Virginia Woolf: Art and Politics

TH 12:00-1:40
L & L 223
Handouts on Canvas

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Office hours: MT - 11:00-12:00
W - by appointment
Th - 10:00-12:00

Texts:

*Mrs. Dalloway* - 1925
*To the Lighthouse* - 1927
*Orlando* - 1928
*A Room of One’s Own* - 1929
*Three Guineas* - 1938
*Between the Acts* - 1941

Packet at the bookstore: If copies of the packet are not on the shelf, you will need to fill out an order form.

Packets materials:
Woolf’s “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown”; “Why Art Today Follows Politics”; “Professions for Women”
Christopher Reed’s “Through Formalism: Feminism and Virginia Woolf’s Relation to Bloomsbury Aesthetics”
Brenda Silver’s “Take Five: Quentin Bell’s Biography and Historical Productions . . .” and “Take Six: Virginia Woolf’s Face”
David Bradshaw’s “The Socio-Political Vision of the Novels”
Laura Marcus’s “Woolf’s Feminism and Feminism’s Woolf”
Helen Carr’s “Virginia Woolf, Empire and Race”
*Oxford Biography (DNB)* version of Woolf’s biography
Notes to *Mrs Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, and introductions and notes to *Orlando, Three Guineas* and *Between the Acts* from Oxford or Penguin editions still unavailable in the U.S.

Recommended (not required): *The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf* (Bradshaw’s, Marcus’s, and Carr’s essays are included in this volume.)

Purpose:

In addition to the outcomes listed below, a specific purpose of this course is to engage with issues of aesthetics and politics in a selection of Virginia Woolf’s work. Woolf has often been considered a “high modernist,” a term equated with a formalist agenda that marginalizes the study of culture, history, and politics in literary works. Woolf’s work is complex, often poetic, and fascinating from a formalist point of view, giving rise to many different interpretations. Yet –
even as Woolf argued that literature is not in the business of advocating causes – she held strong political opinions that shaped her work. I am here defining politics, not in terms of party, but in terms of power relations. One of the questions we will address this quarter is how Woolf negotiated art and politics, realms that at least some critics and writers thought (and still think) should and could be separate. In addition, we will also examine the versions of “Virginia Woolf,” including her status as legendary figure and icon. The plan is not to reveal the one true (nonideological) version of Virginia Woolf, but to investigate what ideological purposes these different versions serve.

Outcomes (Critical Studies Strand):

Students will
   – identify the characteristic themes, techniques, and conventions of a representative group of texts in literature in English focused by theme, author, theoretical approach, or social and historical context;
   – demonstrate knowledge of literary and critical theories;
   – apply theoretical approaches to literary texts;
   – demonstrate proficiency in research methodologies;
   – respond to secondary criticism and/or critical theory in their own writing;
   – develop thesis-driven arguments that are focused by specific interpretive or analytical questions, that are supported by evidence from primary and secondary texts and that synthesize multiple perspectives.

Requirements and Assignments:

Reading, discussion and attendance: Attending class is crucial. You can’t be in on the conversation if you’re not here. Keep up with your reading. You will have longer assignments between Thursday and Tuesday than between Tuesday and Thursday. During the longer period, plan your reading time carefully. It’s probably not a good idea to leave it for the night before class. Mark up your texts and/or keep a notebook as an aid to memory and a method of starting to think about subjects for papers.

Note on attendance and participation:
   Three absences (equivalent to 6 50-min. class periods) may reduce your final grade by one degree (B to B-; B- to C+)
   Four absences may reduce your final grade by one full letter (B+ to C+)
   Six or more absences may cause you to fail the course.
   There are no excused absences or automatic extensions, but I understand that emergencies do arise. If you establish a pattern of conscientious attendance and turning in assignments on time, your credibility increases, and when you have an emergency, I can assume that you are a responsible person and are doing everything you can to meet your obligations. If you establish a pattern of absences, late assignments, and continual excuses, you damage your credibility, making it impossible for me to justify giving you a break. While coming to class every day is important, simply being here doesn’t earn an “A” in this category. An “A” requires
good participation. You exhibit the level of your participation through the thoughtfulness of your questions and comments, the degree of care and reflection you give your writing; your tone and attitude in regard to your work and the members of the class; you commitment to the course. Nov. 3 is the last day to drop without petitioning. Reasons to drop by Nov. 3: you have missed more than three classes or know that you will miss more than three class periods before the end of the quarter and/or you missed the due date for the first paper or did not participate in the research/analysis group. Withdraw officially so you won’t receive a failing grade. If group members are depending on you, let them know if you withdraw.

