

E379S Senior seminar
Updike and Ford
MWF 2:00

Professor Garrison
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Office (Calhoun 203) hours: MWF 2-3

This senior seminar will consider the Rabbit novels of John Updike and the Bascombe novels of Richard Ford as a way of understanding American cultural history in the latter half of the twentieth century. We will read seven novels, beginning with Updike's *Rabbit, Run* (published in 1960) and concluding with Ford's *The Lay of the Land* (published in 2005). Discussions and writing assignments will focus on the customs and concerns, successes and failures, assumptions and ambitions of American life from the 1950's to the end of the century. Particular attention will be given to the intersection of private and public realms, as Rabbit Angstrom and Frank Bascombe contend with the challenges of everyday life (career and money, marriage and family, friendship and faith) against the background of political, economic, and social change.

Required texts

John Updike, *Rabbit Angstrom: The Four Novels* (Everyman)
Richard Ford, *The Bascombe Novels* (Everyman)

Course requirements

Two short papers (20% each)
Two oral reports (5% each)
Term paper (40%)
Attendance (10%)

Reading Calendar

Week of	
Jan 18	Updike, <i>Rabbit, Run</i>
Jan 25	<i>Rabbit, Run</i>
Feb 1	Updike, <i>Rabbit Redux</i>
Feb 8	<i>Rabbit Redux</i>
Feb 15	Updike, <i>Rabbit is Rich</i>
Feb 22	<i>Rabbit is Rich</i>
Mar 1	Updike, <i>Rabbit at Rest</i>
Mar 8	<i>Rabbit at Rest</i>

Spring break

Mar 22	Ford, <i>The Sportswriter</i>
Mar 29	<i>The Sportswriter</i>
Apr 5	Ford, <i>Independence Day</i>
Apr 12	<i>Independence Day</i>
Apr 19	Ford, <i>The Lay of the Land</i>
Apr 26	<i>The Lay of the Land</i>
May 3	Conclusion

Short papers: 5 pages each

Specific topics for the papers are up to you: defining a good topic is part of the assignment.

Paper 1: **Due Feb 26.** On Updike, any one (or comparison of two) of the Rabbit novels read so far

Paper 2: **Due Apr 16.** On Ford, *The Sportswriter* or *Independence Day*, or comparison of the two

Longer paper: 10 pages

Term paper: **Due May 10.** Paper on Updike or Ford or a comparison of the two. If you write on just one of our authors, then you should consider all of the assigned novels; if you choose to compare the two, you may be selective as to which novels you write about.

Oral reports (5-10 minutes)

One on each author.

Attendance

Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. You will be allowed three absences (the equivalent of one full week of class) to cover illnesses and emergencies. After that your attendance grade will be a simple percentage of classes attended: 100% attendance receives 100, 90% a 90, etc. For purposes of making this calculation 3 tardies will count as an absence (arriving more than 15 minutes late will also count as an absence).

Grades

Grades will be awarded on a scale of 100 and converted at the end of the semester in accordance with departmental policy: 94-100 (A), 90-93 (A-), 87-89 (B+), 84-86 (B), 80-83 (B-), 77-79 (C+), 74-76 (C), 70-73 (C-), etc. Grades on late papers will be discounted 10% per class day that they are overdue.

