

Course Syllabus

Course Information

Course Number/Section	LIT 4329.001
Course Title	F. Scott Fitzgerald
Term	spring 2019
Days & Times	M, W, 2:30 – 3:45 PM

Professor Contact Information

Professor	Dr. Milton Cohen
Office Phone	972-883-2029
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Office Location	JO 5.518
Office Hours	M, W, 10 – 11 AM

Course Pre-requisites

completion of lower-division literature requirements

Course Description

Although Scott Fitzgerald's career lasted barely two decades, it was long enough for him to witness his meteoric fame in the early 1920s collapse into near-oblivion by the end of the 1930s. His last royalty check in 1940 was for \$13.13. Yet, barely ten years after his premature death that year, his critical and popular acclaim had again reversed itself and has remained high ever since. While critics may debate whether his importance belongs more to his time or to the ages, no one disputes that he created at least one masterpiece, *The Great Gatsby*, and many superb stories. What would have pleased him even more was knowing that his works are now required reading in high school and college courses in American literature. *The Great Gatsby* alone sells about 300,000 copies a year.

This course surveys his life and major works—five novels (one unfinished), numerous short stories and a play—as well as several autobiographical articles. Among the questions we'll consider are: the relation between his popular fiction (the lucrative *Saturday Evening Post* short stories) and what he considered his serious work; between Scott and his wife, Zelda, as rival authors (her contributions to his work; his alleged stifling of her career); his masterful literary style (and the shifting influences on it); and an assessment of his place in the American literature of his time.

Required Texts

- Scott Fitzgerald, *This Side of Paradise* (Scribner)
- , *The Beautiful and Damned* (Scribner)
- , *The Vegetable* [pdf file on internet]
- , *The Great Gatsby: The Fully Authorized Text* (Scribner)
- , *Tender is the Night* (Scribner)
- , *The Love of the Last Tycoon: a Western* (Scribner)
- , *The Short Stories of F. Scott Fitzgerald: a new collection*, ed. Matthew Bruccoli, (Scribner)
- , *The Crack-Up* (New Directions)

Matthew Bruccoli, *Some Sort of Epic Grandeur: The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, (rev.) (U. of South Carolina Press)
packet of readings (available only at Off-Campus Books)

Course Requirements

Students will write one longer research paper (ca. 10-12 pp.) **or** two short analytical papers (5-6 pp.). A creative project may be substituted for one of the short papers. Class participation (including a brief reaction paper for each novel) will count heavily.

Syllabus

**** reaction paper due**

Date due

Reading/Writing Assignment

(all stories are in *The Short Stories of FSF* unless noted otherwise)

1/14

Introduction to course

I. Early Struggle and Success: 1917-22

1/16

Fitzgerald's Early Career: 1915-22
from *The Crack-Up*: "Early Success"
biography: Bruccoli 1-138

The speaker for his generation

story: "Bernice Bobs Her Hair"

"I'm Sick of the Sexless Animals Writers Have Been Giving Us" (packet)

1/21

M.L. King holiday

1/23

This Side of Paradise

1/28

**** *This Side of Paradise* (continued)**

stories: "Ice Palace"

"The Jelly Bean"

1/30

Fitzgerald and naturalism:

story: "May Day"

2/04

The Beautiful and Damned
biography: Bruccoli, 139-70

keep your UTD email working to receive these messages.

Reaction Papers

R.P. encourage you to express your views of the assigned work or a particular element of it (character, theme, style, etc.). R.P. are evaluated with a $\sqrt{+}$ (effort above expectations), $\sqrt{}$ (meets expectations), or $\sqrt{-}$ (below expectations). A missing r.p. counts as a two $\sqrt{-}$. These marks are averaged at the end the semester. Straight $\sqrt{+}$'s over the semester = B.

Class Participation

C.P. is part of your final grade, though the exact weighting varies from course to course. It represents your active contribution to class discussion. Quality, not quantity, of contributions is what matters.

C.P. is computed as follows. At the end of the semester, I assign a participation grade using a "C" base. I.e., if you came to class regularly, but said nothing, you would receive a "C" for c.p. I then adjust that grade based on your attendance. Excellent attendance (0-2 absences in a twice-a-week course) can raise c.p. by 1/3 of a grade; 3-4 absences don't change it; more than 4 absences lower the C.P. grade progressively by the number of absences.

Those students who would sooner face a firing squad than speak in class should contact me after the first class about doing extra written work to compensate for their silence.

