

The Problematic Narrator in Modern Fiction  
 English 380 (crn 21200); spring 2011  
 Professor Shaffer (313 Palmer; phone: \*3976)  
 Palmer 211: TU/TH 12:30-1:45pm  
 Office Hours: TU/TH 1:45-3 pm (and by appointment)

This course will focus on “problematic” narrators, first-person and otherwise, in canonical works of modern fiction. We will examine narrator/narrative “unreliability” of various kinds (due to narrator repression, trauma, deceit, insanity, ignorance, and/or youthfulness) and related problems of narrator/narrative point of view and distance. We will also entertain various critical and theoretical arguments and terminologies concerning problematic narrators/narratives.

Texts (8):

Bausch/Cassill, eds., *Norton Anthology of Short Fiction*, shorter 7<sup>th</sup> ed. (N)  
 Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*  
 Forster, *Howards End*  
 Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*  
 Joyce, *Dubliners*  
 McCabe, *The Butcher Boy*  
 Ozick, *The Shawl*  
 Swift, *Last Orders*  
 In-class Handouts (H)  
 Library Reserve Reading (L)

Class Policy:

Written work submitted late will be penalized at the rate of one letter grade per 24-hour period. One unexcused absence per semester is allowed; two or more will negatively affect your final grade. Failure to complete any major assignment or to attend class on a regular basis will result in a failing grade in the course. All work for this class must be done in strict compliance with the Rhodes Honor Code.

Requirements:

Two critical essays of 5-6 pages (1500-1800 words) each: 40%  
 One research essay of 10-12 pages (3000-3600 words): 40%  
 Participation, attendance, presentations, reading quizzes: 20%

Reading and writing assignments are due on the class dates listed below. Bring the appropriate text to class each day.

Thursday	<b>January 13</b>	Course Introduction
Tuesday	18	Wordsworth, “The Thorn” (L)
Thursday	20	Melville, “Bartleby” (N)
Tuesday	25	“Bartleby”
Thursday	27	Conrad, “Heart of Darkness” (N)
Tuesday	<b>February 1</b>	“Heart of Darkness”
Thursday	3	“Heart of Darkness”
Tuesday	8	Fitzgerald, <i>Great Gatsby</i>

Thursday	10	<i>Great Gatsby</i>
Tuesday	15	<i>Great Gatsby</i> + <i>First Critical Essay Due</i>
Thursday	17	Gilman, "The Yellow Wallpaper" (N)
Tuesday	22	Midterm Conferences
Thursday	24	Faulkner, "A Rose for Emily" (N)
Tuesday	<b>March 1</b>	Ozick, "The Shawl"
Thursday	3	Joyce, <i>Dubliners</i> (selections)
Tuesday	8	<i>Dubliners</i>
Thursday	10	McCabe, <i>Butcher Boy</i>
Tuesday	15	Spring Break
Thursday	17	Spring Break
Tuesday	22	<i>Butcher Boy</i> + <i>Second Critical Essay Due</i>
Thursday	24	Forster, <i>Howards End</i>
Tuesday	29	Midterm Conferences
Thursday	<b>31</b>	<i>Howards End</i>
Tuesday	<b>April 5</b>	<i>Howards End</i>
Thursday	7	Ishiguro, <i>Remains of the Day</i>
Tuesday	12	<i>Remains of the Day</i>
Thursday	14	Swift, <i>Last Orders</i>
Tuesday	19	<i>Last Orders</i>
Thursday	21	Easter Break
Tuesday	26	Seminar + <i>Research Essay Due</i>
Thursday	28	Seminar
Friday	29	Classes End Awards Convocation Undergraduate Research & Creative Activity Symposium (URCAS)

Writing Assignment Instructions  
Professor Shaffer

1. Type and double-space all essay drafts and final copies. Use one-inch margins and Times New Roman 12-point font (approximately 300 words) on each page. Staple the pages of your essay together. Include your name, my name, a paper title, and a word count on each essay.
2. Be sure that your essay has a clear and identifiable thesis.
3. Substantiate your argument with textual evidence.
4. Use the present tense and active voice in your essay whenever possible.
5. Carefully proofread your work for grammatical, spelling, and typographical errors *before* submitting it.
6. Always keep an extra copy of your essay in safe-keeping and give yourself adequate time to complete all written work. *Planning ahead will help you avoid last-minute crises (and mandatory late-work penalties).*
7. Pledge your work in full under the Rhodes Honor Code.