

The University of Western Ontario – Department of English – Fall 2013  
**English 4520F: James Joyce's *Ulysses* – Michael Groden**  
course Webpage: <http://instruct.uwo.ca/english/4520f/>

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*Final essay (2500 words) - due Thursday, December 5 - 35%*

\*\* Please submit your essay as an attachment to an email message. \*\*

Note: The Gabler edition of *Ulysses* is usually cited by page number or by chapter and line number. (There is no need to give both.) Example: “Mr Leopold Bloom ate with relish the inner organs of beasts and fowls” (Joyce 45) or (Joyce 4:1-2) or (Joyce 4.1-2).

Please use secondary sources for this essay.

- 1) Martha Clifford mistypes “world” for “word” in her letter to Bloom (5:245, p. 63). Consider the word/world dualism in *Ulysses* by looking at one (or more) episodes in terms of the language used and the reality the language presumably describes.
- 2) Joyce called the “Ithaca” episode the true end of *Ulysses*, arguing that “Penelope” has no beginning or end. On the other hand, he said that “Penelope” represents the “indispensable countersign” to “Ithaca” and the rest of *Ulysses*. (See my online “Notes on *Ulysses*” for “Penelope” for the quotation.) The ending of *Ulysses* has always been problematic, and the existence of two possible ends compounds the problem. Discuss “Ithaca” and “Penelope” as two ways of closing the book, and consider the episodes’ possible relationships to each other.
- 3) Joyce claimed to be indifferent to politics, and critics for a long time took him at his word and saw his books as politically apathetic or neutral. But we have often been reminded lately that any text is political (or ideological) whether or not the speaker or author is aware of his or her ideology or politics. At the least, *Ulysses* repeatedly mentions Ireland’s position in the world and its relationship to England and presents many characters’ opinions on Ireland and England. Discuss *Ulysses* in terms of its politics, or consider the ideology, political agenda, or political position that seems to be in (or to lie behind) the text.
- 4) Discuss the issue of gender in *Ulysses* by looking at the text’s depictions of men and women; by considering how it seems to define “masculine,” “feminine,” or both; OR by considering the treatment of sexuality in *Ulysses*.
- 5) Compare an episode from the first half of *Ulysses* (up to “Scylla and Charybdis”) to one from the second half. Consider the changes between what Joyce called the “initial style” of the first half and the technique(s) of the episode you have chosen from the last half. How do the two episodes relate to each other? What is gained and lost by each technique?
- 6) Consider *Ulysses* (a limited, specific part will work best) in relation to some of the ideas from a contemporary major thinker (again, limit yourself): Freud, Jung, Marx, Einstein, etc.
- 7) It has often been claimed that following any recurring detail in the book, no matter how

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seemingly insignificant, will lead you to all the central concerns and themes of *Ulysses*. Trace one of the recurring details (I've listed some in the "Details to Remember" and "Details that have Appeared Before" pages in my online "Notes on *Ulysses*," but there are many others), and consider how it relates to issues that you consider central to *Ulysses*.

8) Discuss the *Odyssey* in relation to *Ulysses* by looking at one episode from Homer and the corresponding episode in *Ulysses*. How useful is the *Odyssey* as a guide to Joyce's text? How useful is Joyce's Odyssean schema (see the online "Notes on *Ulysses*" for each episode). What does the *Odyssey* illuminate in *Ulysses*, and what are the limits of its relevance?

Or look at *Hamlet*, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Flotow's opera *Martha*, or another literary work or work from another art, as sources (or analogues) for *Ulysses*.

9) Discuss *Ulysses* in relation to one of the other arts or to popular culture. Possibilities include (but are not limited to) "Sirens" and music, "Nausicaa" and painting, "Circe" and drama or film, or the relation of music, opera, popular songs, drama, painting, film, journalism, or advertising to a part of *Ulysses*.

10) Robert Martin Adams once wrote a book called *Afterjoyce*, which studied fiction written after *Ulysses*. Discuss the impact of *Ulysses* on fiction that came after it by comparing it to a later novel or to an author who came after Joyce.

*And finally:* 11) You can create your own topic (either one entirely different from these or a modification of one or more of them) if you clear it with me *before Monday, December 2*.

#### **RULES AND REGULATIONS:**

Documentation should follow the format in the *Modern Language Association (MLA) Handbook*; format = author, short title (if these aren't obvious from the text), page number in parentheses within text + full bibliographic details in List of Works Cited at the end. See the English Department's "Citing Authorities in an English Essay."

All essays should have a title and a List of Works Cited (include one even if only the main text under consideration is quoted).

Any extensions must be approved *in advance* (at least the day before the essay is due) in person or via email. Late essays will be penalized 2 marks per day.

From the English Department's "Information for Students": "Plagiarism (the unacknowledged use of another person's work) is one of the most serious academic offences, since it involves fraud and misrepresentation. In plagiarizing, one is in effect claiming another person's words or ideas or data as one's own work, and thus misrepresenting material subject to academic evaluation. . . . Students must acknowledge each printed or electronic source (including study guides such as Coles' Notes and Internet materials) by author, title, date and place of publication, and page number if: (a) they quote from it directly; (b) they paraphrase its ideas; (c) they are conscious of any influence its ideas may have had on their own work. Every source (including websites) that students have consulted (whether they refer to it directly or not) must be included in a bibliography (Works Cited)."

The following is a statement on plagiarism which has been mandated by the UWO Senate:

"Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

Plagiarism checking: The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their work in electronic form for plagiarism checking."