

ENG 321: English Novel (Defoe to Austen)

Spring 2016

MWF 10:00-10:50 a.m.

CRN 32087

185 Lillis Hall

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

CRN 32088

105 Peterson Hall

Instructor: Dr. Kathleen O'Fallon

Office: 256 PLC

Hours: MWF 12:00-1:00 p.m.

and by appointment

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Course Description:

The 18th century ushered in a new and “dangerous” form of literature in England: the novel. This was also a time when satire flourished in public discourse. Novels took various forms, including the epistolary novel, the picaresque novel, the gothic novel and the novel of manners. We will study “straight” examples of some forms and satires of others--written by some of the most influential writers of the day. We will discuss how the culture of the time shaped the literature-- particularly in matters of class, gender and race—and we will also look at how the novel began to influence culture. Ultimately, we will tackle the problem of creating a working definition for a genre that—from its very beginnings—was anti-conventional and diverse.

Required Novels:

Defoe, Daniel

Robinson Crusoe (1719)

Fielding, Henry

Joseph Andrews (1742)

Edgeworth, Maria

Belinda (1801)

Austen, Jane

Northanger Abbey (published 1818)

Additional Texts:

Defoe, Daniel

“The True Born Englishman”

Swift, Jonathan

“A Modest Proposal”

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 should grow out of letters (your own or someone else's) and the discussion provoked by those letters, and they should 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."

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
6. To provide the basis for each group's collective "Letter to the World" (to be presented during the designated final exam period)

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 try to cover multiple issues, and 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

- (A) show that you have read the assignment closely,
- (B) show that you have completed the assigned novel and can place your concerns in the context of the novel as a whole, and
- (C) take a strong stance in relation to the element of the text that you are discussing.

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 will lead to essays, all letters in a group should be given careful scrutiny. Pay special attention to whether or not the writer has taken a strong stance and offered evidence to support each assertion. Suggest ways the letter could be expanded into a longer essay, 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 (both to the instructor and to fellow group members) PRIOR TO THE DAY THEY ARE DUE. NO LATE LETTERS WILL BE ACCEPTED FOR CREDIT. DON'T ASK FOR EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY: THEY WILL NOT BE GRANTED.

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 will form the basis for 3-4 page essays on the assigned novels. 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

During the period designated for our final exam, each group will present a “Letter to the World.” Each member of the group will contribute to writing and editing this letter. The letter will address the question of how the novel as a form began to emerge in 18th-century England by providing a four-part definition of the English novel. For each of the assigned novels, the letter should discuss how that novel demonstrated one of the elements of your definition. Both the letter and the group presentation must defend the group’s choice of definitive elements.

Schedule of Assignments:

Week One: March 28—April 1

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

Week Two: April 4-8

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

Week Three: April 11-15

- M Group reports on letters
- W Background on picaresque novel
***Robinson Crusoe* essay due**
- F *Joseph Andrews*, Book I

Week Four: April 18-22

- M *Joseph Andrews*, Book II
- W *Joseph Andrews*, Book III
- F *Joseph Andrews*, Book IV

Week Five: April 25-29

- M Letters due; small group discussion
- W Group reports on letters
- F Film: *Belle*
Start reading *Belinda*

Week Six: May 2-6

- M Film: *Belle*; ***Joseph Andrews* essay due**
- W Discussion of *Belle*; background on novel of manners
- F *Belinda*, Vol. I

Week Seven: May 9-13

- M *Belinda*, Vol. II
- W *Belinda*, Vol. II
- F *Belinda*, Vol. III

Week Eight: May 16-20

- M *Belinda*, Vol. III; Letters due; small group discussion
- W Group reports on letters
- F Background on Austen, gothic novel

Week Nine: May 23-27

- M *Northanger Abbey*, Chapters 1-9; **Essay on *Belinda* due**

W *Northanger Abbey*, Chapters 10-21
F *Northanger Abbey*, Chapters 22-31

Week Ten ("Dead Week"): May 30-June 3

M MEMORIAL DAY OBSERVED: NO CLASS MEETING
W Letters due; small group discussion
F Group reports on letters

Final Exam Week: June 6-10

Tu 10:15 a.m.--Final for 11:00 class; presentation on group letters;
essay on *Northanger Abbey* due
F 10:15 a.m.--Final for 10:00 class; presentation on group letters;
essay on *Northanger Abbey* due

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 essays aloud 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 arrangements with me in advance 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. 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. If you are using an electronic version of the assigned text, please show it to me before class so I will know why you are attending to an electronic device.**

Please do not leave the room during class unless you have an emergency. If you must leave the room, place your 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**.