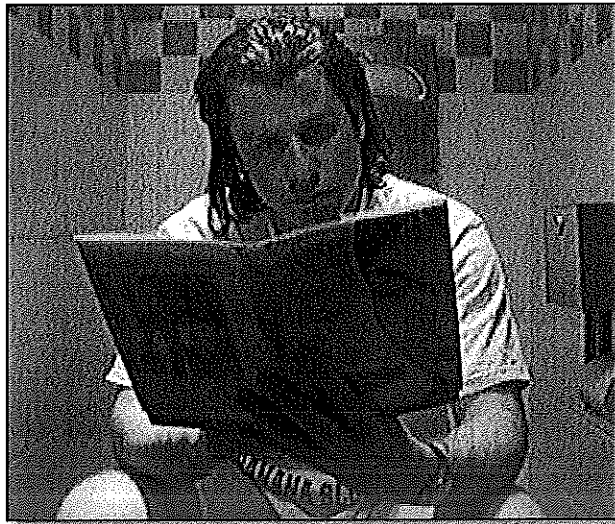


EN 4/6943: Form and Theory of Fiction
Fall 2014, MWF 9am
Professor: Peter DeGabriele

What is Fiction?



When we read fiction, we know that people aren't telling the truth, but we do not accuse them of lying. However, this relative comfort we have with the category of fiction is quite recent, and dates from the early 18th century. In particular, this concept developed alongside that most ubiquitous of literary forms: the novel. In this class, we will look at how the novel developed into the form we recognise today, and at how novelists, literary critics, and philosophers account for the rapid and stunning rise in popularity of novels. We will start in 18th century England, and end in the 21st century and, along the way, look at novels from a wide variety of national traditions and cultural perspectives. At the same time, we will read formalist, Marxist, postcolonial, feminist, and historicist theories of the novel in order to begin to understand the richness and diversity of the genre.

Possible novelists: Defoe, Austen, Melville, DeLillo, Duras, Coetzee, Balzac, Flaubert, Beckett.
Possible theorists: Watt, McKeon, Marx, Lukacs, DeMan, Jameson, Appiah.

During the semester you will compose bi-weekly responses, write two essays, and sit for two exams.