose first major work appeared in the so-called "Modern Period" (i.e., 1919-1939). In this course we will be concerned primarily with the first of the two decades in this period: the 1920's. This decade has been referred to as "The Roaring Twenties" and "The Jazz Age." Some see it as the time of "the full flowering of American literature." By reading and studying some of the best writing to come out of this time we will attempt to identify major themes that characterize the writings of the post-war I decade in America, focusing particularly on the image of the wasteland that provides a context for these themes.

***We will use Canvas and our course website for background information on the works we are reading and for assignments, and we will come together in Zoom sessions each week at our scheduled class time for class discussion of the material. The tests will be "take-home," and our exchange of ideas will be ongoing through Canvas discussion questions and responses. I will be available throughout the semester for individual conferences through email, cell phone, or Zoom.**

IV. Specific Objectives:

A. Close Reading: The take-home hour tests are designed to bring your attention to concrete details in the works. The theory here is that in a well-constructed work, no detail is insignificant, though some details are more important than others are. The emphasis in these tests will be on factual material, but you will also relate the details to thematic concerns. The best way to prepare for these tests is to read the works carefully, and for the hour tests to mark the passages and details discussed in class with particular attention to the ways these passages and details reflect themes of the works. I will provide sample discussion questions to help you prepare for the essay questions on the hour tests.

B. Abstracting: After reading the works closely, the next objective will be to "abstract" from it major thematic concerns as they are expressed through concrete details, image patterns, etc.

C. Synthesis: We will try finally to relate the themes, characters, etc. in the works to each other. This will be an ongoing process in our exchanges through Canvas, email, and Zoom. The hour-test essays and final essay examination will be aimed specifically at this objective, as will some of the Canvas questions.

V. Below is the grading scale: These numerical grades will actually be of concern to you only on the short answer tests. The other assignments will be assigned letter grades.

90-100 A
80-90 B
70-80 C
60-70 D
0-59 F

Letter grades for essays will be averaged in as follows:

A=95; A-=90; B+=88; B=85; B-=80; C+=78; C=75; C-=70; D+=68; D=65; D-=60; F+=59; F see me

VI. VCU Honor System: "Virginia Commonwealth University recognizes that honesty, truth, and integrity are values central to its mission as an institution of higher education." This class will be conducted in strict adherence to VCU's Honor System policies. In essence, you should not use another student's work. You should not falsely present source material as your own. Whenever you use material from another source, you must credit this source clearly, whether you are quoting directly, summarizing, or paraphrasing. Conscious and uncorrected acts of plagiarism (either from another student's work or from an academic source) will result in a failing course grade. In other words, respect the work of others and in no way present it as your own. If you have additional questions about academic integrity and plagiarism consult VCU's policy in the *VCU Resource Guide* or at the following web address:
<http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/honor.html>

VII. Students with Disabilities: "Virginia Commonwealth University is committed to providing students with disabilities equal opportunities to benefit from all programs, services and activities offered." Students with disabilities should identify to the instructor at the beginning of the course the services that they will need. For complete information on university policy regarding this, go to <http://www.vcu.edu/eoaa/selfidprocess.html>

VIII. A Note on Computers: Much of the work in this course will depend on regular use of Canvas and on email sent to and from your VCU email address. I will use **your VCU email address**, the university's official means of communication with students, for communication with you and will expect you to check

it between each of our scheduled class meeting times. The same is true for Canvas: I will post announcements there and you should check it regularly—hopefully on a daily basis. If you do not have a user ID and password that will allow you to access Canvas and your VCU email, be sure to get one before the second week of our class start date. You will be able to access all of the course materials by going to <http://canvas.vcu.edu>. If you do not have a computer ID number and password you can get one by following the steps listed at the following web address: <http://www.vcucard.com/>. Reference to the university's email policy can be found at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/email.htm>.

IX. University Code of Conduct: The University's policies regarding student conduct can be found at <http://www.students.vcu.edu/rg/policies/conductguide.html>.

X. What to Know and Do to Be Prepared for Emergencies at VCU:

1. Sign up to receive VCU text messaging alerts (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert/notify>). Keep your information up-to date.
2. Know the safe evacuation route from each of your classrooms. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in on-campus classrooms.
3. Listen for and follow instructions from VCU or other designated authorities.
4. Know where to go for additional emergency information (<http://www.vcu.edu/alert>)
5. Know the emergency phone number for the VCU Police (828-1234). Report suspicious activities and objects.

XI. Additional Information Regarding VCU Policies: Further information about the policies referred to above and about relevant additional VCU policies can be found on our Canvas course site or at the following web address: <http://www.provost.vcu.edu/syllabi.html>

XI. Miscellaneous:

My office is 307 Anderson House (913 W. Franklin). The telephone number is 828-1255. I will post office hours on Canvas and on our course website (bryantmangum.net), **but** if you need to contact me at times other than those posted please feel free to set up a time during which we can meet by phone, email, or Zoom. There is a voice mail on my telephone; however, during the pandemic I will not check voice mail regularly. Instead, you should contact me through email. My e-mail address is bmangum@vcu.edu. I will try to respond to each email promptly, but if you haven't heard back from me within a day, resend your email in case it has gone astray. The address for my web page is <http://www.people.vcu.edu/~bmangum>, but for information related to our class, visit our course website: <http://bryantmangum.net>, which we will use as a supplement to Canvas. **This (our.net course website) will be an integral part of our course. It will contain trailers for each work, and you will likely have response questions that are taken from these trailers.**

XII. Daily Assignment Sheet to Follow: