

ENG 322: English Novel (Scott to Hardy)

Winter 2014

MWF 2:00-2:50 p.m.

CRN 23389

205 Deady

Hall

Instructor: Dr. Kathleen O'Fallon

Office: 256 PLC

Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00 a.m.

and by appointment

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Literary endeavor and the search for knowledge in no other single reign, save that of Elizabeth, made such splendid contributions to the stock of new facts and written words that men will not willingly let die. Science in this reign made such extraordinary additions to almost every department of knowledge and industry that there is no other reign to be mentioned in the same sentence. The scientific results achieved by the mind of man in the age of Victoria stand alone as at once the wonder and the blessing of mankind.

From the Obituary of Queen Victoria
The New York Times, January 23, 1901

Course Description:

The literature of the 19th century in England—especially of that period associated with the reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901)—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often neglected by modern readers who assume its values are prudish, its style is stuffy, and its ideas are hopelessly out of date.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 *Bleak House* (1853), Norton
Critical Edition (1977)
Bronte, Charlotte *Jane Eyre* (1847), Norton Critical
Edition (3rd)
Gaskell, Elizabeth *Mary Barton* (1848)
Hardy, Thomas *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886)

Written Assignments

No exams are required in this class. Instead, you will be writing short (4-page MAX!) essays on each of the four required novels, and they will be due as indicated on the schedule. Because essays will form the basis of in-class discussion on those days, and you will be expected to come prepared to read them aloud, you should write to provoke discussion. Every student will read aloud at least once during the term. Time and class size will determine if there will be further opportunities to read.

All essays must be narrowly focused, and ample direct textual evidence must be offered in support of all assertions. Choose the general topics of your essays from the list below. 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. Why I love or hate this novel (not a laundry list of praise or complaints, but unified argument).
- b. 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).
- c. An essay imitating a novelist's style.
- d. The effect of point of view on narrative choices.
- e. Effects created by recurring images/symbols.
- f. How this novel tackles a "big idea" important to Victorians (science, industrialization, religious doubt, the power of institutions, breakdown of the class system, commercialism, Darwinism, the advent of policing, etc.)
- g. (for Jane Eyre ONLY) Read either Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys or The Eyre Affair by Jasper Fforde. Discuss the effect that intertextuality has on your reading of Jane Eyre. COUNTS AS TWO ESSAYS. PAGE LIMIT INCREASED TO SIX PAGES.

Schedule of Assignments:

Each day of discussion, students should come prepared with at least one passage from the assigned novel that they wish to discuss. Be ready to explain why you chose that particular passage (Examples: Is it exemplary of the writer's style? Is it a key plot moment? Does it reveal something important about a particular character or relationship? Does it point to a theme in the novel? Is it an evocative image? *Be ready to explain how the passage does what you say it does.*)

Week One: January 6-10

M Introductions What do we mean when we say
"Victorian"?

W Background Dickens

F *Bleak House* Preface and Chapter I

Week Two: January 13-17

M *Bleak House* II-VI

W *Bleak House* VII-XII

F *Bleak House* XIII-XVI

Week Three: January 20-24

M Martin Luther King Holiday: NO CLASS MEETING

W Background Bronte

F *Jane Eyre* I-X

Week Four: January 27-31

M *Jane Eyre* XI-XXVII

W *Jane Eyre* XXVIII-XXXVIII ESSAY DUE

F Rich, "Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless
Woman"

Week Five: February 3-7

M Gilbert, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's
Progress"

W *Bleak House* XVII-XX

F *Bleak House* XXI-XXV

Week Six: February 10-14

M *Bleak House* XXVI-XXIX

W Background Gaskell

F *Mary Barton* 1-5

Week Seven: February 17-21

M *Mary Barton* 6-20

W *Mary Barton* 21-30

F *Mary Barton* 31-38 ESSAY DUE

Week Eight: February 24-28

M *Bleak House* XXX-XXXVII

W *Bleak House* XXXVIII-XLIII

F *Bleak House* XLIV-XLIX

Week Nine: March 3-7

M Background Hardy

W *The Mayor of Casterbridge* 1-15

F *The Mayor of Casterbridge* 16-30

Week Ten: March 10-14

M *The Mayor of Casterbridge* 31-45 ESSAY DUE

W *Bleak House* L-LVIII

F *Bleak House* LIX-LXVII

Final Exam Period: Monday, March 17 3:15-5:15
Final discussion of *Bleak House*, and last chance to
present papers on *Bleak House*.

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 Assignments and "Incompletes":

If exigent circumstances cause problems with the due date for the essays, students must discuss this with the instructor 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. Exceptions will not be made for assignments which specify that they must be submitted in class on the due date.**

A final grade of "incomplete" can only be granted if a student has turned in at least 50% of the required work when he/she requests this option. Students requesting an "incomplete" must come to the instructor with a written proposal detailing when and how they intend to complete all required work for the course—including a plan for fulfilling the class participation component of the course.

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 (80%)
- ✓ Attendance and Participation (20%)

Note: This grade includes reading essays aloud

*Questions regarding grades should be addressed during office hours, NOT through email. Expressing concerns as a desire to learn rather than to obtain what you "deserved" or "expected" will set a productive tone for such discussions. Please understand that an instructor cannot assign grades based on how hard a student thinks he/she has worked on an assignment—only on the written results of that effort. However, writing multiple drafts of essays and **careful** revising of those drafts should lead to more polished work that makes a positive impression on the reader.*

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 ESSAYS ARE ASSIGNED TO BE READ ALOUD, STUDENTS MUST BRING THEM TO CLASS. 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.