

The Nineteenth Century British Novel

LLSL 2333

T, Th 2-3:40 PM

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A. Description and Goals

This course surveys the novel in Britain at the nineteenth-century height of its formal development and confidence. The vast majority of our books are 'household names', with well-known characters and plots that have been treasured for generations and have become cultural common currency even with people who have not read them. As my friend, who many years ago worked in a bookstore, once commented, "these are the classics that people will come into the store and buy right off the shelf." With these authors, the novel combines ingenious plotting and a sense of emotional life, comedy and passion, droll idiosyncrasies with convictions of the heart. Fully in command of its own imaginative resources, the nineteenth century novel became a form in which a society in the midst of rapid and turbulent change chronicled its own transformation and that of the idea of the self without which society is not meaningful.

This course is a lot of reading, but we should be able to read the major representative books of the era in our semester-long frame.

The goals of this class are:

- to introduce students to the major authors of the nineteenth century novel for min Britain
- To reflect on the technical possibilities and scope of the novel form
- To understand the novel as a mode of representing the world—To write competent academic prose.

.B. Books

List of Required Books—all at Barnes and Noble, 5th Avenue and 18th Street, or if you have your own editions, or have an e-reader, feel free to use those.

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* ISBN 978-1-55111-180-3
Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* ISBN 9781551115320)

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* ISBN 9781551111315
William Makepeace Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* ISBN 9780141439839
Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe* (Oxford World's Classics) (9780192834997
Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield* ISBN 9780451530042
Lewis Carroll, *Alice In Wonderland* ISBN 978-0-86203-324-8
Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr., Hyde* ISBN 9780451528957 ..
Thomas Hardy, *Jude The Obscure* ISBN 9780451527257

C. POLICIES

Policy on Attendance and Lateness

- Absences may justify some grade reduction and a total of four absences mandate a reduction of one letter grade for the course.
- More than four absences mandate a failing grade for the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the following:
 - an extended illness requiring hospitalization or visit to a physician (with documentation)
 - a family emergency, e.g. serious illness (with written explanation)
 - observance of a religious holiday

The attendance and lateness policies are enforced as of the first day of classes for all registered students. If registered during the first week of the add/drop period, the student is responsible for any missed assignments and coursework.

For significant lateness, the instructor may consider the tardiness as an absence for the day. Students failing a course due to attendance should consult with an academic advisor to discuss options.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's work as one's own in all forms of academic endeavor (such as essays, theses, examinations, research data, creative projects, etc), intentional or unintentional. Plagiarized material may be derived from a variety of sources, such as books, journals, internet postings, student or faculty papers, etc. This includes the purchase or “outsourcing” of written assignments for a course. A detailed definition of plagiarism in research and writing can be found in the fourth edition of the MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, pages 26-29. Procedures concerning allegations of plagiarism and penalties are set forth in the Lang catalog.

Disabilities

In keeping with the University's policy of providing equal access for students with disabilities, any student requesting accommodations must first meet with Student Disability Services. Jason Luchs or a designee from that office will meet with students requesting accommodations and related services, and if appropriate, provide an Academic Adjustment Notice for the student to provide to his or her instructors. The instructor is required to review the letter with the student and discuss the accommodations, provided the student brings the letter to the attention of the instructor. This letter is necessary in order for classroom accommodations to be provided. Student Disability Services is located at 79 Fifth Avenue - 5th Floor. The phone number is (212) 229-5626. Students and faculty are expected to review the Student Disability Services webpage. The webpage can be found at <http://www.newschool.edu/studentaffairs/disability/> and the office is available to answer any questions or concerns.

- D. Assignments

Three six-page papers, one two-page paper.

Paper 1—six pages—Sir Walter Scott said of Jane Austen, “That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and the sentiment, is denied to me.” Comparing *Persuasion* and *Ivanhoe*, which approach do you favor, Austen’s or Scotts.

Paper 2—Six pages—If you were in total control of the literary canon, and could determine which books lasted and which fell into obscurity, but if you were given the limit that between *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* only one novel would survive, which would it be and why?

Paper 3—six pages--David Copperfield or Becky Sharp? Which one is a hero(ine) for our time?

Paper 4—two pages--how does one of our last three books (Carroll, Stevenson, Hardy) change the novel.

If you wish to do a **fifteen-minute in-class presentation** on any adaptation (film, TV, or any other medium) of any text we are reading this term, this presentation, along with an outline or summary, **can be used to replace** one of the six-page papers.

You are also very free and, in fact, encouraged to pick your own topics as long as they are on the appropriate texts.

E. Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Tue Jan 24 Opening

Thu Jan 26 *Persuasion* up to end of chapter 5

Tue Jan 31 *Persuasion* up to the end of Chapter 16

Thu Feb 2 Finish *Persuasion*

Tue Feb 7 Sir Walter Scott, *Ivanhoe*, up to ch. 14

Thu Feb 9 *Ivanhoe*, up to ch. 28

Tue Feb 14 Finish *Ivanhoe*

Thu Feb 16 *Jane Eyre* up to end of Chapter vi

Tue Feb 21 *Jane Eyre* up to chapter XIII. Paper 1 due,

Thu Feb 23 *Jane Eyre* up to Chapter XXIII

Tue Feb 28 Guest discussant on *Jane Eyre*, *Jennifer Gilmore*

Thu March 1 Guest discussant, Lang alumni parent John Gould with a slide show on English writers; *Wuthering Heights* up to end of ch. 14

(Please note I will be there on both February 27 and March 1 and will be teaching those classes, but having two special guest discussants that week).

Tue March 6 *Wuthering Heights* up to end of ch. 25 Paper 2 due

Thu March 8 Finish *Wuthering Heights*

Week of March 13—off for spring break (I will be in London and likely to be having a more Thackerayan than Dickensian experience there).

Tue March 20 *David Copperfield* ch. 1-10

Thu March 22 *David Copperfield* ch. 11-26

Tue March 27 *David Copperfield* ch. 27-41

Thu March 29 *David Copperfield* ch. 41-64

Tue April 3 *Vanity Fair* ch. 1-15

Thu April 5 *Vanity Fair* ch.15 -29

Tue April 10 *Vanity Fair* ch. 30-44

Thu April 12 *Vanity Fair* ch. 45-67. Paper 3 due.

Tue April 17 *Alice in Wonderland* ch. 1-VI

Thu April 19 *Alice in Wonderland* ch. VII-XII

Tue Apr 24 Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Thu Apr 26 Hardy, *Jude*, “At Marygreen”

Tue May 1 *Jude*, “At Christminster”

Thu May 3 *Jude* part 3 and 4 ‘At Melchester,’ ‘at Shaston ‘

Tue May 8 *Jude* parts 5 and 6 ‘At Aldbrickham’, ‘at Christminster again’, paper 4 due

Thu May 10 Conclusion