



ENG 448/548 – Major Figures – Spring 2017

Prof. Josh Epstein (jepstein@pdx.edu)

Class Sessions: Tues. & Thurs., 4:40-6:30 p.m., Urban Center Bldg. 304

Office Hours: Wed., 11:30-12:30, Neuberger 433, or by appointment.

HENRY JAMES AND JOSEPH CONRAD

Two canonical writers, Henry James and Joseph Conrad both write as outsiders: American and Polish expatriates to Britain; a closeted, (mostly) celibate gay man and a neurasthenic, gun-smuggling sailor who learned English as his third language. Both were gifted writers of genre fiction—gothic ghost stories, swashbuckling adventure novels—and experimental stylists who laid the ground for literary modernism. And both continue to be critically reassessed. James, long considered effete and detached from the world, now reads as a figure preoccupied by anxieties about nation and cosmopolitanism, psychology and sexuality, material consumption and new media. Conrad, long read as an inheritor of James's innovations in form, likewise grows continually more contentious. Is he a "bloody racist," as Chinua Achebe wrote, or a complex skeptic, open to a range of ethical and imaginative frames of reference? We will also engage with various

critical methods that constellate around Conrad and James; still, their reputations must not overshadow the writing itself. As Lambert Strether puts it in *The Ambassadors*, "These impressions . . . have had their abundant message for me." I believe they will for you, as well.

REQUIRED TEXTS: Please get these editions, as physical copies.

- Henry James, *Tales of Henry James*, 2nd ed. (Norton; ISBN 978-0393977103)
- James, *What Maisie Knew* (Penguin Classics; ISBN 978-0141441375)
- James, *The Ambassadors* (Norton Critical; ISBN 978-0393963144)
- Joseph Conrad, *Typhoon and Other Tales* (Oxford; ISBN 978-0199539031)
- Conrad, *Lord Jim* (Norton Critical; ISBN 978-0393963359)
- Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (Norton Critical; ISBN 978-0393937442)
- Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford; 978-0-199691340)
- Online readings posted to D2L; print these out and bring them to class.
- Alfred Hitchcock, *Sabotage* (linked to D2L).

ON LIBRARY RESERVE: These books are on 24-hour reserve under ENG 548—primarily for the graduate student oral presentations, but anyone can check them out.

- John Carlos Rowe, *The Other Henry James* (PS2127.P6 R69 1998)
- Ross Posnock, *The Trial of Curiosity* (PS2124.P63 1991)
- Tessa Hadley, *Henry James and the Imagination of Pleasure* (PS2127.I4 H33 2002)
- Michael Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality* (PR888.C47 L48 1991)
- Christopher GoGwilt, *The Invention of the West* (PR6005.O4 Z7275 1995)
- Mark Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda* (PR888.M63 W65 2006)

READING LOAD: James and Conrad make heavy demands on readers' concentration and endurance. In particular, weeks 4-5 (*The Ambassadors*) and weeks 8-9 (*Lord Jim*) are likely to be intense. You are expected to read every word of every text, on schedule, as assigned. **Plan ahead and leave yourself time to read slowly.**

REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR UNDERGRADUATES (ENG 448)

Participation (15%): *Attend every class, having read the materials thoroughly and annotated the text, prepared with ideas, questions, and passages to discuss.* Participating in class requires you to work out your own ideas by reading the materials carefully, listening *actively*, thinking hard, and voicing cogent arguments, rather than passively accepting those of others. I know not everyone is a "talker," but everyone can find ways to get involved (e.g. writing down questions and ideas before class). Note: thoughtful, focused questions are just as useful as answers, as long as they're rooted in careful preparation. *Ad hoc* homework, in-class writings, or quizzes may contribute to your participation grade. Participation grading standards are posted to D2L.

