

ENG 321: English Novel (Defoe to Austen)

Fall 2015

MWF 12-12:50 p.m.

CRN 12112

175 Lillis Hall

Instructor: Dr. Kathleen O'Fallon

Office: 256 PLC

Hours: MWF 11:00-11:50 a.m.

and Tues. 11:00-noon

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Course Description:

The 18th century ushered in a new form of literature in England: the novel. Novels took various forms, including the epistolary novel, the picaresque novel, the gothic novel and the novel of manners. As we study examples of these forms written by some of the most influential writers of the day, we will discuss how the culture of the time shaped the literature, and we will tackle the problem of creating a working definition for a genre that—from its very beginnings—was anti-conventional and diverse.

Required Texts:

Defoe, Daniel

Robinson Crusoe (1719)

Burney, Fanny

Evelina (1778)

Lewis, Matthew

The Monk (1796)

Austen, Jane

Persuasion (1818)

Written Assignments

No exams are required in this class. Instead, you will be writing a series of one-page letters on **all** assigned novels as well as short (3-4 page MAX!) essays on three of the four required novels. All due dates are as indicated on the schedule of assignments. Because letters will form the basis of in-class discussion, and you will be expected to come prepared to read them aloud, you should write to provoke discussion. Every student will read aloud in small group discussions, and selected letters will be read to the full class.

All essays must be narrowly focused, and ample direct textual evidence (including direct quotations, summaries and paraphrases) must be offered in support of

all assertions. Topics may grow out of letters (your own or someone else's) and the discussion provoked by those letters, or you may choose to respond to one of the prompts listed below. In either case, essays must be informed by close reading of the text, NOT OUTSIDE SOURCES.

In an upper division English class, students (especially English majors) are expected to know how to write an argumentative essay and how to document that essay using MLA in-text citation format. In addition, they should have mastered basic mechanics like capitalization, spelling, punctuation and sentence structure. Papers exhibiting serious problems in these areas will be returned for correction before I comment on them or assign them a letter grade. Essays that do not display mastery of basic mechanics and format will not earn a grade higher than a "C."

ESSAY PROMPTS:

- Robinson Crusoe* Consider Crusoe's character. Does his experience on the change him in some fundamental way(s), or does it merely strengthen character traits that were present in him as a youth? Limit your discussion to one or two traits.
- Evelina* The novel contains scenes that are quite theatrical and include examples of both high comedy (wit, word play, etc.) and low comedy (physical humor). Analyze one of these scenes, discussing how it reveals Burney's critique of the values of the novel's culture.
- The Monk* Discuss how specific features of the novel's physical setting reinforce the Gothic theme that seemingly safe and familiar elements may conceal threatening and evil influences lurking below the surface.
- Persuasion* Compare the "cancelled chapters" of the novel with the ending as published. Discuss which ending best reflects Anne's development as a character throughout the novel.

Epistle [Letter] Writing Assignment

Purposes of the assignment:

1. To begin the process of articulating your thoughts about each reading
2. To provoke class discussion
3. To enhance understanding of the epistolary novel
4. To practice the process of taking an argumentative stance and supporting it
5. To provide the basis for 3-4 page essays on three of the assigned novels

Requirements:

On the days indicated on the course schedule, bring **two copies** (one for instructor, one to be read in group) of a one-page letter addressed to a character in the novel, the author of the novel, or to your classmates.

Each letter must address a **single issue** from the reading that you find provocative and want to pursue in class discussion. DO NOT just summarize the novel's content; express your response to what you have read. Use direct quotations from the text to demonstrate what you're responding to, and be as specific as possible about why your response is an appropriate one. In order to receive full credit, the letter must show that you have finished reading the text and that you have read it closely. You need to take a strong stance in relation to the element of the text that you are discussing, but that stance must be supported by the text itself. **Wild claims that contradict the evidence of the text and letters that reveal unfamiliarity with the whole text will not receive credit.**

These letters become part of an ongoing conversation among the authors of the works we examine, you, your classmates, and the instructor. On the days letters are due, students will meet in designated groups to read letters aloud and discuss their contents. One letter will be selected to represent the group's ideas, and it will be read aloud (by its author or another representative of the group) to the full class. The group representative should explain why the particular letter was chosen and summarize the responses to it. If it sparked disagreement, discuss the different positions group members held. Have a better reason for choosing a letter than "we liked it" or "it was good."

Because letters may lead to essays, all letters in a group should be given careful scrutiny. Pay special attention to whether or not the writer has taken an original approach to the text, articulated a strong thesis and offered specific evidence to support each assertion. If you believe the letter is worth expanding into a longer essay, suggest ways that could be done, and point to places in the text that might help prove (or disprove) the writer's thesis.

LETTERS WILL ONLY BE ACCEPTED IN CLASS ON THE DAY THEY ARE DUE OR THROUGH EMAIL PRIOR TO THE DAY THEY ARE DUE. NO LATE LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT.

Letters are not assigned individual grades. Instead, you will receive a “+” if the assignment is well executed, an “OK” if it is adequately executed, a “-“ if it needs improvement and a “0” if it fails to meet the requirements or is not turned in on time. The four letters will be equivalent to one essay, and a letter grade will be assigned the total effort of letter writing.

