

## **PDQ Joyce Syllabus (OLLI Short, February 1-5, 2020)**

We will discuss and read aloud an abridged version of *Ulysses* consisting of the script of highlights previously used in 2016 for an OLLI Bloomsday reading (attached to home page of Bloomsday by OLLI website at

<https://sites.google.com/site/bloomsdaybyolli/home/bloomsday---2017>).

**OBJECTIVE:** The objective of this 5-class study group is to share the enjoyment of reading Janes Joyce's *Ulysses*. *Ulysses* is certainly Joyce's master work, although there is much to be said for just about everything that he wrote.

**SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE (HOPEFULLY):** For people who have not read *Ulysses*, there will be some background about the author and his writing, and some direct experience of the book. It should be fun because Joyce was a genius with a fine sense of humor. The script of highlights that we will use provides a good sample of *Ulysses*, and a good way of getting into the book.

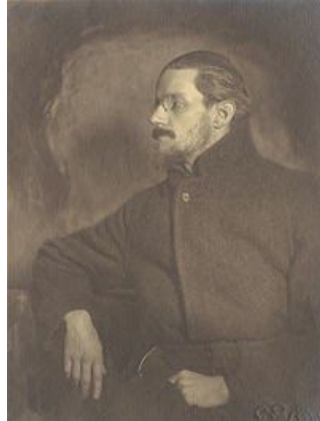
For those already familiar with Joyce and *Ulysses* this is an opportunity to re-experience something pleasurable. It is remarkable that even upon multiple readings *Ulysses* always seems to present something new - passages that do not seem to have been present before or new interpretations, relationships or references. This is not surprising because the author purposely mined the book with ironic puzzles and riddles. In a sense reading and re-reading *Ulysses* is like reviewing the work of a mischievous poet.

Our sampling of *Ulysses* is, of course, not a substitute for the entire book, and it is a challenge to choose highlights because there are many fine passages. Joyce was constantly experimenting, and it is remarkable how little filler there is, if any.

**CLASSES:** In each class we will progress through the script - with discussion and reading. The second class on Tuesday, February 2 is Joyce's birthday and we will have a celebration that will involve extended reading and a film. At one or more of the classes we will be joined by a Joyce authority, including Michael Groden, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Western University.

**TABLE AND GUIDE:** Below are a copy of the Guide to Fruitful Reading of *Ulysses* (from the Bloomsday by OLLI website at <https://sites.google.com/site/bloomsdaybyolli/guide-to-fruitful-reading-of-ulysses>), as well as a summary *Ulysses* table.

## GUIDE TO FRUITFUL READING OF *ULYSSES*



### THE CHALLENGE

For many people the reading of *Ulysses* appears to present a challenge rather like the climbing of Mount Everest (or, more appropriately, Mount Olympus). Often they try, but give up the effort (most typically at the third chapter or the seventh chapter which present particular stylistic innovations).

Often people who would most enjoy the book never read it - this is particularly a shame for those who enjoy humor.

At the same time people who read the book more than once always discover new things which they appear not to have noticed earlier. The texture of the *Ulysses* tapestry is rich and the book can be experienced in many ways and through multiple levels of meaning (this has resulted in a massive body of academic work). The book is at the same time very broad in its seemingly universal scope and very narrow in focus on Ireland and the Irish (particularly Dublin and Dubliners).

Here is an effort to serve as sherpa to support and guide the conquest of *Ulysses* by enterprising readers.

## STEP-BY-STEP:

We propose an orderly approach that makes use of materials linked to and posted on this website. The basic strategy is to allow you to familiarize yourself more and more intensely with *Ulysses* by stages, so that you are comfortable with the book's environment when you begin reading, are sensitized as to what to look for, and are aware of resources that can enrich your experience along the way.

### The Suggested Steps:

- **1)** Read one or more introductions and summaries such as those of the Rosenbach library (<https://rosenbach.org/ulysses-plot-summary/>) or Michael Groden (<http://www.michaelgroden.com/notes/>) (alternately, chapter summaries can be read just before reading the script or full text of each chapter);
- **2)** Review the Introductory Table posted on the [JJ Birthday Celebration Page](#) (if you like, have a look at the more extensive table posted on the [Readers/Thespians Page](#), as well);
- **3)** Read through the 365 tweets posted on the [Supplement/Extras Page](#) (start at the end of the document and go to the beginning);
- **4)** Read the 2016 Script posted on the [Bloomsday - 2016 Page](#). This consists of highlights from *Ulysses* - equivalent to a severely abridged version of the book (constituting about 12% of the text);
- **5)** Read the book (The Gutenberg text with added Episode Titles is posted on the [Supplement/Extras Page](#), but, many different editions are available cheaply (particularly as e-books)/the editions of text corrected and re-set in 1961 are generally regarded as the best these days).

