

MASTERWORKS

THE GREAT GATSBY

MLS 553M-1
Meeting Day: Tuesday
Summer, 2013
Time: 6:45-9:25
Meeting Place: CSS 167
Meeting Dates:
5/21, (5/28), 6/4, 6/11, 6/18

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Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter—tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther. . . . And one fine morning—So we beat on, boats, against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

Texts:

Primary:

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York, Scribner, 1925 edition, 1995 publication.

Secondary:

Curnutt, Kirk. *The Cambridge Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Cambridge UP, 2007, ISBN 0-521-67600-2

Gatsby chapter of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*

<http://site.ebrary.com/lib/rollins/docDetail.action?docID=10039134&p00=azar%20nafisi>

*Another good source book, though not required, is *F. Scott Fitzgerald in Context*, Cambridge Press, ISBN: 9781107009196. It was just released in March and is expensive, (\$99.00), so don't feel obligated to purchase, but this text does provide wide context to Fitzgerald's world. Our library now owns one e-book copy: Call Number: PS3511 .I9 Z6153 2013 ISBN: 9781139625012 (electronic bk.)

Course Goals and Objectives:

The Great Gatsby ends with the beautifully poetic and hopeful lines written above, and by making this passage the focus of such intense study as this course provides, we help corroborate the work's validity. Indeed, a subjective list of the one hundred most

important twentieth century novels deems *Gatsby* in the top five, and one of our goals is to assess reasons why this might be true. Fitzgerald's arguably most critically acclaimed work is a relatively easy read on the surface but opens itself to layers of meaning and thematic possibility that only continue to proliferate. We will focus on the following areas of investigation: the novel's language, the importance of historical setting, Fitzgerald's literary contributions, character significance, symbolic relevance, critical response, and thematic possibility. Above all, we will emphasize the sheer beauty of the work in its totality and our responses to it as seasoned readers.

Course Requirements:

1. Attendance and punctuality:

Because we meet only five times (see note below) you should plan to be in full attendance. If you are unable to be present for **all sessions**, reconsider taking the course. One absence or significant lateness may result in a grade deduction. More than one missed class would necessitate dropping the course.

*In lieu of the May 28th meeting, you will be asked to view outside of class Baz Luhrmann's new film release of *The Great Gatsby* as well as one other version. (Below is the complete list but note that #1 is lost and #2 is hard to find, so #3 and #4 are the likely choices).

1. *The Great Gatsby*, in 1926, by [Herbert Brenon](#) – a [silent movie](#) of a stage adaptation, starring [Warner Baxter](#), [Lois Wilson](#), and [William Powell](#). It is a famous example of a [lost film](#). Reviews suggest that it may have been the most faithful adaptation of the novel, but a trailer of the film at [National Archives](#) is all that is known to exist.^[49] [Gatsby 1927 movie trailer](#)

http://gothamist.com/2013/04/09/heres_the_1929_film_adaptation_of_t.php

2. *The Great Gatsby*, in 1949, by [Elliott Nugent](#) – Starring [Alan Ladd](#), [Betty Field](#), and [Shelley Winters](#); for copyright reasons, this film is not readily available.^[49]
3. *The Great Gatsby*, in 1974, by [Jack Clayton](#) – the most famous screen version, starring [Sam Waterston](#) as narrator Nick Carraway, with [Mia Farrow](#) as Daisy Buchanan and [Robert Redford](#) as Gatsby, with a [script](#) by [Francis Ford Coppola](#).^[49]
4. *The Great Gatsby*, in 2000, by [Robert Markowitz](#) – a made-for-TV movie starring [Toby Stephens](#), [Paul Rudd](#), and [Mira Sorvino](#).
5. *The Great Gatsby*, in 2013, by [Baz Luhrmann](#) – Starring [Leonardo DiCaprio](#), [Carey Mulligan](#), [Tobey Maguire](#), [Amitabh Bachhan](#). This adaptation of the novel was released on May 10, 2013.

2. Preparation and participation:

Active participation is important in this discussion-based course. In order to fully contribute, **come to the first class having already finished *The Great Gatsby***. It is also good to have read the secondary collection as well, but not essential. Since many of you experienced this novel some time ago, probably in high school, it is important to have a fresh visitation, and I recommend reading the work perhaps

more than once to have it fully in your grasp. Of course, this also requires active involvement by highlighting and keeping a journal of questions, comments, ideas, and notations about passages you find of particular relevance or interest.

3. Grade breakdown:

Your grade will be divided into the following three portions:

1. Full class attendance and active participation—40%
2. The two response papers—10%
3. Final critical analysis paper—50%

Course Policies:

- 1. Papers:** All papers are expected at the beginning of the class on the date in which they are due.
 - a. **Response papers:** These will be assigned topics to be covered in no more than five pages. Each will count equally one half toward the response portion of your grade.
 - b. **Critical analysis paper:** This paper will be on a topic of your choosing in association with a particular vein of critical analysis. The paper should reference outside sources and be approximately ten-to twelve pages in length. The paper should follow proper MLA format and will count for one half of your final grade.

Plagiarism in any form will result in an F for the paper, and potential failure for the course.

Syllabus

May 21

Introduction to course, Fitzgerald, the Jazz Age, and *The Great Gatsby*.

Reading: Come to class with novel already read. (If possible, also read the Cambridge companion beforehand)

Discussion: Overview of the novel's language, importance of historical setting, elements of style, character significance, symbolic relevance, and thematic possibility.

May 28

View Baz Luhrmann's *The Great Gatsby* on your own outside of class as well as one other film version prior to May 28.

*See list of film versions above.

Response Paper I, submitted electronically by May 31 if possible, or before is even better).

Write a critique of Luhrmann's film focusing on its success or failure weighed against such elements as relationship to the novel, effective storytelling, development of character, cinematic techniques, etc.

June 4

Reading: The *Gatsby* chapter of Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. (See link above for reading.)

Discussion: *Gatsby's* universal or cultural relevance.

Response Paper II due. Write your own defense or criticism of Jay Gatsby as a heroic representation of the American Dream, whatever you take that to mean, and your view of his value as a representative of American values as viewed from both inside and outside our culture.

June 11

Reading: *The Cambridge Introduction to F. Scott Fitzgerald*

Discussion: Critical response to *The Great Gatsby*
*Each student should bring in three articles offering a valuable perspective on the novel and should be prepared to summarize and discuss these. Look for diversity of subject and at least one piece should be published within the last two-five years.

June 18

Colloquy: Presentation of student research and critical analysis. Discussion of *The Great Gatsby's* future.

*Changes to syllabus may need to be made but will be announced at least one week in advance.