NYU CAS Summer in London Program, 2017

ENGL-UA 9201. "Reading as a Writer: The Ghost of Virginia Woolf"

Professor Nicholas Boggs
Classes: MW 2:00-5:00 pm
Office Hours: W 1-2 pm by appointment at 6 Bedford Square
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This course explores some of the varied ways in which the canonical British modernist author Virginia Woolf has inspired and helped shape contemporary British literature written by authors including Zadie Smith, poet Malika Booker, and in the case of Michael Cunningham’s Pulitzer Prize-winning novel, The Hours, a major work of contemporary American literature as well. Exploring both fiction and literary non-fiction, we'll give special attention to such ideas as the pleasures and anxieties of literary influence within and across generations, genders, racial categories, and national boundaries, and historical periods; histories of female authorship; and the city of London itself as both literary setting and literary “character.” We will also focus on what reading Woolf and her descendants can teach us about our own writing practices, in both their critical and creative forms. Students will have the opportunity to tour London neighborhoods associated with selected authors and literary works, including Bloomsbury and Willesden. For English majors, this course fulfills either an elective requirement or can serve as the required “gateway course” for the Creative Writing Track in the English Major.

Required Reading:

Virginia Woolf, “Street Haunting: A London Adventure”

------------------.“A Room of One’s Own.”

------------------. Mrs. Dalloway.

Michael Cunningham. The Hours.

Annie Dillard, The Writing Life.

Malika Booker. Pepper Seed.

Zadie Smith. NW.

Assignments:

Your primary duty is to keep up with the readings and to come to class ready to engage in focused discussion. Beyond this, you have these specific tasks:
1. A one page close reading or creative experiment is due every day of class (see additional instructions).
2. One close reading presentation (see additional instructions).
3. One two-hour mid-term examination, in class on XX. The examination will consist of two parts: Part I, close analyses of a number of short passages; Part II, a one-hour essay on Mrs. Dalloway.
4. A group project on London as a “literary typography.” (see additional instructions).
5. A final 8-paged paper, a critical and/or analytical reflection on the role of London in the literary works discussed in this class, modeled on Woolf’s, “Street Haunting: A London Adventure,” and/or on your own experience walking through the streets of London (see additional instructions).

Schedule:

**June 21** W  Introduction.
Virginia Woolf, “London: A Street Haunting”

Visit Tavistock Square

**June 28** W  Guest Lecture: Gender and Modernism, Prof. Rowena Kennedy Epstein; Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway

**July 3** M  Woolf, Mrs. Dalloway, continued; Michael Cunningham, The Hours; Dillard, “Chapter Two;” Visit Regent’s Park

**July 5** W  Cunningham, The Hours, continued; Dillard, “Chapter Three”
Tour of Virginia Woolf’s Bloomsbury

**July 10** M  In-Class Midterm Exam

**July 12** W  Malika Booker visit, Pepper Seed

**July 17** M  Zadie Smith, NW; Dillard, “Chapter Four”

**July 19** W  Smith, NW, continued; Dillard, “Chapter Five” and “Chapter Six”

**July 24** M  Writing workshops; Dillard, “Chapter Seven”

**July 26** W  Final Paper Presentations/FINAL PAPER DUE