**** Attendance:** I do not distinguish between excused/unexcused absences. If you miss class, *you don't need to email me to explain or apologize.* I do not think less of students for missing class; life happens. That said, if you're not here, you're not participating—regardless of the reason. Undergrads are permitted two "free" absences, intended as a safety net for emergencies and illnesses. If you miss 3-4 classes, you will earn *at best* a final participation grade of C, likely lower. Upon your fifth absence, regardless of the cause, you will earn a final participation grade of zero. **No student can pass ENG 448 having missed seven or more classes.**

D2L Postings (30%): Every week (more or less), by 11:59pm on Saturday, you'll post a D2L response (500+ words) on the prior week's readings and discussions. I may sometimes post prompts for these responses, but you'll usually be on your own to generate topics—a good starting point is to take an intriguing question from class and develop it through *close reading of language*. Don't summarize plot; go beyond subjective reactions ("I liked X," "I felt Y," etc.); go beyond describing characters' feelings or motives; avoid empty generalizations ("XYZ raises interesting issues about society..."). Focus in on a topic, cite textual examples, and analyze how the language of the text develops larger themes. Treat D2L posts as formal writing assignments.

You may omit three postings without penalty. For that reason, D2L postings will not be accepted late under any circumstances. If (when) D2L malfunctions, please email the response to me *before the due date* and then post it once D2L is up and running again.

Pastiche Paper (20%): Write a short story or vignette (1000-1200 words) in the style of Henry James, attentive to James's techniques of perspective, voice, imagery, style, etc. To this vignette, attach an analysis (600-800 words) of your own story, explaining what aspects of James's writing you've illuminated, and citing examples from *James's texts* that relate to the techniques or themes of your pastiche. The plot of this story is up to you; you might tackle a Jamesian topic, or an ironically un-Jamesian one (you would then want to analyze that irony). Use this assignment to think critically about James's use of language and form, and the *effects* of those choices.

Oral Presentation (10%): Individually or in groups, you'll deliver a presentation in two parts (25 minutes total): (1) Lead the class through a close reading of a short passage (a paragraph or so, from somewhere in the middle of the day's reading), analyzing form, style, word choice, figurative devices, etc. and interpreting the passage's significance to the text (what larger themes, questions, implications, formal patterns, etc. does it develop). (2) Offer 2-3 focused yet open-ended discussion questions from which our discussion can develop. Don't worry if you can't cover everything in 25 minutes; I'll pick up where you leave off. You'll turn in a hard copy of an outline for this presentation. *Please don't use PowerPoint* (we'll discuss why in class).

Final Exam (25%): In lieu of a final paper, we will work toward an extensive final exam with both take-home and in-class components. For the take-home, you will synthesize a few D2L postings and engage with *two* of the supplemental critical readings marked with a § on the schedule (you don't have to do *all* of these readings, but do at least two of them). The in-class exam (no books/notes) will comprise essays and passage IDs.

The in-class exam will be held on **Tues., June 13, from 5:30 pm-7:20 pm**. This date and time are set by the Registrar's Office and cannot be adjusted for individual students. If you need an alternate exam for a disability accommodation, *please contact SHAC Testing Services* (www.pdx.edu/shac/testing-services) *several weeks in advance of the exam*. Alternate exams should be scheduled to overlap with the official class exam time.

REQUIRED COURSEWORK FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS (ENG 548)

Participation (20%): Grad students are expected to take a leadership role in discussion. I may occasionally ask you to post to D2L to supplement (not replace) those discussions. *Grad students should not EVER miss class. If you miss two classes, you will earn a participation grade of F. After three absences, or continuous lack of preparation, I will ask you to withdraw.*

Critical Presentation (20%): Assignment sheet posted to D2L. Deliver a presentation (15-20 minutes) about a scholarly book (see p.1), and then lead discussion on how that book applies to our primary texts (another 15-20 minutes). Some of these books are specifically about our course texts, some are not, in which case it is your job to make a case for how the criticism applies. Your task is to offer a summary of the book's main arguments and concepts, and then to open up discussion with a few focused questions that will help your classmates apply the concepts from the critical book (which they won't have read) to James/Conrad (which they will have read).

