

358:206 Women and Modernity  
Short Paper Writing Assignment

In the past few weeks, we have discussed the major elements of modernism as a response to and reflection of a rapidly changing society. From the British tradition, we have read Virginia Woolf's *Jacob's Room*, an example of high-modernism, or the most abstract and experimental form of modernist writing. We have also discussed Woolf's feminist writing, focusing on her understanding of women's changing roles in political and artistic life. Using your knowledge of the class materials and discussions, write an analytical essay in which you comment on one technical element of Woolf's prose style (listed below; using several examples from the novel) and connect it to an interpretation of the novel. Some questions you might ask yourself: What is the impact of using this style? How does it affect the major themes of the novel? What is your interpretation of the reading?

Elements include:

- Character
- Voice (narrator)
- Focalization
- Abstraction
- Metaphors or symbolism
- Chronology (plot v. story)

Due at the beginning of class on **Tuesday, November 21**. Responses should be 3-4 pages, typed, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 point font, and with one-inch margins. See syllabus for our late paper policy.

You should follow the conventions of an academic paper in both organization and tone. The tone of your paper (word choice, syntax, punctuation, general style) should be appropriate for an academic setting. Your paper should contain an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement at the end, body paragraphs containing topic sentences and evidence in support of claim, logical transitions between paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph that states the broader implications of your argument (do not use "In conclusion"). Your "evidence" will likely be significant quotations, details, patterns, or passages from the text, cited appropriately (using page numbers for all evidence used). Use quotation marks to denote ANY writing that is not your own. You will only be working with the novel for this paper. You may not quote word for word from the study materials provided to you or any other sources. All information must be in your own words, unless it is a direct quote from the text.

Six Requests:

1. Provide a thematically rich thesis statement. Usually, your thesis will be the last sentence or two of your introductory paragraph.
2. Work on developing strong topic sentences that explicitly articulate the claim or insight of a particular paragraph and serve as supporting parts or stages of your overall argument.

3. Quote from the text. Your essays need to provide examples demonstrating your points. They also need to be enlivened by drawing your readers into the stories you have to tell about the works of fiction.
4. Reread. And reread again. At least sixty percent of the time you devote to this essay should be spent re-reading the text. Keep asking yourself “what else?” and “where else?” Try to get as rich and inclusive interpretation of the stories as possible. Don’t settle for a single telling quotation, but find others that are like it that can be used for elaboration, clarification, and qualification.
5. Search for the nuances. Your responses should not fall into either/or categorizations, but rather should focus on subtle differences or surprising similarities. I would be as happy to see you open up a problem that cannot be solved as to settle conclusively on an interpretation that fails to admit of its limits.
6. Bring some energy to your writing. Tell a good story, back it up with evidence from the text, and don’t assume that there is a right answer to any of it. Show your thought and provide evidence for it.