

Beginnings of the Modern Age

- “On or about December 1910 human nature changed.”-Virginia Woolf
- Modernism--Definition
- _____ that spanned all of the arts and spilled into politics and philosophy
- Dates: Roughly _____
- Authors seek to convey life not as it is but as people actually _____ it
-” _____ ” → Gertrude Stein called post WWI Americans this

- **MODERN FICTION**

- **Features of Modern Short Story**

1) _____ = de-emphasis on importance of something or someone → protagonists are _____

2) irony

3) stream of consciousness = steady and disorganized flow of thoughts
(no punctuation or capital letters, endless sentences, obscure phrasing)

- **MODERN FICTION**

4) _____

5) themes of instability or loss

6) plots without a _____

(“open forum” – plot development less important than expression of mood and character)

- **Modernist Themes**

- _____

- Qualities of cities: anonymous, dark, mechanized, vastly powerful
- Attract and repel _____

- _____

- One sensitive person from the world, the city, for various reasons:

World is shattered fragments of something once whole (Eliot)

Women lack agency and rights (Woolf)

Individual is certain that no one can understand and accept him (Joyce)

- **Modernist Themes**

- _____

- Characters are surrounded by the debris of the smashed certainties of the past

- World=directionless place, without center or certainty

- (historical events like WWI and WWII support this fundamental sense of uncertainty)

- Authors tend to allude to the past because of profound uneasiness in the modern world

- History is a nightmare from which I am trying to awake.- James Joyce, *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

- **Events of the Modern Age (1910-1930s)**

- Fitzgerald, Wharton, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, e.e. cummings, and Ernest Hemingway were all authors published.
- 1912 Titanic sinks
- 1913 Henry Ford introduces the assembly line
- 1917 US declares war on Germany (WWI)
- 1920 Prohibition of alcohol
- 1920 _____
- Immigration laws passed (mostly restrictions on Asians and Southern/Eastern Europeans)
- 1929 Stock market crash → _____
- The Shortening Skirt
 - In 1919, the average distance of a skirt hem above the ground in proportion to a woman's height was 10%
 - By 1924, 15%
 - 1925= 20%
 - 1927= 25% (reached the knee!)
- "In olden days a glimpse of stocking was seen as something shocking/ Well heaven knows, anything goes!" – from the musical *Anything Goes*
- **MODERN FICTION**
- **Defining Fiction Writers**

_____ – exemplifies narratives from multiple perspectives and concentrates on loss in Modern Age

_____ – cast doubt on marital glory and patriotism and characterized the alienation felt among people

- **MODERN FICTION**
- _____ – defines the excesses of the Jazz Age and criticizes the empty and destructively false values of the wealthy few at the top of society

■ **F. Scott Fitzgerald (1846-1940)**

- Born Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald (after the writer of "The Star Spangled Banner.")
- Attended _____
- Joined the army in 1918, where he met Zelda Sayre, whom he would eventually marry
- Worked in NYC for an _____
- Fitzgerald's life
- Published his most successful novel, _____, in 1925 while living a lavish life abroad in Europe.
- His lifestyle reflected the frantic pace and social ambitions of _____.
- However, he believed that the United States was in disarray—there was what many believed to be shallow materialism and symbols of success, yet a lack of "_____."
- There was a new "generation grown up to find all Gods dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken." – Fitzgerald
- Tobias Wolff on Fitzgerald– He "saw our American world ... with clearer eyes than any of his contemporaries."