Final Project: The endgame will be a seminar paper on a James text and/or a Conrad text, using meticulous analysis of language to develop a focused, ambitious argument that illuminates a larger historical, aesthetic, or theoretical concern. Situate your thesis in relation to previous scholarship in the field. This project will develop in a few stages:

- **Topic proposal:** You will post a topic proposal (300-500 words) to D2L, formulating a research question. Explain the main question your project will ask—the problem it will seek to solve—about Conrad/James, and why that question is worth exploring.
- **"Position Paper" and Seminar (20%):** This pair of assignments, designed to set up your final essay, models the format of the Modernist Studies Association conference, where scholars, often in the early stages of a larger project, circulate short papers and meet to discuss them. Assignment sheets, and samples, will be posted to D2L.
 - **Position Paper + Annotated Bibliography:** The *position paper* (1700-2000 words, MLA) begins to work through the critical questions of your final project. Even if some of the "snags" of the project are not fully figured out, start developing a rigorous investigation of your topic. Attach an *annotated bibliography* of at least four scholarly research sources, annotating each entry with a detailed (100-word) explanation of the source's arguments and contributions to your project.
 - **Seminar:** During the last class session, the grad students will discuss the position papers, offering feedback and developing connections among them. Before the

seminar, you should read the other papers, and for each paper, come up with 2-3 questions and 2-3 points of connection to your own paper.

- **Final Essay (40%).** Develop the position paper into a fleshed-out scholarly argument (3500ish words, double-spaced, MLA format). Consult and cite *at least five scholarly research sources* in addition to the primary texts, and include an MLA Works Cited page (no annotations necessary). **Follow MLA guidelines to the letter**, in all matters of citation, quotation, and manuscript format. Remember Van Halen's "no brown M&M's"; failure to format correctly is a sign of inattention to bigger details.

POLICIES, RESOURCES, AND GRADING (448 + 548)

Office Hours/Email: I am happy—nay, eager—to meet with you to discuss any aspect of this course. You are cordially invited to office hours, or to arrange a different time to meet. You are also welcome to email with quick questions, though issues that take hours of emailing back-and-forth can usually be resolved in a 10-minute conversation. Emails multiply like Tribbles (bit.ly/tribblesgalore) and are not well-suited for complex or sensitive discussions. In general, if your inquiry will require more than 2-3 sentences in response, we should speak in person. *Please treat emails as courteous professional correspondence.* Include a subject heading, a polite salutation (not "Hey"), and sign-off; write in grammatical English and a respectful tone.

Technology: Please do not use cell phones, iPads, laptops, etc. during class. Also please note that you are required to ask permission before recording class sessions.

Class Cancellations: If the University is closed due to weather or Apocalypse, please check D2L and your @pdx.edu email for assignments and arrangements. For emergency readiness information, see www.pdx.edu/environmental-health-safety/fire-and-life-safety .

Late Work: Deadlines are binding. I cannot, alas, tailor deadlines for each individual student's convenience. Papers (not D2L postings) may, at my discretion, be accepted late, with a penalty of at least half a grade per calendar day. Exceptions will be made, and extensions granted, only for documented medical or family emergencies. *Technology issues don't qualify as emergencies.*

Disability Accommodations: The Disability Resource Center (www.pdx.edu/drc; 116 Smith Memorial Student Union, drc@pdx.edu; 503.725.4150) helps to provide reasonable accommodations for students who encounter barriers in the classroom. If you have, or think you may have, a disability that will affect your work in this class, please contact the DRC *as soon as possible*, and then speak with me individually. Please note that while I am committed to making reasonable accommodations for all students, it is ultimately your responsibility to make the appropriate arrangements as soon as possible. For exam accommodations, see above (p.3).

Anti-Discrimination: At PSU, we work to create a culture of professionalism and mutual respect. I do not permit personal attacks or harassment on any grounds, including race, gender, sexual/affective orientation, religion, national origin, or disability. You may report any incident of discrimination or harassment, including sexual harassment, to the Office of Equity and Compliance (www.pdx.edu/diversity/office-of-equity-compliance) or the Office of the Dean of Student Life (www.pdx.edu/dos/student-conduct-at-psu). As a faculty member, I am obligated to report any instances of harassment, violence, or prohibited discrimination. If you wish to discuss

these concerns confidentially with an employee who does not have reporting obligations, please visit www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/get-help . For information on Title IX, complete the required D2L module *Creating a Safe Campus* (www.pdx.edu/sexual-assault/safe-campus-module).

