

**Dusting Off the Classics:
Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*
University of Denver Enrichment Program
Winter/Spring 2021 – Section #2
Richard Sacks**



UNIVERSITY of
DENVER
ENRICHMENT PROGRAM

Four Wednesday evening sessions from 6:30-8:30pm: May 12, 19, 26, June 2
via Zoom with class size limited to 23

Course homepage: <https://sacks-richard.com/to-the-lighthouse-at-du>

Professor Sacks' email: sacks.richard@gmail.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

We all yearn to sail to the quintessential "lighthouse" of our hopes and dreams. But how do we envision in our mind's eye such a profound and potentially life-changing journey, what is necessary to then actually embark upon it, what is needed to sustain us along the way, and is it ever possible to truly arrive at our desired destination? Such are some of the essential questions posed by one of the most dazzling and virtuosic artistic creations of the 20th century, Virginia Woolf's 1927 novel *To the Lighthouse*, written amidst the turbulent societal and cultural changes sweeping through the British Isles and beyond in the years following the "Great War." Join Dr. Richard Sacks, who spent four decades at Columbia University teaching its core great books course – which began in the ancient Mediterranean world and regularly culminated with *To the Lighthouse* – in a close reading of the wondrous landscapes, seascapes and mindscapes in Woolf's astonishing masterpiece, at once an elegiac remembrance of her parents and family, especially her mother, and at the same time a post-impressionistic journey challenging us all to sail beyond the normal temporal and spatial boundaries governing how we see things, how we remember things, and how we try to process the never-ending streams of consciousness flowing through our daily lives.

READING SCHEDULE

- May 12 "The Window" 1-10 (pages 3-62)
beginning with "the power to crystallise and transfix the moment" (page 3)
- May 19 "The Window" 11-17 (pages 62-111)
finding ourselves "[drawn]...into visibility" and "composed...in the twilight" (page 97)
- May 26 "The Window" 18-19, "Time Passes" 1-10, and "The Lighthouse" 1-3 (pages 112-162)
"wait[ing] for the future to show" amidst "a downpouring of immense darkness" (page 125)
- June 2 "The Lighthouse" 4-13 (pages 162-209)
ending "as if...[seeing] it clear for a second" (page 209)

NOTE ON EDITIONS

I will be using the edition published in 1989 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich (now from the Mariner Book imprint of the merged Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), with a poignant introduction (from 1981) by the American writer Eudora Welty. As of 2/26/21, [this edition was available from Amazon for \\$8.79](#). Though you are welcome to use any unabridged edition of the novel, class discussions will likely be much more productive if we're all using texts with the same page numbering. Also, it appears that some other editions use the same page numbers for the text itself, with the first part of the novel ("The Window") beginning on page 3, the middle part ("Time Passes") beginning on page 125, and the final part ("The Lighthouse") beginning on page 145.

COURSE RESOURCES

Materials such as weekly handouts and updates, as well as links to online resources, will be posted on the course website "materials and info" page (<https://sacks-richard.com/lighthouse-du-materials-2>).