

English 322-13036
The English Novel (Scott to Hardy)
Fall 2013

Professor H. Kaufman

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Office Hours: Tuesday 1-4 and by appointment

541-346-3932

Class Meetings:

360 Condon

T/TH 10:00-11:20

Course Description

This course will focus on the British novel's development during the nineteenth century. We will consider the novel not as a fixed genre, but as a fluid literary form. This course will focus on the ways in which British writers in the nineteenth century boldly overturned, pushed, revised, challenged, or otherwise re-imagined the shape and content of the novel. We will study some of their innovations, such as their choice to include marginal voices and perspectives; to weave together multiple narrative threads; to explore character interiority; to imagine settings unfamiliar to their readers; and to address taboo or controversial subjects. As we move through the century we'll examine the fascinating relationships writers forged between the form and content of novels. We will also give careful thought to important nineteenth-century contexts that were shaped and influenced by novels in this period.

Required Texts (Available at the UO bookstore). Please get the editions specified below:

Mary Shelley (with Percy Shelley), *Frankenstein* (1816-17) from *The Original Frankenstein*, Ed.

Charles Robinson (ISBN: 978-0-307-47442-1), Vintage Classics, 2009.

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1837-8), Ed. Kathleen Tillotson, Introduction by Stephen Gill,

Oxford World Classics, 2008. (ISBN: 978-0199536269)

George Eliot, *Mill on the Floss* (1860), Ed. Oliver Lovesey, Broadview Press, 2007.

(ISBN: 9781551114675)

H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885), Penguin Classics, 2008.

(978-0141439525)

Course Expectations and Details

Reading:

This class will have some demanding (but wonderful!) reading assignments. We will move at a steady pace and I will expect everyone to keep up. **Please bring to each class the book/text we are reading for that day, paper, and a writing utensil** (notes may be taken on computers, but paper will be necessary for in-class writing & quizzes).

As you read each night's assignment you should take physical or mental notes, asking questions, noting important or confusing passages, or thinking about how this reading assignment is different from others we've read in this course. I've included a Reader's Guide (see last page of syllabus) to help you with your note taking. Please don't feel limited by this list of questions. I offer it as a guide for those you prefer specific questions to consider as they read.

Class Participation

Each person enrolled in this course is expected to help foster a community of respect. We will read controversial material and I expect that everyone will not always agree, or that your experiences may be much different from those you learn about in the course materials. It is crucial that everyone listen carefully and contribute to class discussion in a thoughtful and respectful manner.

Please turn cell phones to vibrate before class begins, and silence any electronic equipment capable of interrupting class.

Quizzes

Quizzes are unannounced and will focus on the reading due on the day of the quiz. If you are absent on the day of a quiz, you cannot make it up (since it will be “pop”). However, you may drop one quiz grade from your quiz grade average. If you’ve missed one quiz, you can count it as your “dropped” quiz. If you haven’t missed a quiz then the lowest quiz grade will be dropped. Quizzes take place at the start of class.

Essays

You will complete two 4-page critical essays, an in-class essay, and one final take-home exam. With the exception of the in-class essay, all written work should be submitted to Blackboard by the due date. You should upload your work—saved as a single word file—onto the section on Blackboard titled “Assignments.”

Late work can be uploaded, but it will be counted as “late.” Paper grades will be docked 5 points for each day the paper is late. Extensions and incompletes will be given only for documented emergencies. I do not accept written work submitted by email. The “Writing Guide” (located toward the end of this syllabus) contains some guidelines for writing and formatting your essays. Please follow the guidelines, and consult the MLA guide for additional information.

In-class Writing Assignment

This assignment will give you a chance to think on your feet. I’ll ask you to close read and respond to questions about one or two passages from *Frankenstein*. Answers should be written in a bluebook with blue or black ink. Bluebooks will be handed in at the end of the class period.

Take-Home Final Exam

You will have a cumulative final exam in this course. This assignment will be open book, and will ask you to write two short essays in response to questions about the material we’ve covered in this course (reading assignments as well as subjects covered in class discussions/lectures).

Work & Assessment

- 10% Class participation — including quality and consistency of contributions to discussions, punctuality, preparedness for class, and quiz grades
- 15% In-class essay
- 25% Essay #1, 4 pages minimum
- 25% Essay #2, 4 pages minimum
- 25% Final take-home exam

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is mandatory. It is your responsibility to sign (your name only) the sign-in sheet at the beginning of each class. If you neglect to sign your name you'll be listed as absent for that day. You may not sign in classmates.