Accommodations: If you need disability related educational accommodations, contact Student Disability Services at 509-963-2214 or at ds@cwu.edu. Their office is Hogue 126. Please let me know about any accommodations made through DS.

Pronoun policy: Since some people do not identify as male or female, they prefer a pronoun other than “he” or “she” to refer to themselves. Currently, many different options for alternative pronouns exist, so if you have a preference, let me know.

Cell phone policy: Cell phones should be turned off, unless you are using them to look up information related to the course to contribute to discussion.

Due dates: Written work is due in class on the due date on the schedule. Late assignments are not acceptable unless you speak with me about an extension, and I agree. Too many extensions interfere with my schedule, so ask for them only when you have a genuinely good reason. Do not e-mail assignments unless you have an emergency arrangement with me.

Submit both a paper copy in class and an electronic copy on Canvas. If you do not submit both paper and Canvas copies, I may not grade the paper.

Papers:
Undergraduates: Two analytical papers (minimum length: seven-pages /2100 words each) that advance a thesis of your own based on evidence from the primary text(s) and that incorporate two scholarly sources in a significant way. Critical sources are intended, not as a substitute for your own argument but as a means of building your argument through response, disagreement, or carrying another writer’s insights further.
For the first paper: write on Mrs. Dalloway or To the Lighthouse. You may write on both novels if your subject is narrowly focused.
For the second paper: write on Orlando, A Room of One’s Own, Three Guineas, or Between the Acts. Or you may treat an issue that draws on one of these works in combination with any other of Woolf’s works we have read if the subject is narrowly focused.
Graduates: Two ten to 12-page papers that incorporate at least two critical sources in a significant way in each essay. As with the undergraduate essays, critical sources should be used as a means of building your own argument. Choices about texts are the same as above. In addition to the works cited for your paper, include a separate annotated list of three or four critical works that you consulted but did not use in your paper. Annotations should summarize
the main argument of the source in around 100 words.

Everyone:
Directions and ideas for the papers will be available in a separate handout.

Avoid plagiarism: Give credit to any sources you quote or authors whose ideas you use. If in doubt, consult The MLA Handbook or discuss the question with me. A case of plagiarism damages your credibility as well as your grade. A plagiarized paper is a waste of time and energy – for both student and professor. If I find that a paper contains plagiarism, the paper will receive a 0 and I will report the plagiarism as a “behavior of concern.” A university staff member will then contact the student.

For help in incorporating your sources, consult The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (8th ed.). Also, note how the writers of critical articles and books integrate sources into their work. MLA uses attributive tags (“Martha Benson argues” or “According to Martha Benson”) rather than freestanding citations.

Papers should be followed by a works cited page giving full bibliographic information according to The MLA Handbook or Purdue Owl at https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/ or simply type Purdue Owl into Google. Use only scholarly sources – print or from library databases, such as the MLA Bibliography, JSTOR, and Project Muse as your major sources for scholarship. I will discuss research strategies further in class.

Papers must be typed, double-spaced on standard 8 1/2 x 11" paper. Leave about an inch margin on all sides. Number your pages. Use a staple or paper clip (no plastic folders please). Consult a recent handbook for grammar and punctuation rules. Proofread your paper carefully before and after it comes out of the printer. Remember to turn in both a paper copy in class and an electronic copy on Canvas.

Proposal discussion and paper workshop(s): In preparation for the first paper, you’ll have an opportunity to discuss in a small group an introductory/thesis paragraph or proposal draft with at least one critical article you plan to use. On the day of the discussion, explain your main idea to your group and how you are planning to use the criticism.

