ENGLISH 105A
20TH-CENTURY IN ENGLISH, 1900-1945
(FALL, 1999)

"The first step in becoming an active, critical reader is to realize that reading is not a
passive activity: as readers [AND STUDENTS!], we are not simply sponges absorbing
information and knowledge situated outside us in the text. Rather as critical readers we
create meaning by interacting with a text." (Rehner 3)

A) PARTICULARS:

Instructor: Cameron Reid
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Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 1:00 p.m.-2:30 p.m. (or by appointment)
Meeting Times: Tuesday and Thursday 11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

B) REQUIRED TEXTS:

F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (Scribner)
Ernest Hemingway, In Our Time (Distican)
Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God (Harper)
John Steinbeck, Grapes of Wrath (Canbook)

COURSE PACK FOR ENGLISH 105A -- AVAILABLE IN THE BOOKSTORE

*NOTE: other editions of the novels are fine but recognize page references will be different
for in-class discussion; check out the USED BOOK STORE(s) for copies of these books.

C) COURSE REQUIREMENTS (in order of appearance):

1.) Midterm (take it home Thursday, Oct 14th, write it Tuesday, Oct 19th;
in class): 20%

2.) Optional Paper Proposal (Due Tuesday, November 2nd; more details to follow): 10%
(1-2 pages)

3.) Final Paper (Due on or before Thursday, November 25th): 25% (or 35% depending
on whether you choose to do the optional paper proposal: 4-5 pages)

4.) Final Exam (set by registrar): 35%

5.) Participation and Group work: 10%
D) COURSE MANDATE:

Our course, "20th-century English Literature, 1900-1945," contends with a very eclectic period in English literary and social history. We, as a reading audience, cannot begin to think about the great 'puzzle' of early 20th-century literature without developing a background in the sorts of historical and social influences in/against which this literature takes shape. That is, we need to recognize that the literature both reflects and speaks to its time. We also need to recognize that this literature gets situated, gets grounded or implicated within much larger cultural, geo-political, psychological, artistic, and intellectual contexts at work in the minds of most (if not all) the "great" literary figures in the first-half of this century which results in what is typically referred to as "Modernism." Consider, for instance, the growing intellectual influence of Marx, Freud, and Darwin; the growing impact of the scientific mind; the rapid shifts and growth in technologies; the rise of new media such as film and radio; and the spirit of rationalism looming over the cultural 'zeitgeist' of early 20th-century Europe. One also must recognize the inevitable disillusionment and alienation of a "Lost Generation" of writers who came of age during a time of World Wars, the "Great Depression," the rise of Fascism in Europe, the growing presence of weapons of Mass-destruction, etc.

So often our readings and discussions will be organized around some of the above themes or contexts, literary and cultural "access points," if you will, that might help to better orient us to this complicated period and its writings.

E) WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF CLASSES (some later classes may change):

Sept 14 Discussion of course requirements

Sept 16 Short introduction to Modernism

Sept 21 MODERN CRITICISM AND THOUGHT: 1; essays by Conrad and Woolf (Reading Package)

Sept 23 MODERN CRITICISM AND THOUGHT: 2; essays by Lawrence (Reading Package)

Sept 28 DISILLUSIONMENT AND THE MODERN MAN: 1; Hemingway's In Our Time

Sept 30 DISILLUSIONMENT AND THE MODERN MAN: 2; Hemingway's In Our Time

Oct. 5 SHORT STORY: 1; Faulkner's "Barn Burning" and "A Rose for Emily" (Reading Package)

Oct. 7 SHORT STORY: 2; D.H. Lawrence's "The Rocking Horse Winner"; Welty's
"Petrified Man" (Reading Package)

Oct. 12 **POETRY 1: WAR POETRY;** W.B. Yeats: "The Second Coming"; "Easter 1916"; Wilfred Owen: "Anthem for Doomed Youth"; "Dulce et Decorum Est";
Siegfried Sassoon: "Repression of War Experience"; "The General" (Reading Package)

Prufrock" (Reading Package); take home your Midterm

Oct. 19 **MIDTERM** (written in class)

Oct. 21 **THE SOCIOLOGICAL NOVEL: 1;** Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*

Oct. 26 **THE SOCIOLOGICAL NOVEL: 2;** Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*; Handout
Essay Topics and "Style Guide" for the Final Essay

Oct. 28 **THE SOCIOLOGICAL NOVEL: 3;** Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*

Nov. 2 **POETRY 3: IMAGISM;** H.D.: "Sea Rose"; "Oread"; "Helen"; William Carlos
Williams: "The Widow's lament in Springtime"; "The Great Figure"; "Spring and All";
"The Red Wheelbarrow" (Reading Package); Essay Proposal due

Nov. 4 **POETRY 4: IMAGISM, POETIC EXPERIMENT;** all e.e. cummings selections;
H.D.: "Sea Rose"; "Oread"; "Helen"; William Carlos Williams: "The Widow's lament in
Springtime"; "The Great Figure"; "Spring and All"; "The Red Wheelbarrow" (Reading Package)

Nov. 9 **THE "ROARING TWENTIES": 1;** Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

Nov. 11 **THE "ROARING TWENTIES": 2;** Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

Nov. 16 **DETECTIVE FILM;** Wilder's "Double Indemnity" (Film, in class)

Nov. 18 **DETECTIVE FILM and SHORT STORY: 3** Wilder's "Double Indemnity"
(remainder of Film, in class); Hammett's "Too many have lived"; Chandler's essay "The
Simple Art of Murder" (Reading Package)

Nov. 23 **HARLEM RENAISSANCE: 1;** Hurston's *There Eyes Were Watching God*

Nov. 25 **HARLEM RENAISSANCE: 2;** Hurston's *There Eyes Were Watching God;
Final Essay due -- in class

Nov.30 **HARLEM RENAISSANCE: 3;** Hurston's *There Eyes Were Watching God;
Langston Hughes selections (Reading Package)

Dec. 2 Course Wrap-up