

English 245: The British Novel

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Spring, 2011
MW 8:00-9:30
Office Hours: MW: 9:30-10:00
& by appointment
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Course Description:

In this course, we will examine the development of the romantic novel, considering the various social and historical events that influenced its development. We will begin the course by reading a novel by Lady Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, which raises questions about anonymous authorship, social class, and social manners. The very form of Lady Georgiana's novel reminds us of the importance of the circulating library for the development of fiction. We will then contrast this novel with Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*, considering such questions as: how do we distinguish a popular from a great work of fiction? Is it by reputation that we judge or can we find intrinsic qualities in the work of art itself? In this course we will examine how the novel changed from its epistolary origins into a genre that makes use of omniscient and multiple narrative forms. We will examine how British writers shifted strategies to reach a changing audience and to respond to such events as the French Revolution. Lady Georgiana's novel was written for a circulating library; Austen's novel is developed from the epistolary model of Samuel Richardson; Mary Shelley begins and ends *Frankenstein* with a series of letters, while Bronte uses a number of narrators to tell her tale in a way that recalls Lady Georgiana's strategy in her epistolary novel about gambling. Is there a reason why these strategies changed over time? What effect do they have on the reader's experience of the story?

Arts and Literature Domain

Courses in the Arts and Literature domain ask students to extend their knowledge and experience of the arts while developing their critical and reflective abilities. In these courses, students will interpret and analyze particular creative works, investigate the relations of form and meaning, and through critical and/or creative activity come to experience art with greater openness, insight and enjoyment. These courses focus on works of art or literature as such, though the process of analysis may also include social and cultural issues. Work in this domain includes literature, the visual arts, media arts, the performing arts, music and theater.

Students will complete three courses in this learning domain, with not more than two courses coming from the same department or program.

Course Requirements:

2 essays and a final exam.

E-mail essays will not be accepted. Papers must be handed in as a hard-copy. Please keep a copy of all work on disk; keep a copy of all graded papers. 3 or more absences will lower your grade by 10 points. Please do not phone ahead with excuses or regrets. Students must read, even if they do not buy, the books listed on this syllabus, published by the presses listed below. Every effort has been made to choose the most reliable edition, and we will make reference to this and to essays at the back of each book.

Grade Distribution:

Essay #1.....25%
Essay #2.....25%
Midterm (5 reading quizzes).....25%
Final Exam.....25%

Books:

Lady Georgiana, The Sylph (Northwestern)
Jane Austen, Sense and Sensibility (Norton)
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (Norton)
Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights (Norton)
Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness

Course Calendar

Week One The Sylph, March 28, March 30
Week Two The Sylph, April 4, April 6

Week Three Sense and Sensibility, April 11, 13
Week Four Sense and Sensibility, **Essay #1 due on April 20**
 April 18, 20
Week Five Frankenstein, April 25, 27
Week Six Frankenstein, **Midterm on Monday**, May 2, 4

Week Seven Wuthering Heights, May 9, 11; **Essay #2 due on May 11**
Week Eight Wuthering Heights, May 16, 18

Week Nine Heart of Darkness, May 23, 25
Week Ten Heart of Darkness, May 30, June 1 **Essay #3 due on June 1**

Final Exam: Monday, June 6

Choose two of the essays below; they need to be turned in on the day listed below:

Essay 1, 5 pages double spaced, April 20

1. Austen's novel distinguishes between characters who exhibit sense and those who exhibit sensibility. Which characters would you assign to each trait and why? What is the novel saying about the relationship between these two human qualities? How does an understanding of the historical time period help us understand the novelist's perspective on sense and sensibility. Use Raymond Williams' definition of "sensibility" at the back of the Norton anthology to help you answer this question.

Essay 2, 5 pages double-spaced, May 11

1. How does Mary Shelley use the epistolary form to reveal gender characteristics that become important for themes (or content) in the novel as a whole. Consider what we learn about Victor through letters. What function does Robert Walton's correspondence serve in the novel? Compare and contrast with Lady Georgiana's *The Sylph*.

Essay 3, 5 pages double-spaced, June 1

1. Explain Bronte's use of narrative technique in Wuthering Heights. Compare and contrast with Conrad's use of multiple narrators in Heart of Darkness. How do these writers use narrative form to enrich and complicate their story?

Midterm: May 2

Final Exam: June 1

For each week:

1. Compose 3 questions related to each novel that we read and bring it to class. Each question should relate to a significant passage in the novel of 1-5 lines (it can be longer).
2. Answer one of your own questions in a paragraph. Include a significant quotation from the text in your answer. Bring it to class typed, double-spaced, and with your name and the name of the class on the top, as well as the date submitted. Late papers will be downgraded one grade for every week they are late. (one day late = one week late).
3. You will be asked to read your paragraph aloud to the class. Please be prepared for questions and to explain any written observations you have made.

Spring 2011 Calendar

Saturday	March 26	BEGIN SQ2011 SATURDAY CLASSES
Monday	March 28	BEGIN SQ2011 DAY & EVENING CLASSES
Sunday	April 3	Last day to add classes to SQ2011 schedule
Sunday	April 10	Last day to drop classes with no penalty
Monday	April 11	Grades of "W" assigned for classes dropped on or after this day
		Last day to select pass/fail option
Friday	April 15	Last day to select auditor status
Friday	April 22	Good Friday - University Closed
Saturday	April 23	Easter Holiday - University Closed
Sunday	April 24	Easter Holiday - University Closed
Monday	April 25	Begin optional mid-term exam week
Friday	April 29	End optional mid-term exam week
Friday	May 13	Last day to withdraw from SQ2011 classes
Monday	May 30	Memorial Day (Observed) - University Closed
Friday	June 3	End SQ2011 Day & Evening Classes
Saturday	June 4	SQ2011 Saturday Final Exam
Monday	June 6	Begin SQ2010 Day & Evening Final Exams
Friday	June 10	End SQ2010 Day & Evening Final Exams
		Baccalaureate Mass
		Graduation Weekend KickOff
		END SPRING QUARTER 2011
		TUITION DUE: SUMMER I SESSION
Saturday	June 11	COMMENCEMENT
Sunday	June 12	COMMENCEMENT
Friday	June 17	GRADES DUE: SPRING 2011
		IN Grades issued Autumn 2010 lapse to F
		R Grades issued Spring 2010 lapse to F