ENG 322: English Novel (Scott to Hardy)

Spring 2013
MWF 2:00-2:50 p.m. CRN 32903 204 Chapman Hall

Instructor: Dr. Kathleen O’Fallon
Office: 256 PLC Hours: MWF 10:30-11:30 a.m.
and by appointment
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Course Description:

The literature of the 19th century in England—especially of that period associated with the reign of Queen Victoria—is often neglected by modern readers who assume its values are prudish, its style is stuffy, and its ideas are hopelessly out of date. However, the Victorian period was a time of radical change socially, economically, politically, and scientifically. The resultant excitement, uncertainty, and anxiety of the English people can be found expressed in the works of the country’s greatest novelists. The novels selected for this course contain memorable characters and complex narratives which give us a dazzling portrait of a nation separating itself from the past, yet not fully embracing the future.

Required Texts:

Dickens, Charles  A Christmas Carol (1843)
Bronte, Charlotte  Jane Eyre (1847)
Gaskell, Elizabeth  Mary Barton (1848)
Collins, Wilkie  The Moonstone (1868)
Hardy, Thomas  The Mayor of Casterbridge (1885)
Written Assignments

No exams are required in this class. Instead, you will be writing short (3-page MAX!) argumentative essays on three of the required novels written by Bronte, Gaskell, Collins or Hardy, and they will be due as indicated on the schedule. All essays must be narrowly focused, and ample direct textual evidence must be offered in support of all assertions. You may choose the general topics of these essays from the list below, keeping in mind that you will need a clear thesis to articulate your particular approach to that general topic. You may not repeat topics, but you may use the "big ideas" topic more than once, as long as you choose a different idea.

Topics:

A. A letter to a central character evaluating a key choice the character has made (keep in mind the limitations the Victorian period exerts on some people’s choices).
B. An essay imitating a novelist’s style.
C. The effect of point of view on narrative choices.
D. Effects created by a recurring image or symbol.
E. How this novel tackles a “big idea” important to Victorians:
   science, industrialization, religious doubt, the power of
   institutions, breakdown of the class system, the treatment of the
   poor, commercialism, Darwinism, the advent of policing
A fourth essay will require you to compare the elements of Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol* with a modern film or television version of the story. The class will be divided into groups for viewing and discussing the version of the story they have selected. As an individual, you will write a 3-4 page argument regarding what comparing the contemporary version with Dickens’ original suggests about the respective cultures each represents.

In addition to the four required formal essays, you will bring to class on designated days a passage from the text under discussion and a brief (1-2 page) explanation of how the passage reveals something important about the writer’s style, the development of a particular character, a significant turning point in the plot, or a key theme of the novel. You should conclude with one or more questions that will provoke discussion of the passage. ALL STUDENTS WILL READ AT LEAST ONE PASSAGE AND RESPONSE ALOUD DURING THE TERM.

**Group Presentation**

Groups will choose one modern version of *A Christmas Carol* to view together and discuss. Each group will “teach” the class about the version they have chosen, showing key excerpts from the film and discussing the important comparisons between the original version by Dickens and its modern counterpart.

**Schedule of Assignments:**

**Week One: April 1-5**

M Introductions What do we mean when we say “Victorian”?
W Mrs. Gaskell on Charlotte Bronte, from “Contexts” section of
  Jane Eyre, Norton Critical Ed., 457-465
F Jane Eyre, Chapters I-X

  Week Two: April 8-12
M Jane Eyre, Chapters XI-XXVII
W Jane Eyre, Chapters XXVIII-XXXVIII
  Passage response due
F Jane Eyre, Selected Criticism
  “Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman”
  (Rich)

  Week Three: April 15-19
M Jane Eyre, Selected Criticism
  “A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane’s Progress” (Gilbert)
  PAPERS DUE
W Background: The “condition of England” question
F Mary Barton, Chapters 1-10

  Week Four: April 22-26
M Mary Barton, Chapters 11-20
W Mary Barton, Chapters 21-30
  Passage response due
F Mary Barton, Chapters 31-38