Later that week (see schedule) hand in to me a revised proposal, including a reference to one scholarly source (article, book chapter, book). The proposal should at the very least express your question at issue even if you are not yet ready to advance a thesis (a response to that question). If possible, say how you plan to use the source you’ve cited (argue with it, expand its scope, use it for support). The revised, formal proposal should be 200-300 words. Be sure to include a full citation of the scholarly source, using correct MLA format (8th ed.). I will give you feedback on the proposal.

For the first paper, you’ll also have a chance to bring in a workshop draft and exchange it with another writer. This process gives you an audience familiar with the work(s) and also gives you the experience of responding to and editing another writer’s analytical work. The draft should be three pages typed. Show me your draft at the end of class to earn points for the workshop. We may have time for a second proposal workshop at the end of the quarter.
Rewrite option: If you receive a grade of C- or lower on your first paper, you may rewrite it. In order to be fair to others who do not have a chance to rewrite, your revision grade can be no higher than a C (76%). You must also do the following:

1) Take the paper with my comments to the Writing Center located in the library and consult with a staff person there. This person will notify me that you have been there.

2) Demonstrate in your revision that you have addressed the problems mentioned in the comments and meet expectations of the assignment as outlined in the paper guidelines given out in class.

3) Turn in the revision one week from the date you receive the original paper back. Turn in the paper by 12:00 noon at my office or in my department mailbox.

4) Along with the revision, also turn in the graded copy with my comments.

Quizzes:

There will be a twelve-point quiz on each novel and the critical and contextual material we’ve discussed in class: multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank. You may make up one quiz if you do so within the grade period. If you miss a test on Tuesday, you must make it up before class the following Tuesday. To make up the test, go to the English Department office and request your copy. Be prepared to show your ID. The test will be in a file with your name on it, and you take it at the desk just outside the department office. If discussion during the grace period covers material on the quiz that would give you an unfair advantage over your classmates, I will have to eliminate that material from the quiz. Quizzes will include material from research/analysis groups and may include material from class lectures.

Research/analysis/discussion groups:

Reports on "versions" of Virginia Woolf: The first purpose of the group is to research and briefly report your findings to the class on one of these subjects:

Group 1: Versions of the Bloomsbury Group
Group 2: Biographical versions of Virginia Woolf
Group 3: Iconic/pop culture versions of Virginia Woolf
Group 4: Versions of / allusions to *A Room of One’s Own*. (See schedule for dates.)

Your research may be in print sources or the Internet or both. *You may use non-scholarly sources--especially for subject 3--but analyze them carefully.* Time for reports will depend on the number of people enrolled, but prepare to talk for 10 minutes and we’ll hope to have a few minutes for questions/discussion. In addition to reporting to the class, turn in a three-page double-spaced report (about 1000 words). On a separate page, *list the sources you used* with full bibliographic information.

Summary and analysis of a literary critical source: The second purpose of the group is to find and discuss with the class a recent critical article or book chapter (within the last 12 years)
that provides an interesting perspective on the work you are assigned. If you find a source you think is exceptionally useful that is over twelve years old, consult with me. Explain how the article offers a way to read the book or addresses a significant issue the book raises. Your responsibility is to summarize/analyze the article and lead class discussion for a period of approximately 40 minutes.

**Grades:**

1st paper proposal ................. 15 pts.
1st paper ........................... 75 pts.
2nd paper .......................... 75 pts.
report and critical research presentation ..................... 60 pts.
tests ................................. 72 pts. (12 pts. each)
workshops .......................... 20 pts. (10 for first paper workshop and 10 for second proposal workshop if we have time for two)
attendance and participation ...... 35 pts.
Total: 342-352 pts. (depending on workshops)

**Schedule:**

Two-day per week classes mean that you have shorter and longer assignments, given the time between class periods. Be careful to budget your time so that you can stay on schedule with the reading.

Thurs., Sept. 21 - Introduction to the course
    Modernism, Postmodernism, and the work of Virginia Woolf
    For Tues., Sept. 26, read *Mrs. Dalloway*, 3-102

Tues., Sept. 26 - *Mrs. Dalloway* - 3-102 (through “she did not like that man.”)

