

Virginia Woolf in the 1930s: *The Years* and *Three Guineas*

Start date 20 January 2023 **End date** 22 January 2023

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge
CB23 8AQ

Tutor Dr Claire Nicholson **Course code** 2223NRX016

Director of ISP and LL Sarah Ormrod

For further information contact inteng@ice.cam.ac.uk

Tutor biography

Claire Nicholson has taught English in Cambridge for many years. Her interest in fashion history was combined with literary analysis in her dissertation *In Woolf's Clothing: Clothes and Fashion in Virginia Woolf's Fiction*, for which she was awarded her PhD in 2013. Her specialist area is Modernism and Virginia Woolf, and the history of women's writing. Publications include *The Voyage Out: Centenary Perspectives* (2015) which was produced to mark the centenary of Virginia Woolf's first novel.

Claire is Chair of the Virginia Woolf Society and lectures on Woolf in a variety of contexts including literary festivals, the National Trust, the British Library and Literature Cambridge in addition to her teaching courses for ICE on Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group. She is currently preparing her PhD thesis for publication as well as contributing articles to journals.

Her teaching style is inclusive and encourages student participation in discussion in response to written, visual and audio material.

Course programme

Friday

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the Terrace Bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

- 19:00 Dinner
- 20:30 – 22:00 Introduction: Woolf in the 1930s**
- 22:00 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Saturday

- 07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)
- 09:00 – 10:30 *The Years*: 3 generations of women in the Pargiter family**
- 10:30 Coffee
- 11:00 – 12:30 ‘Red Rose’: a militant suffragette**
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 – 16:00 Free time
- 16:00 Tea
- 16:30 – 18:00 *The Years* and *Three Guineas*: the split into fiction and essay**
- 18:00 – 18:30 Free time
- 18:30 Dinner
- 20:00 – 21:30 *Three Guineas*: Woolf, feminism and pacifism**
- 21:30 Terrace Bar open for informal discussion

Sunday

- 07:30 Breakfast (for residents only)
- 09:00 – 10:30 A guinea for each: society, education & the professions**
- 10:30 Coffee
- 11:00 – 12:30 Conclusions: How does Woolf’s work speak to women today?**
- 12:45 Lunch

The course will disperse after lunch

Course syllabus

Aims:

The course will allow you to:

1. Gain a greater knowledge and appreciation of the two set texts, and an understanding of their historical context
2. Develop literary-critical ways of thinking and responding to fiction and non-fiction texts.
3. Participate in debate and discussion on questions addressed in both texts.

Content:

This course will examine what Woolf tells us about the changing lives of women in Britain from the 1880s (the decade in which she was born) to the 1930s, a decade which was to end with the declaration of World War II. *The Years* looks at the varying fortunes of women in the Pargiter family, from Rose's militant action as a suffragette to the limited choices available to middle-class women restricted to the domestic sphere. Woolf's implied criticisms of the social system are made explicit in the text written in parallel, *Three Guineas*. This essay exposes the competitive, patriarchal education system as the root cause of its ultimate expression: war. We will discuss how Woolf's argument that equal access to education for men and women could be instrumental in the eradication of violence and war. We will also examine how her chosen structure of both texts affects how her message is conveyed.

Presentation of the course:

To get the most from the course you should read the two set texts beforehand and expect to re-read extracts from them in class. We will undertake some close textual analysis which helps to understand and appreciate the richness and complexity of Woolf's writing. Each session will begin with a short lecture/presentation followed by student participation in paired/small group discussion. There will also be opportunities for full class debate and the sharing of ideas.

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

1. Understand the main themes addressed in each text.
2. Have knowledge of the historical context for both texts.
3. Apply literary-critical approaches to questions raised in both texts.
4. Participate in the sharing of ideas through debate and discussion.

Reading and resources list

Required reading

The Years (first published 1937), Virginia Woolf, Oxford World Classics ed. Hermione Lee, 1992 ISBN 978-0-19-955539-0

A Room of One's Own and *Three Guineas* Oxford World Classics, Virginia Woolf, ed. Anna Snaith, 1992 ISBN 978-0-19-964221-2

Supplementary reading

If you wish to undertake some wider reading in relation to the set texts, the following are suggestions but not set requirements for the course:

Virginia Woolf: An Inner Life, Julia Briggs, London: Allen Lane, 2005 ISBN 978-0-19-280234-7 (see chapter 11 on 'The Years of *The Years*' pp.269-304 and chapter 12 'Attacking Hitler in England: *Three Guineas*' pp.305-337)

The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf, Jane Goldman, Cambridge University Press, 2006 ISBN 978-0-521-54756-7

Virginia Woolf, Alexandra Harris, London: Thames & Hudson, 2011 ISBN 978-0-500-51592-1

Virginia Woolf, Hermione Lee, London: Vintage 1996 ISBN 978-0-09-973251-8

The Cambridge Companion to Virginia Woolf, Susan Sellers (ed.) Cambridge University Press, 2010 ISBN 978-0-521-721677 (see chapter 4 'The novels of the 1930s and the impact of history pp.72-90)

Authors in context: Virginia Woolf, Michael Whitworth, Oxford University Press, 2005 ISBN 978-0-19-280234-7

Online resources:

Website for the Virginia Woolf Society of Great Britain: www.virginiawoolfsociety.org.uk