English W3225, Fall 2011: Virginia Woolf

Edward Mendelson                                      Office: Philosophy 614, Tue 4-6, Thu 1-2
207 Mathematics, TTh 11:00-12:15                 em36@columbia.edu, x4-6417

Requirements: Three brief papers (700-800 words each); a one-hour final exam (with two hours to write it); regular attendance. For full details, see the other side of the page.

Sep. 6, 8  Introductory (please read “Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown,” available as a PDF via Courseworks)

13, 15  Jacob’s Room [1922] (Penguin)
20, 22  Mrs Dalloway [1925] (Harcourt)
27, 29  Mrs Dalloway

Oct. 4, 6  Mrs Dalloway

11, 13  Mrs Dalloway

Oct. 18: first paper due

18, 20  To the Lighthouse [1927] (Harcourt)
25, 27  To the Lighthouse

Oct. 4, 6  Mrs Dalloway

Nov. 1, 3  To the Lighthouse

Nov. 10: second paper due

10  Orlando [1928] (Harcourt)
15, 17  Orlando and A Room of One’s Own [1929] (Harcourt)
22  The Waves [1931] (Harcourt)

29, Dec. 1  The Waves; Between the Acts [1941] (Harcourt)

Dec. 6, 8  Between the Acts

Please see the other side of the page for details of the course requirements.
Details about the requirements:

Three brief, intelligent, and interesting papers (700 to 800 words maximum), due on October 18, November 10, and December 6. Any paper longer than 900 words will get a grade of F. Do your own thinking; don’t repeat the professor’s ideas. Each paper must begin (immediately below the title) by quoting a brief passage (three or four lines at most) from one of the books assigned in the course, and then, in the opening sentences, discussing that passage. The paper should then go on to expand on the meaning and larger significance of the passage in terms of the work as a whole or in all of Virginia Woolf’s work. Quote the brief passage, by itself, between the title of your paper and your opening sentence. Of course, later in the paper you may also quote the same passage (or anything else by Virginia Woolf or any other writer), but the quotation must appear between your title and first sentence.

Your paper must begin by interpreting or otherwise illuminating specific words from the quotation (not merely by paraphrasing or summarizing the quotation), perhaps with reference to the themes and concerns of the entire book. This discussion of the actual words must begin in the first sentence of your paper (of course it should continue into later sentences, but it must begin in the first sentence). Do not begin the paper with vague, empty, boring, English-paper-style waffle or fluff of the kind that you may have learned to write in high-school or in other college classes.

Possibly one or two ten-minute surprise quizzes; these will not seriously affect your grade.

The final exam should take no more than one hour to complete, but you will have two hours (starting at 9 a.m.), not the standard three, in the same room as the lectures. The “projected university examination schedule” indicates that the exam will take place on Tuesday, Dec. 20th, at 9 a.m. The university may change that date, so be careful to check it later in the term.

Absolutely no smartphones, cell phones, tablets, laptops, netbooks, messaging devices, digital assistants, iPods, MP3 players, CD players, video players, game consoles, radios, televisions, set-top boxes, still cameras, video cameras, sound recorders, headphones, virtual-reality headsets, or global positioning devices; absolutely no electronic devices of any kind unless required for medical reasons. Anyone who writes, sends, or reads a text message during class will be banished. Absolutely no baseball caps; no head coverings of any kind unless required by your religion or for medical reasons. No passive-aggressive questions (for example, the kind that begin “My problem with this book is” or “Speaking as a”). Bathroom visits during class are strongly discouraged.