Academic Integrity: I am doggedly serious about plagiarism, cheating, multiple submission (submitting the same work in multiple courses), and other violations of the Code of Conduct (<http://bit.ly/PSUcode>). Everything you submit must represent your own work, written specifically for this course. Any use of another person's words or ideas must be fully cited. *Any academic misconduct, no matter how "minor," will result in a grade of zero and a formal disciplinary report.* If you are unsure about what you're doing, ask me *before* submitting the assignment. Uncertainty about the rules is not an excuse for violating them.

Advising: The English Department's academic adviser for undergraduates is Roxanne James (<http://www.pdx.edu/english/undergraduate-advising>). For grad students, your main contacts will be Prof. Christine Rose (Literary Studies director), Matt Swetnam (Program Coordinator), and your faculty mentor or focus area director.

Grading: *Grades are assigned to the work, not to the student.* All work is held to the same standards, regardless of the student's life circumstances, work obligations, etc. Assignments (especially written work) will be assessed according to the following standards.

Undergraduate (ENG 448): Note that *C means satisfactory*; C-range grades are not indictments of your abilities or effort. To earn an A requires work of outstanding insight and sophistication. Each assignment starts at zero and *works up to* the grade that it earns:

- F = Failure (*fails to satisfy expectations*; doesn't fulfill the assignment)
- D = Inferior (*meets expectations with deficiencies*; essentially underdeveloped or off-target)
- C = Satisfactory (*meets expectations adequately*; ideas, arguments, and writing are competent, if unevenly or thinly developed)
- B = Good (*meets expectations with merit*; solid, thoughtful, and thorough, if not striking)
- A = Excellent (*exceeds expectations* for originality, sophistication, depth, and elegance)

Graduate (ENG 548): Anything lower than a C represents work that falls short of satisfactory graduate-level writing, research, or scholarship (if feasible, I will ask the student to revise and resubmit the assignment).

- A = Excellent (ambitious, insightful, well-researched, well-argued, well-written, etc.)
- A- = Very good, approaching excellence, with minor wobbles of argumentation or development
- B+ = Highly satisfactory, short of excellent (promising but unevenly developed or presented)
- B = Satisfactory (fulfills the assignment but with underdeveloped arguments or erratic writing.)
- B- = Marginally satisfactory, bordering on substandard.
- C+/C = Acceptable but below standard (bare minimum of graduate-level scholarship or writing.)

Please let me know if you have any questions—with the caveat that **the best way to earn good grades is to focus on the work itself**. I don't negotiate grades, but am happy to meet *in person* (not over email) to discuss strategies for improving your work.

No Incompletes or X ("No Basis") grades will be posted for this course.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

THJ = *Tales of Henry James* (Norton Critical Ed.)

TOT = *Typhoon and Other Tales* (Oxford ed.)

Culler = *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*

(x) = uploaded to D2L as PDF files; print off and bring to class.

§ = Supplemental critical readings, **all required for grad students.**

Undergrads: do any two of these supplemental readings (see Final Exam, p.3).

Readings due **before class** on the days indicated.

T 4/4 Intros

R 4/6 "The Art of Fiction" (*THJ* 375-94); "The Real Thing" (189-211). Culler, "Narrative" (83-94). Also look over the James chronology in *What Maisie Knew* (vii-xii).

Sat., 4/8 Undergrads: D2L posting, on "The Real Thing," due 11:59 p.m. No late work.

T 4/11 In *THJ*: "The Beast in the Jungle" (303-341); "On 'The Beast in the Jungle'" (417-9). Culler, on "the subject" (pp.109-20), psychoanalysis (142-3), and queer theory (145-6). § Eve Sedgwick, "The Beast in the Closet" (*THJ*)

R 4/13 In *THJ*: "In the Cage" (229-302); "On 'In the Cage'" (414-7). **Grad Presentation: Rowe, *The Other Henry James***

§ Rowe, "Gender, Sexuality, and Work in *In the Cage*" (*THJ*).

Sat 4/15 Undergrads: D2L posting, on "Beast" or "In the Cage," due by 11:59 p.m.