Your regular attendance is vital to the goals of this course. You may miss two class meetings without penalty. *Your final grade will drop one-third of a letter grade for each subsequent absence unless you have contacted me and we have agreed on alternative arrangements.* You are still responsible for making your sure work is turned in on time despite absence.

Course Website (blackboard.uoregon.edu):

You will need to access this site to upload your writing assignments; receive feedback on your written work; and access syllabi and handouts.

Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and will need accommodation, let me know by week two of the term so that I can make appropriate arrangements. Please request that the office of Disabilities Services send a letter indicating that you've consulted with them about your disability.

Plagiarism: All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly documented. Please see me if you have any questions about your use of sources. Plagiarism will be handled according to the *Student Conduct Code*:

<http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode/tabid/69/Default.aspx>

Tutoring and Help

Writing help is available through Academic Learning Services, located in 68 PLC, and available by phone at 346-3226. I am also very happy to help you will coursework. Please contact me by email or after class to set up a meeting time.

Assignment Schedule

Assignments are due on dates listed below. Please use editions of the novels listed on the first page of this syllabus.

Week 1

T 10/1 Course Introduction
TH 10/3 *Frankenstein*: pgs. 45-104

Week 2

T 10/8 *Frankenstein*: pgs. 104-197
TH 10/10 *Frankenstein*: pgs. 197-245 (end)

Week 3

T 10/15 *Oliver Twist*: chapters 1-11
TH 10/17 *Oliver Twist*: chapters 12-20

Week 4

T 10/22 *Oliver Twist*: chapters 21-33
TH 10/24 **In-class essay: please bring bluebooks to class**
Keep reading *Oliver Twist*

Week 5

T 10/29 *Oliver Twist*: chapters 34-42
TH 10/31 *Oliver Twist*: chapters 43-53 (end)

Week 6

T 11/5 *Mill on the Floss*: Book First, “Boy and Girl”
TH 11/7 *Mill on the Floss*: Book Second, “School Time”
Friday 11/8 Essay #1 Due on Blackboard by 5:00 PM

Week 7

T 11/12 *Mill on the Floss*: Book Third, “The Downfall” **AND** Book Fourth,
“The Valley of Humiliation”
TH 11/14 *Mill on the Floss*: Book Fifth, “Wheat and Tares”

Week 8

T 11/19 *Mill on the Floss*: Book Sixth, “The Great Temptation”
TH 11/21 *Mill on the Floss*: Book Seventh, “The Final Rescue”

Week 9

T 11/26 *King Solomon’s Mines*
TH 11/28 Thanksgiving—no class

Week 10

T 12/3 *King Solomon’s Mines*
TH 12/5 *King Solomon’s Mines* (end) **AND Essay #2 due on Blackboard by 5:00 PM**
Final Take-Home Exam distributed in class on this day

Final take-home exam due on Blackboard by Tuesday 12/10 at Noon

Writing Guide

- * Essays must be typed and double-spaced. You should have standard 1-inch margins on the top, bottom, and sides. Use Times New Roman 12 pt. font.
- * Your essay should have a title. A suggestive title can add to the power of an argument. It's also a great way to check to see if your argument is focused around a clear issue.
- * Mark your name in the upper right-hand corner of the essay's first page. Insert page numbers.
- * Keep a copy of your paper.
- * Proofread and Edit your paper many, many, many times before submitting it. Thoughtful, well-written, edited essays cannot be thrown together at the last minute.
- * You will want to use formal prose. Essays should not sound like emails to your best friend, your grandmother, or your roommate. Your voice can help to establish your authority, and thus plays a powerful role in the essay's persuasive power. If you sound like you take yourself seriously your reader will follow your lead.
- * Introduce an author by citing his/her complete name; thereafter, use the last name only.
- * Use present tense.
Wrong: In *Jane Eyre* Brontë suggesteded
Right: In *Jane Eyre* Brontë suggests

Components of the Thesis: Focus is the key to success

The **subject** of your essay is the text you are discussing:
George Eliot's *Mill on the Floss*

The **topic** of your essay is the interpretive issue or problem you are trying to address:
What is the significance of the way Eliot presents nature in this novel?

