F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* (1925)

Study Questions

The greatest of Fitzgerald's novels, *Gatsby* brilliantly evokes the shallow excesses and tawdry pleasures of the American rich and their hangers-on in the "roaring" twenties. A story of ambition and conquest, superficial pleasure and gratuitous pain, yearning and loss, it comes to us through the memories of a narrator able to discern the motives and assess the actions of his new East and West Egg friends with some detachment, even as he grows more and more involved in their lives. Think like Nick Carraway for this assignment, and tease out the meaning and significance Fitzgerald meant to attach to these **characters, actions, symbols, and events**. Be prepared to give a brief (1 minute) statement of what we should see in each.

1. James Gatz/Jay Gatsby (describe his background- plumb the significance of the name change)
2. Gatsby's house in West Egg (why did he have this fabulous place?)
3. parties at Gatsby's (who was there? how did they act toward their host)
4. Daisy Buchanan (place her socially; define her as a woman)
5. Tom Buchanan (background, social attitudes, sense of himself, treatment of women, what Daisy means to him)
6. the party at Myrtle Wilson's apartment in the Metropole (the place? who was there? her relationship to Tom Buchanan-how discreet? who knew? the dog?)
7. the meeting between Gatsby and Daisy
8. their history: what Daisy meant to Gatsby, his love for her, and why Daisy didn't wait
9. Dan Cody and Meyer Wolfsheim
10. George Wilson, his garage, its location
11. Jay and Daisy's developing affair, juxtaposed against Tom and Myrtle's, and the relationship between Jordan Baker and Nick
12. the confrontation at the Park Avenue Hotel-what Gatsby wanted to happen there, and why
13. "You want too much!"-why Daisy turned away
14. Buchanan's hold on Daisy
15. George Wilson's discovery of his wife's infidelity—what it meant to him and how he reacted
16. Myrtle's death in the road
17. Buchanan's manipulation of Wilson
18. Gatsby's murder
19. Henry C. Gatz
20. T. J. Eckleburg

Discuss Fitzgerald's development of the following **themes**. Compare them where you can to their treatment in *Carrie*.

1. gender
2. class
3. race
4. consumption, status and wealth
5. capitalism
6. East/West
7. New York
8. infidelity
9. Prohibition
10. time ("Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can. "-p. 116)