

Sister Carrie

When Theodore Dreiser wanted to publish his first book in 1900, his publisher feared the novel was too risqué, so he changed Dreiser's title, *The Flesh and the Spirit*, to *Sister Carrie*. Even with editorial changes, the novel was too controversial for many, and it sold poorly. One hundred and twenty years later, *Sister Carrie* represents a masterpiece of American Naturalism, and a powerful influence on later American writers. Dreiser's story of beautiful but poor Carrie Meeber begins as she travels by train from rural Wisconsin to Chicago to find work. Before she gets off the train and sets foot in Union Station, she will already have begun her American ascent. We will try to keep up with her.

ISBN-10: 9780486434681 (Dover Thrift Edition) But any edition will do.

Course Outline by Week

January 28: Introduction/background to Theodore Dreiser, *Sister Carrie*, and American Naturalism

February 4: *Sister Carrie*, chapters 1-10

February 11: *Sister Carrie*, chapters 11-21

February 18: *Sister Carrie*, chapters 22-31

February 25: *Sister Carrie*, chapters 32-41

March 4: *Sister Carrie*, chapters 42-50

March 11: The Legacy of *Sister Carrie*

March 18: *Sister Carrie* on film and stage

Happy New Year! I look forward to experiencing *Sister Carrie* with you all! If you would like to do some background reading, here are two suggestions:

Stephen Crane, *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (1892), a short novel that Dreiser found inspiring, published eight years before *Sister Carrie*. You can read it here:

<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/447/447-h/447-h.htm>

An essay from *The Paris Review* (2017) on Dreiser in New York:

<https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2017/10/26/theodore-dreisers-new-york/>

I hope to see you on screen at 11 am on January 28th. Thanks!

Ann Boswell