T 4/18 *What Maisie Knew*, through ch.18. Culler, pp.43-55 (cultural studies), entries on Marxism and cultural materialism (143-144).

R 4/20 *Maisie*, chs. 19-25. **Grad Presentation: Posnock, *The Trial of Curiosity***

Sat 4/22 Undergrads: D2L posting, on *Maisie*, due by 11:59 pm.

T 4/25 Finish *Maisie*; editor's intro (xiii-xxvii); *The Ambassadors*, Books 1-2.

§ Optional but recommended: Hertz, "Dora's Secrets, Freud's Techniques" (x)

R 4/27 *The Ambassadors*, Books 3-6.

Sat 4/29 Undergrads: by 11:59 pm, D2L posting on *The Ambassadors*.

T 5/2 *The Ambassadors*, Books 7-11.

R 5/4 Finish *The Ambassadors*; read James' preface (pp.1-15) and Watt, "The First Paragraph of *The Ambassadors*" (in Norton Critical edition; required for grads and undergrads).

Grad Presentation: Hadley, *Henry James and the Imagination of Pleasure*.

If you feel like getting in the weeds, I also recommend the material on James' revisions of the novel (354-70).

Sat 5/6 Undergrads: Pastiche Paper due, 11:59 p.m., D2L Dropbox. No D2L postings.

T 5/9 Read James, "The New Novel" (x); Conrad, *Typhoon* (*TOT* 1-74); "Henry James: An Appreciation" (x); Preface to *Nigger of the Narcissus* (x; yes, the title is very unfortunate). Also look over the "Chronology" (*TOT* xliii-l).

- R 5/11 Conrad, "An Outpost of Progress" (x); *The Secret Sharer* (TOT 177-217); Culler on postcolonialism (144-5). **Grad Presentation: Levenson, *Modernism and the Fate of Individuality***
- Sat 5/13 *Undergrads: by 11:59 pm, D2L post on "Outpost," "Typhoon" or "The Secret Sharer."*
- T 5/16 *Lord Jim* (through ch.20). Please also note the division of monthly installments (listed in our edition of the novel); like many of our novels, *Lord Jim* was published serially.
- R 5/18 *Lord Jim* (through ch.30)
- Sat 5/20 *Undergrads: D2L posting due, 11:59 p.m.* Discuss *Lord Jim*, on its own or in comparison to one of the stories.
- T 5/23 *Lord Jim*, finish.
- R 5/25 *The Secret Agent*, through ch.5. Recommended: excerpts by Kropotkin (260-263) and Nordau (263-268). **Grad Presentation: GoGwilt, *The Invention of the West***
§ Read Esty, chapter from *Unseasonable Youth* (x) OR any one of the essays by Jameson, Miller, or De Koven (in our edition of *Lord Jim*).
- Sat 5/27 *Undergrads: D2L posting due, 11:59 p.m.*
Grad students: paper topic proposal to D2L forum, due by 11:59 p.m. 300+ words.
- T 5/30 *The Secret Agent*, finish; read author's note (233-238). Briefly discuss final exam.
- R 6/1 *Sabotage* (watch before class). **Grad Student Presentation: Wollaeger, *Modernism, Media, and Propaganda***
§ Any one of the critical essays on *The Secret Agent* from our edition of the novel; OR Wollaeger, "Killing Stevie" (x).
- Sat 6/3 *Last D2L posting for undergrads, due 11:59 p.m.*
Grad students: position paper due, 11:59 p.m.
- T 6/6 **Undergrads: Final Exam Review.** Take-home exam materials distributed in class. (Grad students: no attendance required; use this time to read your classmates' papers.)
- R 6/8 **Grad students: Mock Seminar.** (Undergrads: no attendance required. Please use this time to work on your exam.) Before the seminar, read your peers' position papers. For each paper, write down 2-3 comments, questions, or suggestions for development. Also, for each paper, write down 2-3 points of connection to your own paper.

Final Paper for grad students: Due Tues., June 13, by 11:59 p.m. No late work accepted.

Final Exam for Undergrads: Tues., June 13, from 5:30 pm-7:20 pm.

Take-home exam due to D2L Dropbox before the in-class exam begins (5:30). No late work accepted.