Thurs., Sept. 28 - *Mrs. Dalloway* - 102-39 (through “Calmly and competently, Elizabeth Dalloway mounted the Westminster omnibus.”)
    Questions about Woolf’s aesthetic: “Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Brown” (packet)

Tues., Oct. 3 - *Mrs. Dalloway* 139-94 / I’ll talk about a critical article or chapter on *MD*.
    Questions about Woolf’s aesthetic: “Why Art Today Follows Politics”;
    “Professions for Women” (packet)
    Versions of Virginia Woolf: Christopher Reed’s “Through Formalism” (packet)
    Assigning of critical groups and report subjects
Thurs., Oct. 5 - Continue discussion of “Through Formalism” if necessary
Intro and notes to *Mrs. Dalloway* (packet)
**Quiz** on *Mrs. Dalloway*, article/chapter discussed in class, and Reed’s “Through Formalism”
Group organizing time

Tues., Oct. 10 - *To the Lighthouse* - “The Window”
Directions and ideas for papers / research methods and tips / citation

Thurs., Oct. 12 - **Group 1** reports on Versions of Bloomsbury
*Lighthouse* - “Time Passes”

Tues., Oct. 17- *To the Lighthouse* - “The Lighthouse”
**Group 1** summarizes and analyzes scholarly literary critical article or book chapter on *To the Lighthouse*

Thurs., Oct. 19 - Versions of Virginia Woolf: Brenda Silver’s *Virginia Woolf Icon*, “Take Five” and “Take Six”
**Group 2** reports on biographical versions of V. W.

Tues., Oct. 24 - **Quiz** on *To the Lighthouse*, Group 1's report and critical article/book chapter
Proposal workshop on a paper on *Mrs. Dalloway* or *To the Lighthouse* or on a very narrowly focused thesis that connects the two works.
*Orlando* - Chapters One and Two

Thurs., Oct. 26 - **Proposals due** so that I can get them back to you with typed feedback as soon as possible.
Continue with research and citation as necessary
*Orlando* - Chapter 3

Tues., Oct. 31- *Orlando* - Chapters 4-6
Proposals with comments handed back
**Group 2** summarizes and analyzes scholarly literary critical article or book chapter on *Orlando.*

Thurs., Nov. 2- **Paper 1 due** unless you are in the *Orlando* Group (Group 2)
**Quiz** on *Orlando*, Group 2's report and article/book chapter
*A Room of One’s Own*, Chapters One and Two
Tues., Nov. 7 - **Proposals due for Group 2**

*Room*, Chapters Three-Six

**Group 3** reports on versions of *A Room of One’s Own* and critical article/chapter

Thurs., Nov. 9 - Proposals back to Group 2

**Quiz** on *Room*, Group 3’s report and article/book chapter

*Three Guineas*, Part One and notes and references

Versions of Virginia Woolf: David Bradshaw’s “The Socio-Political Vision of the Novels”

Tues., Nov. 14 - **Paper 1 due** if you’re in the *Orlando* critical group

*Three Guineas*, Parts Two and Three and notes and references

**Group 4** reports on Internet/popular culture versions of Virginia Woolf

Thurs., Nov. 16 - **Quiz** on *Three Guineas*, Bradshaw’s article, and Group 3’s report and critical article

Ideas for papers

Tues., Nov. 21 - **Between the Acts**

Versions of Virginia Woolf: Jane Marcus’s “Woolf Feminism and Feminism’s Woolf”

**Group 4** summarizes and analyzes scholarly literary critical article/book chapter on *Between the Acts*.

Thurs., Nov. 23 - Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Day

Tues., Nov. 28 - **Between the Acts**

Versions of Virginia Woolf: Helen Carr’s “Virginia Woolf, Empire and Race”

Thurs., Nov. 30 - **Quiz** on *Between the Acts*, Group 4's report and article/chapter and Marcus’s and Carr’s articles.

discuss paper subjects, articles, catch up - proposal workshop

Wed., Dec. 6 - **Paper 2 due - 2:00 p.m. at my office or in my mailbox in the English Dept. office. No late papers.**