

# MODERN EUROPEAN SHORT FICTION

Tuesdays & Thursdays 10:05-11:20 a.m. in 305 Languages



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Office hours: Thursday 12-2 in 09 Languages and by appointment.



In this class you will examine important modern European short fiction. By reading a selection of the best short works of authors such as Kafka, Woolf, Svevo, Sartre, Joyce, Mann, Schnitzler, and Calvino, students consolidate their understanding of foundational European authors, as well as develop their own connections between the texts. While the stories will be contextualized historically, culturally, and geographically, the course is organized into thematic units, including animals, home, love, and guilt, to facilitate comparative analysis. Students will engage critically with concepts pertaining to identity, trauma, genre, and narrative form. These shorter works allow for the opportunity to read closely great authors of the modern period who have shaped the world we live in today.

## Suggested books:

Franz Kafka, *The Sons*

Arthur Schnitzler, *Fräulein Else*

James Joyce, *Dubliners*





Primo Levi, *The Periodic Table*

Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*

Please see the class website for more information:

[https://sites.duke.edu/english244\\_01\\_f2019/](https://sites.duke.edu/english244_01_f2019/)

Please bring the text to class. All readings are available on the website.

	Assignments	Grading	Due Date
<p>The goal of these short assignments are to help you develop new ways of considering the texts, as well as to promote active and thorough reading. All assignments will be described in more detail on the class website at least two weeks in advance of a due date. Please talk to me after class or email if you have any questions.</p>	 Analysis		
	Close Reading Paper (3 pages)	15%	10/6
	Passage & Film Paper (4 pages)	20%	11/27
	 Engagement		
	Participation	15%	
	 Brief Research		
	Animal (1 page)	10%	10/14
	Object (1 page)	10%	Varies
	Object revised	5%	12/4
	 Comprehensive Knowledge		
In-class passage analysis	10%	10/31	
Take home final (3 pages)	15%	12/18	

8/27: Introduction & Kafka, "Give it up"

## 1) ANIMALS

8/29: Kafka, "A Report to an Academy"  
Hoffmann, "Report From an Educated  
Young Man"



9/3: Flaubert, "A Simple Heart"

9/5: Landolfi, "The Two Old Maids"

9/10: Kafka, "The Metamorphosis"

9/12: Svevo, "Argo and his Master"

9/17: Carrington, "The Oval Lady," "The Debutante"  
Manganelli, "91"

Chekhov, "The Lady with the Dog"

*Rare Book Room Visit*

## 2) FAMILY & HOME

9/19: Calvino, "The Argentine Ant"

9/24: Schnitzler, "Fräulein Else"

9/26: Joyce, "Araby," "Eveline," "Clay,"  
"The Dead"

10/1: Kafka, "The Judgment"  
Bontempelli, "Empress"  
Ferrante, "Delia's Elevator"  
Nabokov, "Torpido Smoke"

10/3: Woolf, "The Mark on the Wall"  
"A Haunted House," "The Widow  
and the Parrot," "Mrs. Dalloway in  
Bond Street," "The Lady in the  
Looking Glass"

10/10: Blixen: "Babette's Feast"

## READINGS

### 3) LOVE

10/15: Pirandello, "The Trip"  
Vivien, "Prince Charming"  
Babel, "First Love"



10/17: Dostoevsky, "White Nights"

10/22: Mann, "Death in Venice"

10/24: Du Maurier, "Don't Look Now"

10/29: Beckett, "First Love"  
Wilde, "The Rose and the Nightingale"  
*Nasher Art Museum Visit*

10/31: *In-Class Passage Identification*

### 4) GUILT

11/5: Sartre, "The Wall"  
Camus, "The Adulterous Woman"

11/7: Döblin, "The Murder of a Buttercup"  
Wells, "A Dream of Armageddon"

11/12: Scego, "Sausages" & "Exmatriates"  
Mansfield, "The Garden Party"

11/14: Sembène, "The Promised Land"  
Kafka, "In the Penal Colony"

11/19: Tabucchi, "Against Time"  
Wat, "Long Live Europe!"  
Bernhard, "The Italian"

Each unit asks you to consider short works  
from a variety of perspectives.

In the first unit we will discuss the range of  
ways to approach short texts, the human-  
animal boundary, and the portrayal of  
animals over time.

### 5) HOLOCAUST

11/21: Bassani, "A Plaque on Via Mazzini"

11/26: 9 - 11 a.m. paper discussions

12/3: Borowski, "This Way to the Gas  
Chambers, Ladies and Gentlemen,"  
"The Supper," "Silence," "The  
January Offensive"  
Nomberg-Przytyk, "The Camp Blanket"  
Wiesel, "The Watch"

12/5: Levi, "Argon," "Zinc," "Phosphorous,"  
"Mercury," "Vanadium," "Carbon"

In the second, we will talk about some of  
the major elements of modernism,  
biographical contexts, identity, and  
representations of the family and home.

In the third unit, we will consider the  
relationship between the geographical  
location of a story (place as character)  
and plot, portrayals of love, and the  
differences between terms such as  
"novella" and "short story."

In the fourth unit we will discuss  
expressionism and existentialism,  
mutual influences, and representations  
of guilt. We will continue the  
conversation of what it means to be a  
"European author."

In the fifth unit we will discuss the  
boundaries between fiction and memoir,  
how to represent what is often  
characterized as unrepresentable, and  
portrayals of the Shoah in short fiction.