Attendance

I do take attendance, and your cumulative absences affect your class participation grade (see above). Absences are excused for medical reasons or family emergencies only and require documentation (e.g., doctor's note, Rx, severed hand, etc.). Grandparents, I've found, have a disturbing tendency to die when major assignments are due (anxiety e.s.p., no doubt); in such cases, bring a signed and dated card from the hospital or funeral home.

Leaving class while it's in session is as disruptive and distracting as coming in late. Except in an emergency, it has no justification in a 75 minute class. **Repeated early exits may affect your participation grade.** If you know you must leave early, let me know at the beginning of class and sit near the door. Leaving after the break in a long class may result in an absence recorded for that class.

Tardiness

Since class typically starts on time, if you come in late, you disturb not only the instructor and your classmates, but the "flow" of the lesson. Coming in late while a student is presenting an oral report is even more disturbing. **Cumulatively, two tardies = one absence.**

Late Papers

Graded papers turned in late will be marked down as follows: 1-2 days late = 1/3 of a grade lower; 3-4 days late = 2/3 of grade lower; 5-7 days late = full grade lower; beyond 1 week, paper not accepted. **Late reaction papers are normally not accepted.** If your paper is finished but you did not turn it in for some reason, email me a copy on the due date and bring a hard copy to the next class. Otherwise, do not email me your papers.

Secondary Research

Check to see if s.r. is required, optional, or forbidden for the assigned paper. (In reaction papers, for example, s.r. is not allowed.). When used, it should never dominate your paper or control the discussion; your ideas should. Use s.r. to amplify your arguments, to provide

contrasting views you will argue against, or (in your introduction) to suggest the range of critical opinion on your topic.

Consider the source's potential validity (and respectability): scholarly books and journal articles have been peer-reviewed and are therefore more reliable (and usually more sophisticated) than material found in personal websites on the internet. Going into the library stacks also shows more effort than relying solely on the internet or on material in omnibus collections (e.g., *Poetry [or Short Story] Criticism*). High school-level notes such as *Cliff's Notes*, *Monarch Notes*, or *Spark Notes* are not acceptable.

Use quotation marks for all material taken directly from a secondary source. For quoted material and for paraphrased material, **cite your source** parenthetically immediately after the quoted or paraphrased material, using author's last name (or abbreviated book title) and page number: "xxxxx" (Smith 40). At the end of your paper add a "Works Cited" page with complete bibliographical data. See the *MLA Handbook* for correct form.

Using the internet

Internet material is easy to obtain, but material on personal websites did not typically pass a quality-control test of peer review and may therefore contain misinformation or highly dubious claims. **Let the user beware!** The most reliable sources on the Internet are scholarly articles from journals (available through JSTOR). Factual information from Wikipedia is also usable; but researching books and articles on an author or work shows more effort.

Plagiarism

Passing off someone else's ideas as your own constitutes plagiarism, whether it was done intentionally or inadvertently. Likewise, having someone else write all or part of your paper. Thus, it's essential to show where your ideas came from, using parenthetical citation (see "Secondary Research" above). Be aware that A&H subscribes to "Turnitin.com," which can trace the source of material taken from the internet. UTD takes all forms of academic dishonesty very seriously, as does your instructor. Plagiarism can result—and in my courses has resulted—in an "F" for the course and the incident recorded on the student's permanent record.

Grading

As you'll see, I spend a lot of time on each paper, hoping (perhaps quixotically) that you'll apply corrections and comments to your subsequent papers. When I've finished grading a set of papers, I then distribute them by grade and scan each paper quickly to make sure it conforms (in relative strengths and weaknesses) to others of the exact same grade. This final scanning sometimes results in a grade being raised or lowered slightly. Split grades, e.g., A-/B+ means the grade is on the borderline.

In computing your grades, I assign specific points to each grade:

A+	4.5	B+	3.5	etc.
A	4.25	B	3.25	
A-	4.0	B-	3.0	
A-/B+	3.75	B-/C+	2.75	

I then multiply the grade by its relative weight (30%, 40%, etc.) to determine total points. Likewise, for class participation, which comprises oral participation (typically 35% of CP) and reaction papers (typically 65%).

Normally, total points for the semester determine the final grade as follows:

	340	B+	240	C+	140	D+
407+ A	307	B	207	C	107	D
375 A-	275	B-	175	C-	75	D-

Improvement points

In many courses, I review your work over the entire semester, and add a few points to your semester total if your writing has improved. Hence, save all your written work during the semester as I may collect it at the end of the semester.

For general UTD course policies, click on: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>