



## One Day, One Novel: William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses*

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**Start date** 17 February 2019

**End date** 17 February 2019

**Venue** Madingley Hall  
Madingley  
Cambridge

**Tutor** Dr John Lennard

**Course code** 1819NDX027

**Director of ISP & Lifelong Learning**

Sarah Ormrod

**For further information on this course, please contact**

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**To book** See: [www.ice.cam.ac.uk](http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk) or telephone 01223 746262

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### Tutor biography

John Lennard is an Associate Member and Director of Studies in English at Hughes Hall, Cambridge, and a Panel Tutor for ICE. He was formerly a Fellow of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and Professor of British and American Literature at the University of the West Indies-Mona, in Jamaica. He has published on practical criticism, Shakespeare, punctuation history, Faulkner, Paul Scott, Nabokov, and genre fiction.

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## Course programme

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09:30	Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee
10:00 – 11:15	<b>Welcome to Yoknapatawpha County</b>
11:15	Coffee
11:45 – 13:00	<b>Tales at Tangents: the Structure of <i>Go Down, Moses</i></b>
13:00	Lunch
14:00 – 15:15	<b>The Long, Long Life of Ike McCaslin</b>
15:15	Tea
15:30 – 16:45	<b>The Bear and the Deep Woods</b>
16:45	Day-school ends

## **Course syllabus**

The course is a one-day study of one novel : the syllabus is simply Faulkner's *Go Down, Moses*.

### **Aims:**

To introduce students to Faulkner's great legendarium of Yoknapatawpha County ;  
to explore the structure of the intersecting or complementary stories comprising the novel, and make explanatory and sometimes revelatory connections;  
to tease out the fearful implications of the revealed life and history of Ike McCaslin ; and  
to consider the central tale of 'The Bear' and its emblematic as well as literal meanings.

### **Content:**

Faulkner wrote longer and shorter tales of Yoknapatawpha County (loosely based on Lafayette County, Mississippi) over more than thirty years, so we begin by setting out the place and its principal families. In the later 1930s he was also experimenting with how a novel may be constructed of component tales more freestanding than simple chapters, and *Go Down, Moses* represents a culmination of that process, following *The Unvanquished* (1938) and *The Wild Palms* (1939) ; the second session therefore considers structure, and *how* one has to read the novel. In the third, we come to its spine, the long life of Ike McCaslin : various stories narrate parts of it from youth to old age, while others probe his family history, kin, and the motives and consequences of one shocking decision. The last session turns to 'The Bear', the longest tale and the heart of the novel, and that bear is at once entirely real, the crook-pawed Old Ben who has become a legend in the county, and emblematic both of the wilderness human growth has destroyed, and of the indifferent violence found in the deep woods of the world, and of the human heart.

### **Presentation of the course:**

In each session I shall have things to say, and show using Powerpoint, for 30-40 minutes, leading to open discussion.

### **As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:**

Navigate the intersecting stories of *Go Down, Moses* with greater ease and understanding;  
Understand the implications of the horror at the novel's heart; and  
Appreciate the profound skill with which Faulkner emblematises reality.

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## Reading and resources list

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Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course. Any essential reading is marked with an asterisk \*

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Author	Title	Publisher and date
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### \*Required Reading

William Faulkner, *Go Down, Moses* (1942; New York: Vintage, 1991). Other editions are fine, so long as they are complete, comprising seven stories from 'Was' to 'Go Down, Moses'.

### Additional Reading

The most useful preparation is to read some other Faulkner, particularly *The Unvanquished* (1938) and *The Wild Palms* (1939, now published as *If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem*).

The following critical books are also readable, useful, and recommended:

Warren Beck, *Faulkner: Essays* (Madison, WI, & London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1976)

Cleanth Brooks, *William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country* (New Haven, CT, & London: Yale University Press, 1963)

— *On the Prejudices, Predilections, and Firm Beliefs of William Faulkner* (Baton Rouge, LA, & London: Louisiana State University Press, 1987)

John Lennard, *Reading William Faulkner: Go Down, Moses and Big Woods* (Tirril: Humanities-Ebooks, 2012)

Jay Parini, *One Matchless Time: A Life of William Faulkner* (2004; New York: HarperPerennial, 2005)

### Website addresses

<http://faulknersociety.com>

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### Additional information

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#### Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

#### Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on [ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk](mailto:ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk) or +44 (0)1223 746262.

**Note** Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

*Information correct as of:* 15 January 2019