Three of these letters may form the basis for 3-4 page essays on the assigned novels. If you do not want to stick with your letter topic for the longer essay, alternative prompts are available on CANVAS. You may choose to write on any of the assigned novels, but once you miss the due date for a novel, you will have to move on to the next. Carefully plan which novels you want to write about so that you have time to draft and revise your essay adequately. I strongly encourage you to bring essay drafts to my office hours so we can work on them together.

Group Presentations

“The Jane Austen Project” is explained in a separate handout.

Schedule of Assignments:

Week One: Sept. 28—Oct. 2

M	Introductions
W	Lecture: The origins of the novel in England
F	<i>Robinson Crusoe</i> --Introduction to “A little after this, my ink began to fail me. . . other Things.”

Week Two: Oct. 5-9

M	RC “ . . .as to Weapons, I took them all to my Side every Night.”
W	RC Finish
F	Letters due; small group discussion

Week Three: Oct. 12-16

M	Group reports on letters
W	Background on epistolary novel Jane Austen Project group assignments <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> essay due
F	<i>Evelina</i> , letters 1-21

Week Four: Oct. 19-23

- M *Evelina*, letters 22-43
- W *Evelina*, letters 44-65
- F *Evelina*, letters 66-84

Week Five: Oct. 26-30

- M Letters due; small group discussion
- W Group reports on letters
- F Background on gothic novel
JA Project group meetings
Evelina essay due

Week Six: Nov. 2-6

- M *The Monk*, Introduction and Vol. I
- W *The Monk*, Vol. II
- F *The Monk*, Vol. III

Week Seven: Nov. 9-13

- M Letters due; small group discussion
- W Group reports on letters
- F Background on novel of manners
JA Project group meetings
The Monk essay due

Week Eight: Nov. 16-20

- M *Persuasion*, Chapters 1-8
- W *Persuasion*, Chapters 9-17
- F *Persuasion*, Chapters 18-24 and "Canceled Chapter"

Week Nine: Nov. 23-27

- M Letters due; small group discussion
- W Group reports on letters
- F THANKSGIVING OBSERVED; NO CLASS MEETING

Week Ten ("Dead Week"): Nov. 30-Dec. 4

M Group meetings: Jane Austen Project
 Persuasion essay due
W Group meetings: Jane Austen Project
F Group meetings: Jane Austen Project

Final Exam Period: Thursday, Dec. 10, 10:15 a.m.
Jane Austen Project Presentations

Desired Learning Outcomes

Assignments in this class give students opportunities to practice skills that the English Department has designated as “desired learning outcomes” for the undergraduate major. These outcomes include:

1. to read literary and cultural texts with discernment and comprehension and with an understanding of their conventions;
2. to draw on relevant cultural and/or historical information to situate texts within their cultural, political and historical contexts;
3. to perform critical, formal analyses of literary, cinematic and other cultural texts;
4. to write focused, analytical essays in clear, grammatically correct prose;
5. to employ logic, creativity and interpretive skills to produce original, persuasive arguments;
6. to employ primary and/or secondary sources, with proper acknowledgment and citation, as they contribute to a critical essay’s thesis.

To these department objectives, I have added the following:

7. to contribute meaningfully to a shared classroom culture of vigorous and respectful discussion;
8. to work productively in small group situations;
9. to take a significant role in a formal group presentation.

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 that 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%)
- ✓ Letters (20%)
- ✓ Attendance and Participation (20%)

Note: This grade includes reading quizzes and group presentation.

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.

RULES OF CIVIL DISCOURSE FOR THE CLASSROOM

Do your homework, so you are adequately prepared for discussion. **If it becomes clear that students are not keeping up with reading assignments, I reserve the right to begin giving unannounced reading quizzes.**

Raise your hand politely (that is, don't wave it around like a first grader who needs to go to the bathroom or extend it aggressively when you hear something you disagree with) and wait to be recognized by the teacher before speaking.

Listen actively (but silently)—don't just wait for someone else to take a breath so you can jump in with your opinion.

Avoid interrupting others.

Don't assume that you need to add your "two cents' worth" on *every* aspect of discussion. You can learn by letting others take the lead sometimes.

State your ideas as concisely as possible, staying focused and avoiding repetition.

When you make strong claims, be ready to point to specific places in the text that back up your ideas.

Ask good questions, and remain as open-minded as possible.

Acknowledge other points of view even as you prepare to express your own opinion. (This shows that you have heard what the other person has said.)

Avoid one-on-one arguments that dominate the discussion without moving it forward. Keep discussion focused on ideas, not personalities.

. . . AND OBSERVE A FEW RULES OF SIMPLE COURTESY:

Turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices before class begins. (Exception: if you are using an electronic version of the text.)

Don't distract others by talking while someone else has the floor.

Be on time. If you must be late, be quiet and unobtrusive as you enter the classroom. Don't walk in front of the instructor while she is conducting the class.

Once you're in, stay in. Take care of getting snacks and using the restroom before class or during designated breaks.

If you absolutely cannot wait to use the restroom or get a drink of water, leave your cell phone in plain sight on your desk.

Statement Regarding Sexual Harassment

The UO is committed to providing an environment **free** of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and gender-based stalking. If you or someone you know has experienced or is currently experiencing gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are **not alone**. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all OU employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the

Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure that you are aware of the range of the options available to you and that you have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline or visit the website at **safe.uoregon.edu**.