Your **thesis** is the position you take and which you support throughout your essay:
In *Mill on the Floss* George Eliot does not simply *adopt* scientific theories about nature, she *adapts* them in order to critique the cause of Maggie's demise.

Who cares?/So what? is the part of your essay that gives it power; it's what drives you to write on this topic in the first place:
In this novel Eliot is able to raise important questions about the nature of what her culture deems natural—that is, about the grave repercussions of viewing social constructions as “natural.”

Evidence/Quotes

To present a persuasive argument, you will want to explain how the evidence you present leads to and supports your interpretation of the work. Begin by introducing the quote (something to orient your reader so we know the speaker and context of the quote). How does this quote support your thesis? What is significant about the way the writing is put together?

Avoid long quotations. Whenever possible, integrate significant phrases from the text in your own sentences as you present and explain your interpretation.

Whenever you use a significant word or phrase from the text, use quotation marks to indicate that you are in fact using someone else's words.

*Your assignment is textual analysis, not plot synopsis, and not simply historical commentary.

Your task is to show the connections between what the author says and how she or he says it — in other words, to identify and examine the implications of the author's strategies (style, theme, images, patterns of thought and of argument, etc. . .) in light of the text's form, cultural contexts, or other facets of the work we've discussed in class.

Grading:

A range: You have read the material/text with careful thought and have responded insightfully with clearly written prose. Your writing addresses the specific expectations of the assignment, and is guided by a clear focus and logical progression from one idea to the next. Your essay is well organized, succinct, specific, well informed, free from grammatical errors, and does not rely on generalities or assumptions. It is clear that you have spent time thinking about the way the text is put together and how it makes its point.

B range: Essays in this range need a more carefully developed thesis, or raise an interesting thesis, but need more persuasive tactics to make the essay claims convincing or clear to the reader. B-range essays include quotes or examples from the text and a careful analysis of what those quotes/examples mean and why they matter to the overall focus of the essay. Essays in this range may also have a few grammatical errors or rely on tired or unspecific language and generalizations.

C range: Essays in this category contain some interesting ideas that are in desperate need of focus, specificity, and analysis, such as "I really liked this piece a lot" or "This was really boring." If you include quotes without close analysis or interpretation, your grade will fall into the C range. If your essay lacks organization and/or a clear focus/argument, you'll earn a grade in the C range.

D range: This mark indicates that you have put very little work into the assignment. You've offered some thought, but your essay appears to have been thrown together at the last minute, is littered with errors, lacks focus and organization, and fails to follow the essay assignment.

F: Failure to complete the assignment.

Reading Guide

- 1) Find a passage that struck you as interesting, beautiful, ugly, sad, striking, or that otherwise stands out in your mind. What is it about that passage that you find so compelling or striking? Pinpoint some of the features (language, image, setting, character description, plot twist, suspense, surprise, etc.) that make it jump off the page for you.
- 2) Which character bothers you most? Why? What do we know about that character that leads to such a strong reaction?
- 3) What do you notice about the setting of the novel? What does it look like? How does the setting shape your impression of the story?
- 4) Many novels take on controversial or taboo subjects. Which subjects does this novel raise that would have been controversial to nineteenth-century readers? Are these subjects still controversial? Why? Even if you don't know a lot about the issues, identify places where you sense they are rising to the surface of the text.
- 5) Is the novel told in the present or past tense? How does the perspective of the narrator alter your reading? How would an alternate perspective (told from a different moment in time or by a different kind of narrator) affect your reaction to the story?
- 6) Select a surprising moment. What do you notice about the way the writer presents that surprise? Did it catch you off guard, or did you see it coming? Which details from earlier passages prepared you for the surprise?
- 7) What shape does this novel take? Is it 10 chapters of equal length, or does it have unique structural features (diaries, letters, short chapters, no chapters, etc.?). Give some thought to how those features influence your understanding of the novel.
- 8) What is the significance of the novel's title? What is the significance of a particular chapter's title?
- 9) How does the writer get you to sympathize with particular characters? How does the writer get you to dislike or become frustrated with particular characters? What's going on in the writing that leads you to certain conclusions about characters or events?
- 10) What do you know about the narrator of the story? How does the narrator's tone or perspective alter your impressions of the narrative?