

English 102.401
Secrecy and Sexuality in the Modern Novel
MWF 12 VANC B11

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Office hours: Tues 2-5

Literary critics have traditionally seen difficulty and abstraction as signs of aesthetic value. As a result, many of the books that we consider "great literature" are noted as much for what they don't say as for what they do. In this course we read several "difficult" modern classics, paying close attention to the tactics of secrecy, ambiguity, and indirection that they employ. Rather than reading the blanks and silences in these texts as purely formal elements of a modernist style, we read them against the grain and historically. Placing these texts in the context of late-nineteenth- and twentieth-century crises around illicit sexuality (homosexuality, pederasty, incest), we ask what, if anything, they are hiding.

Required Books (available at Penn Book Center, 34th and Market)

James Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room*
Willa Cather, *The Professor's House*
Sigmund Freud, *Dora: An Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*
Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*
James Weldon Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*
Jackie Kay, *Trumpet*
Nella Larsen, *Passing*
Herman Melville, *Billy Budd*
Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*
Philip Roth, *The Human Stain*
Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*
Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
Jeanette Winterson, *Written on the Body*

Course Requirements

This is a writing-intensive course, and your active participation is essential to the success of the course. You will be expected to attend all course meetings, participate in discussion, and take the process of revision very seriously. You will be meeting with your TA during the semester to discuss your writing; you should also plan to meet with the professor.

Class attendance and participation	10%
Some short writing exercises throughout the semester	10%
2 "close reading" papers (4-5 pages) (draft and revision)	30%
1 longer final paper (10-12 pages) (draft and revision)	30%
Final Exam	20%

Course Schedule

- Mon Jan 10 Course introduction
- Wed Jan 12 Freud, *Dora* (to p. 55, end of section II)
- Fri Jan 14 NO CLASS TODAY (sections begin next week)
- Mon Jan 17 NO CLASS—MLK DAY
- Wed Jan 19 Freud, *Dora* (to end)
- Fri Jan 21 First section meeting: locations to be announced
- Mon Jan 24 Wilde, *Dorian Gray* (to end of chapter IX)
- Wed Jan 26 Wilde, *Dorian Gray* (to end)
- Fri Jan 28 Meeting
- Mon Jan 31 Stevenson, *Jekyll and Hyde*
- Wed Feb 2 Stevenson, *Jekyll and Hyde*
- Fri Feb 4 Meeting
FIRST PAPER DUE TODAY
- Mon Feb 7 Melville, *Billy Budd: Sailor*
- Wed Feb 9 Melville, *Billy Budd: Sailor*
- Fri Feb 11 Meeting
- Mon Feb 14 James, *The Turn of the Screw*
- Wed Feb 16 James, *The Turn of the Screw*
- Fri Feb 18 Meeting
REVISION OF FIRST PAPER DUE TODAY
- Mon Feb 21 Cather, *The Professor's House* (to end of "The Family")
- Wed Feb 23 Cather, *The Professor's House* (to end)
- Fri Feb 25 Meeting

Mon Feb 28 Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (to end of Ch. VI--p. 102)

Wed Mar 2 Johnson, *Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (to end)

Fri Mar 4 NO CLASS TODAY

SPRING BREAK

Mon Mar 14 Nella Larsen, *Passing*

Wed Mar 16 NO CLASS TODAY

Fri Mar 18 Meeting
SECOND PAPER DUE TODAY

Mon Mar 21 Nabokov, *Lolita* (Part I, to p. 142)

Wed Mar 23 Nabokov, *Lolita* (to end)

Fri Mar 25 Meeting

Mon Mar 28 Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (Part I, to p. 71)

Wed Mar 30 Baldwin, *Giovanni's Room* (to end)

Fri Apr 1 Meeting
REVISION OF SECOND PAPER DUE TODAY

Mon Apr 4 Winterson, *Written on the Body* (to p. 111)

Wed Apr 6 Winterson, *Written on the Body* (to end)

Fri Apr 8 Meeting

Mon Apr 11 Kay, *Trumpet* (to p. 170—end of “Interview Exclusive”)

Wed Apr 13 Kay, *Trumpet* (to end)

Fri Apr 15 Meeting
FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY

Mon Apr 18 Roth, *The Human Stain*

Wed Apr 20 Roth, *The Human Stain*
Course wrap-up

Fri Apr 22 Wrap-up and exam review

Fri Apr 29 FINAL VERSION OF FINAL PAPER DUE TODAY

Wed May 4 FINAL EXAM
 8:30-10:30 am
 Location to be announced