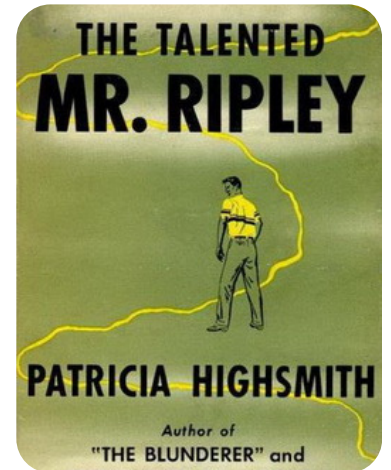# THE GREAT CON:
THE TALENTED MR. RIPLEY IN LITERATURE & FILM

American writer Patricia Highsmith first published *The Talented Mr. Ripley* in 1955. The story is told from the point of view of Tom Ripley, a man who is young, clever, and has a knack for fraud. A case of mistaken identity earns him a ticket abroad to a scenic coastal village in Italy, a far cry from his hardscrabble life in New York City. He soon becomes obsessed with Dickie Greenleaf, heir to a shipbuilding fortune and embarks on a series of deceitful and sinister acts that beget more of the same. Highsmith's story builds its suspense as the reader traverses Tom's physical and psychological journey through an affluent world too obtuse to recognize the extent to which he is a threat.

The Talented Mr. Ripley has been adapted from book to screen multiple times, with the most notable being the 1999 film directed by Anthony Minghella, starring Matt Damon and Jude Law. Such is the influence of the story that it has invited comparison to the 2023 film *Saltburn*, whose main character commits a similar subterfuge on a wealthy British family over the course of a summer in their country castle. As stories of frauds and scammers endure across popular media, Tom Ripley's is one that confronts the reader to examine how far they would go to gain access into a world whose entry requires reinventing oneself to the point of moral collapse.

Click here to view promo video.

In this course, we will study the Highsmith novel as well as the 1999 film adaptation. We will close out the course with a discussion of *Saltburn*, which is indebted to the novel.

YOUR INSTRUCTOR: Heather Brown, PhD

Heather Brown has a PhD in English with a concentration in rhetoric and composition from the University of Maryland, a master of arts in English from the University of North Carolina-Wilmington, and a bachelor of arts in English with a concentration in creative writing from Hollins University. She has taught courses in academic writing, English literature, language and linguistics, women's literature, feminist theory and criticism, rhetorical theory and criticism, and more. Brown began working as a learning designer primarily serving graduate and professional studies programs in not-for-profit higher education institutions and library training organizations, and most recently the Northwestern University School of Professional Studies.

Brown is also an adjunct associate professor of academic writing at the University of Maryland Global Campus, one of the largest distance-learning institutions in the world, where over a third of the students are Black and African-American and the University serves more than 55,000 military-affiliated students worldwide.

FRIDAYS, OCTOBER 11 THROUGH NOVEMBER 15

7am AK | 8am PT | 9am MT | 10am CT | 11am ET

Each session is 90 minutes

- Live Lecture 1, Friday, October 11
- Live Lecture 2, Friday, October 18
- Live Lecture 3, Friday, October 25
- Live Lecture 4, Friday, November 1
- Live Lecture 5, Friday, November 8
- Live Lecture 6, Friday, November 15

To register, please contact your local Osher Institute.