  Week Five: April 29-May 3
M Background: From Mary Barton to Sergeant Cuff: The Detective in
  Victorian Novels
  PAPERS DUE
W The Moonstone, Prefaces and Prologue, and The Story, First
  Period, “The Loss of the Diamond”
F The Moonstone, Second Period, Narratives 1-3
Passage response due

Week Six: May 6-10
M  The Moonstone, Second Period, Narratives 4-8 and Epilogue
W  Background: Wilkie Collins and Charles Dickens as Collaborators
F  Background: Christmas as a Victorian Invention
    Special Writing Assignment: List the key elements of the story of
    A Christmas Carol

Week Seven: May 13-17
M  A Christmas Carol (read ALL)
W  A Christmas Carol (read ALL)
    Passage response due
F  Group meetings—choosing of modern version to study

Week Eight: May 20-24
M  Group meetings
W  Group meetings
F  Presentations by groups

Week Nine: May 27-31
M  MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED—NO CLASSES
W  Presentations by groups
F  Presentations by groups  PAPERS DUE
    Week Ten: June 3-7
M  The Mayor of Casterbridge, Chapters 1-15
    Background: Tragicomedy and Modernism
W  The Mayor of Casterbridge, Chapters 16-30
    Passage response due
F  The Mayor of Casterbridge, Chapters 31-45

Final Exam Period: Wednesday, June 12 3:15-5:15
Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty:
All work submitted in this course must be your own and must be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, and paraphrases) must be properly documented. Refer to the summary of the Code of Student Conduct in the Schedule of Classes. In cases where plagiarism has been clearly established, the award of an F for the final course grade is my standard practice. It is simple to discover if a paper has been “borrowed” from the internet, so don’t underestimate my ability to spot plagiarism. Please talk to me if you have any questions about your use of sources before you turn in something that might be questionable.

Policy on Late Papers and Make-up Exams:
If exigent circumstances cause problems with the due date for the essays, you must discuss this with me before the deadline so that arrangements can be made. Late work which is not cleared with the instructor prior to the due date will not be accepted.

Policy on Disabilities:
Students with physical or learning disabilities should consult the instructor as soon as possible so accommodations can be made.

Grades:
Each of the following requirements has weight in determining your grade:
✓ Essays (60%)
✓ Group presentation/essay (20%)
✓ Attendance and Participation (20%)

Note: This grade includes reading aloud

**Attendance and Participation:**

Students are expected to be in class, on time, having read the materials assigned for that day and having done any required writing. Assignments are due when class begins.

Attendance will be taken every day. It is your responsibility to sign in on the attendance sheet for yourself only. More than three absences will result in a one-half grade penalty in the final course grade. Attending class is a choice you have to make on your own, and that means you have to accept the consequences of that choice.

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, except in two cases:

1. Illness so severe and prolonged that a doctor officially excuses you.
2. You are involved in a university-sanctioned activity.

Written proof of these excuses is required, but there is no need to explain your reasons for other absences. Emailing me that you are going to miss does not excuse you from class.

If you know you are going to miss a class, make advance arrangements with me to turn in any work that is due and/or to pick up handouts. Ask a classmate to catch you up on discussion that you will miss.

If you have an unplanned absence, see me as soon as you return to pick up missed handouts, and ask a classmate for any missed notes. If you have questions about material discussed while you were gone, come to
my office hours. We will have carried on in your absence, so please don’t be arrogant enough to ask if you missed anything. Of course, you did.

STUDENTS MUST ALWAYS BRING TEXTS TO CLASS WHEN THEY ARE BEING DISCUSSED. WHEN PASSAGE RESPONSES ARE ASSIGNED, STUDENTS MUST BE PREPARED TO READ THEM ALOUD. IT SHOULD GO WITHOUT SAYING THAT WRITING IMPLEMENTS ARE ALSO REQUIRED.

Students are expected to contribute significantly to discussion, and to do so in a way that shows respect for classmates. Listening carefully is as important as speaking thoughtfully, so please do not interrupt or wave your hand insistently while someone else is speaking. All ideas are welcome in this class, but they should be backed up by evidence from the texts.

To be fully present in the class, you must be focused on the reading and the discussion at hand. THEREFORE, please turn off and put away all electronic devices before class begins. Please do not leave the room during class unless you have an emergency.