

**Learning ULYSSES Online**  
**a guide through the deep waters of a difficult**  
**novel**

06/08/2021

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Wednesdays on Zoom 6:30-8:30 PM

Oct 20, Nov 17, Dec 15, Jan 19, Feb 16, Mar 16, Apr 20, May 18, Jun 8

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## Required Text

James Joyce, *ULYSSES: The Corrected Text* (Viking, ed. Gabler et al.)

Don Gifford and Robert Seidmann, *ULYSSES Annotated* (Uof CA Press)


## Goals

Students in this class will work together to gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for life and central literary achievements of James Joyce focusing on his best known work *ULYSSES* (pub. 1922). Secondary readings and class discussions may occasionally dip into Joyce's earlier or later works, but the main goal will be to read this novel together and unravel some (though certainly not all) of its mysteries.

Class meetings will be conducted over Zoom where we will focus on answering questions that arise from the reading. Our hope is to build an interesting conversation for first-time and returning readers as we puzzle our way through some of the novel's enigmas and enjoy its language.

## Assignments

As class meets just once a month students should have ample time to keep pace with complexities of the novel. Reading assignments for each chapter will include working with



the Gifford/Seidmann text, so be prepared to discuss what you have read from the start of each class.

But students will also find a great number of lectures offered via Google Classroom for those wishing to go deeper into the Joycean waters. These brief lectures are available there in both video and in text format so that students can suit them to their own pace with the book. There are also additional readings on the Classroom site which are meant to supplement the novel and showcase the enjoyment (or bafflement) felt by generations of readers. They are not to be seen as a requirement but as an aid, or a dessert even, to your diet of monthly Joyce.

Your **final assignment**, while optional, will be to participate in or attend the yearly Bloomsday Reading and Celebration held by the Rosenbach Museum and Library or in many other cities around the world. Bloomsday is an international celebration of literature, a one-of-kind holiday for Philadelphians (because of the Rosenbach's historic involvement) and a special day for bookish nerds across the globe. This year, as *ULYSSES* turns 100, our goal here is not just to help you complete the novel but to give you a sense of the enjoyment it brings to so many readers and to join us in the anniversary.

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## READING ASSIGNMENTS

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### **10/20 First meeting; "a toe-drag in the deep end"**

(no initial reading need reading need be done for this meeting, but some points of my introductory lectures will appear on the Google Classroom site three days before)

- Introductions
- A little bit about Google Classroom and supplementary material
- What experiences have you had with *ULYSSES* before this class?
- Why is this novel best read in groups?
- A brief history of its making

-How much does Joyce's biography, Irish history and literary theory inform our understanding of the novel?

-The importance of good annotations

-A little deeper Joyce dive

-What to listen for

-Who's saying what?

### **11/17 Second meeting; "diving in while you can still see the bottom"**

(We will be covering the first three "episodes" of the novel for our first discussion and it will be a lot to take in. Please feel free to use the Google Classroom site to post questions that might help you through the reading and visit some of the lectures there so more group time is spent answering questions)

1) "Telemachus" (pgs. 3-19)

2) "Nestor" (pgs. 20-30)

3) "Proteus" (pgs. 31-42)

-Starting in the middle

-The classical framework

-The modern metropolis

-What clues are we given? Is it enough to suggest a plot?

-How much is expected of the reader?

-What do we know about Stephen (and do we like any of it)?

-The point where the novel becomes a plantstand

### **12/15 Third meeting; "getting our bearings and feeling the tide"**

1) "Calypso" (pgs. 45-57)

2) "Lotus Eaters" (pgs. 58-71)

3) "Hades" (pgs. 72-95)

-Who is Stephen and who is Bloom

-The little cloud

-The man on the beach and the man in the crowd

-The difference between an autobiographical figure and an avatar

The city emerging

-The trap of the omniscient narrator

-"The Uncle Charles Principle"

### **1/19 Fourth meeting; "a direction forward with no land in sight"**

1) "Aeolus" (pgs. 96-123)

2) "Lestrygonians" (pgs. 124-150)

-A chorus of narrators

-Who is the Arranger?

Who is the Messenger?

-The Parable of the Plums

-Two men haunted

-Food of the body

### **2/16 Fifth meeting; "a quickening tide of conversations and opinions"**

1) "Scylla and Charybdis" (pgs. 151-179)

2) "Wandering Rocks" (pgs. 180-209)

3) "Sirens" (pgs. 210-239)

-Food of the mind

-The consubstantial essence

-The Hamlet Theory

-Montage and world building

-The intermezzo

-The view from above and the slice down the middle

-Malleable history and verisimilitude

-The narration takes over

-A flock birds and a chorus of voices

-The importance of song

-Bloom's last words

### **3/16 Sixth meeting; "a storm of styles to drown us"**

- 1) "Cyclops" (pgs. 240-283)
- 2) "Nausicaa" (pgs. 284-313)
- 3) "Oxen of the Sun" (pgs. 314-349)

- Men in pubs
- Who is he talking to?
- The City of Spies
- Bloom Elijah, the Hero deified
- Bloom on the beach- "the dark stranger"
- The source of Milly's monologue
- Wrestling language from story
- Does freedom of style allow freedom from story?
- What is actually happening here?

#### **4/20 Seventh meeting; "paddling forward through the undertow"**

- 1) "Circe" (pgs. 350-497)
- The unstageable play
  - The overwrought director
  - Just who is hallucinating here?
  - Two men haunted

#### **5/18 Eighth meeting; "the sighting of new land"**

- 1) "Eumaeus" (pgs. 501-543)
  - 2) "Ithaca" (pgs. 544-607)
- The persona of the narrator becomes a comfort
  - A quaint acquaintance
  - What the sailor says
  - Drawn together by fate or fiction
  - The bird's eye view of two angels
  - How the world (and the furniture) has changed
  - Staring up at the stars

-That big dot at the end

### **6/8 Ninth (and final) meeting; “grounded with Mother Earth”**

1) “Penelope” (pgs. 608-644)

-Who gets the last word in?

-She is who she is

-“Feminine literature”

-Why yes?

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Morris Beja, *James Joyce: A Literary Life* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1992)

Peter Costello, *James Joyce: The Years of Growth 1882-1915* (New York: Pantheon, 1992)

Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982)

Brenda Maddox, *Nora: The Real Life of Molly Bloom* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1988)

#### Guides

Harry Blamires, *The New Bloomsday Book: A Guide Through ‘Ulysses’* (London: Routledge, 1996)

Laura Heffernan, *Sparknotes Guide to James Joyce’s ‘Ulysses’* (Spark Publishing, 2007)

Declan Kiberd, *‘Ulysses’ and Us: The Art of Everyday Life in Joyce’s Masterpiece* (Norton, 2009)

Margot Norris, ed., *A Companion to James Joyce’s ‘Ulysses’* (Palgrave Macmillan, 1998)

#### General Monographs & Essay Collections

Derek Attridge, ed., *James Joyce’s ‘Ulysses’: A Casebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)



Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses'* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989)

Richard Ellmann, *Ulysses on the Liffey* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986)

Stuart Gilbert, *James Joyce's 'Ulysses': A Study* (New York: Vintage, 1955)

Clive Hart and David Hayman, eds., *James Joyce's 'Ulysses': Critical Essays* (Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1977) Hugh Kenner, *'Ulysses'* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987)