- **NB** you may wish to listen to a recording of *Ulysses* as you read - the spoken word often brings out elements of the text more vividly than reading alone. Highly recommended are the readings of Jim Norton available through Audible or Amazon and the marathon performance of the Irish radio station RTE available at [RTE RECORDING](#)).
- **NNBB** You may wish to make use of [Michael Groden's Guide to reading Ulysses](#)- this is a marvelous resource/you will probably find it most useful to consult the notes on each episode before reading it (you might find it helpful to make use of this earlier, for example when you are reading the 2016 Bloomsday script) - to use this resource click on the episode (chapters in *Ulysses* are referred to as Episodes) first, then click on the category of notes that you wish to consult. There are also links to sources and a bibliography to be found here.

### **PRELIMINARY REMARK (as you get started):**

*Ulysses* chapters are referred to by scholars as "Episodes", and, following a whim of Joyce, "Episode" headings are not printed in the book. You will find the Episode names in most materials on this website (e.g. the tables, scripts, reading assignments and full book text).

### **COMMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO INTRODUCTORY TABLE:**

*Ulysses* takes place in less than 24 hours starting at 8:00 am on June 16, 1904. The book is really eighteen novels in one – there is a different masterfully-realized style in each episode. Each corresponds to an adventure of the Greek hero in his travels around the Mediterranean Sea. But, Joyce's book deals with the amble across Dublin of an Irish anti-hero (an advertising salesman named Leopold Bloom).

Bloom is a much beloved character with extensive interests and sensibilities whose name has been incorporated into the holiday that

celebrates James Joyce and *Ulysses*. The two other principal characters are Stephen Dedalus a largely autobiographical representation of Joyce in his early twenties, and Molly Bloom (Leopold Bloom's wife) whose closing soliloquy constitutes the most famous ending in all of literature.

The book itself weighs in at almost 700 pages, and contains some 33,000 different words (about the same number as in the works of Shakespeare) among the 260,000 words of the text. Although *Ulysses* takes place in less than a full day, it touches upon a vast number of different matters – scientific, literary, mythological, medical, economic, religious, political, historical, sociological, psychological, philosophical and other themes.

But, if *Ulysses* is seemingly universal, it is also a very local work of art. Joyce once said that if Dublin disappeared in a natural catastrophe, it could be rebuilt from indications in *Ulysses*. Joyce's Dublin is populated by a considerable population of very Irish people with myriad occupations, personalities, and eccentricities, and it features much of what Dubliners experienced in 1904 –particular streets, buildings, occupations, food and drink, animals, sights, weather, music, etc. – and especially ideas and opinions.

Joyce prided himself as being crafty; he incorporated many puzzles and riddles, and most things in *Ulysses* are presented in an ironic light. Multifaceted humor is the fuel on which *Ulysses* runs. ENJOY!



## ***Ulysses* Table**

**Elements extracted from tables prepared by James Joyce for friends**

| <b>Episode</b>            | <b>Scene</b>           | <b>Hour</b> | <b>Art/Science</b>   | <b>Technique</b>     | <b>Meaning</b>               |
|---------------------------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Telemachus              | The tower              | 8 a.m.      | Theology             | Narrative (young)    | Dispossessed son in contest  |
| 2 Nestor                  | The School             | 10 a.m.     | History              | Catechism (personal) | The wisdom of the ancients   |
| 3 Proteus                 | The Strand             | 11 a.m.     | Philology            | Monologue (M)        | Primal matter                |
| 4 Calypso                 | The House              | 8 a.m.      | Economics            | Narrative (mature)   | The departing Wayfarer       |
| 5 Lotus Eaters            | The Bath               | 10 a.m.     | Botany,<br>chemistry | Narcissism           | The temptation of faith      |
| 6 Hades                   | The<br>Graveyard       | 11 a.m.     | Religion             | Incubism             | The descent into nothingness |
| 7 Aeolus                  | The<br>Newspaper       | 12 p.m.     | Rhetoric             | Enthymemic           | The derision of victory      |
| 8 Lestrygonians           | The Lunch              | 1 p.m.      | Architecture         | Peristaltic          | Despondency                  |
| 9 Scylla and<br>Charybdis | The Library            | 2 pm        | Literature           | Dialectic            | The double-edge sword        |
| 10<br>Wandering<br>Rocks  | The Streets            | 3 p.m.      | Mechanics            | Labyrinth            | The hostile milieu           |
| 11 Sirens                 | The<br>Concert<br>Room | 4 p.m.      | Music                | Fuga per canonem     | The sweet deceit             |

|                    |              |         |            |                          |                       |
|--------------------|--------------|---------|------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| 12 Cyclops         | The Tavern   | 5 p.m.  | Politics   | Gigantism                | Egocidal terror       |
| 13 Nausicaa        | The Rocks    | 8 p.m.  | Painting   | Tumescence, detumescence | The projected mirage  |
| 14 Oxen of the Sun | The Hospital | 10 p.m. | Medicine   | Embryonic development    | The eternal herds     |
| 15 Circe           | The Brothel  | 12 a.m. | Magic      | Hallucination            | The man-hating ogress |
| 16 Eumaeus         | The Shelter  | 1 a.m.  | Navigation | Narrative (old)          | Ambush on home ground |
| 17 Ithaca          | The House    | 2 a.m.  | Science    | Catechism (impersonal)   | Armed hope            |
| 18 Penelope        | The Bed      | -       |            | Monologue (F)            | The past sleeps       |