

Theological Issues in 20th and 21st Century Fiction
LSHV 485-01
Wednesdays 6:15 - 8:45 p.m., September 23 – December 9, 2009
No class November 25
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This seminar explores theological issues raised in recent best selling, prize winning fiction (Dan Brown's *DaVinci Code*, Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*, Ian McEwan's *Atonement*, Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*, Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*, Edward P. Jones's *All Aunt Hagar's Children*, and Marilynne Robinson's *Home*) against a background of earlier, theologically sophisticated literary works (T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* and Shusaku Endo's *Silence*). Each work offers a unique window on the present and an opportunity to take theological bearings in a rapidly changing world.

A background in theology is not required for this course, though the writings assume a basic familiarity with the Gospel.

September 23 T.S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* (required)
Euripides's *Alcestis* (recommended)

September 30 Shusaku Endo's *Silence*

October 7 Dan Brown's *DaVinci Code*

October 14 Michael Cunningham's *The Hours*
Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (recommended)

October 21 Ian McEwan's *Atonement*

October 28 Yann Martel's *Life of Pi*

November 4 Sue Monk Kidd's *The Secret Life of Bees*

November 11 Edward Jones's *All Aunt Hagar's Children*, selected stories

November 18 Annie Dillard's *The Maytrees*

December 2 Marilynne Robinson's *Home*

December 9 To be determined.

Three short (3-4 page) papers will be required of all who are registered for the course. At the end of each class, participants will be given topics for possible papers related to the following class's assigned reading. Participants will be free to submit papers on any of the assigned readings.

Those taking the course for graduate credit will also be expected to submit a more substantial (10 page minimum) research paper. This paper will be due December 16, unless other arrangements are made in advance with Dr. O'Brien.

All papers must be typed (word-processed), meticulously proofread, and submitted on time. Late papers will be accepted, but will be subject to a letter grade penalty.

Please note: *Registrants should read and be prepared to discuss Eliot's **The Cocktail Party** for the first class meeting.*

Disabilities Statement:

If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.