

Syllabus

English 532.01: The Nineteenth-Century English Novel: Classic or Commodity?
Spring 2014, M 4:30-7:00 pm, UH 1403

Professor: Molly Youngkin
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Office Hours: Mon. 2:30-4pm, Tues. 1:30-3:00pm, and Wed. 2:30-3:30pm

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Course Description and Objectives

All the books I have selected for this course are considered “classics” of the English nineteenth century, books that were literary masterpieces in their own time and have continued to draw the attention of literate readers for more than a century. Yet they all also were written within a literary marketplace that was driven by commercial concerns (printing and distribution costs, potential sales, copyright and royalty agreements with authors, etc.), making them as much “commodities” (or commercial endeavors) as they are classics.

This course will consider the conditions under which well-known authors of the nineteenth century wrote their novels and how these conditions influenced the content and style of these novels, with emphasis on both the broad trends in literary production during the period and the specific circumstances faced by each author. We also will consider how our current understanding of these novels is shaped by the classic/commodity tension. To what degree are these novels marketed to us as classics or commodities, via a wide range of media (book jackets, online venues such as amazon.com, television shows such as Masterpiece Theatre, and movie versions of the novels)? By considering this issue, we can better understand our role in the process of deciding which texts are part of the “literary canon.”

In keeping with the goals of the undergraduate and graduate programs in English, we will take as our objectives:

- studying literature of the period with a focus on both breadth and depth
- improving your written and verbal articulation of issues of literary interpretation
- examining primary and secondary sources, with emphasis on the importance of both in the discipline
- using literary research tools, with emphasis on how these tools can assist you in the production of high-quality papers

In achieving these goals, I will assume basic knowledge of the nineteenth century (what you learned in your British literature survey), but I also will fill in the gaps when needed. Don't hesitate to ask questions in class. No one knows everything about the nineteenth century, so there's always more to be learned!

Required Texts

Austen, Jane. *Northanger Abbey*. Ed. Marilyn Butler. New York: Penguin, 2003. ISBN 9780141439793
 Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Ed. Pauline Nestor. New York: Penguin, 2002. ISBN 978014139556
 Collins, Wilkie. *The Moonstone*. Ed. Sandra Kemp. New York: Penguin, 1999. 9780140434088
 Eliot, George. *Silas Marner*. Ed. David Carroll. New York: Penguin, 2003. 9780141439754
 Gibaldi, Joseph. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th edition. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. ISBN 9781603290241
 Hardy, Thomas. *Jude the Obscure*. Ed. Dennis Taylor. New York: Penguin, 1998. 9780140435382

Please purchase the editions I have specified here. It's very difficult to have a productive discussion if people are using a variety of editions, all with different page numbers.

Grade Breakdown

Participation	20%
Oral Presentation	10%
Short Paper	15%
Historical Documents Assignment	10%
Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review	20%
Seminar Paper (8-10 pages for undergrads, 12-15 pages for grads)	25%

Assignments and Expectations

Participation: In upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses, participation is an absolute must. I expect you to come ready to discuss the readings for the day with enthusiasm, and I expect everyone to contribute to the discussion. Attendance is also a must. Because this course meets only once a week, you are allowed only two absences. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so you should save your absences for dire emergencies (death in family, illness, work commitments). Coming to class late or leaving class early counts as a partial absence. If you miss more than two classes, there will be a significant reduction in your participation grade. You may not miss a day on which a major assignment is due. Part of the assignment is being in class to present your findings to your classmates.

Oral Presentation: We will use 10-minute oral presentations to get the conversation going each week. You will be expected to present a literary, historical, or cultural context needed for us to understand the text assigned for the day. I also expect you to pose a couple of questions for us to consider in our discussion for the day. Please bring a 1-page handout with a brief outline of the context you plan to discuss and the questions you would like us to consider.

Short Paper: You will write one short paper (4-6 pages, double-spaced), about the text you choose to do your oral presentation on. It will be due the week following your presentation, so you can write your paper with the benefit of class discussion. The paper should focus on one of the themes or issues you found most interesting in the text, and it should incorporate at least one outside secondary source not assigned by me. You also are welcome to use sources I have assigned, if they are helpful to your argument.

Historical Documents Assignment: Since part of the purpose of this class is to understand Victorian literature in its historical context, I would like you to read and analyze some historical documents related to one of the novels we are reading. You can choose documents related to any of the cultural issues raised by the texts, letters written by one of the authors we are reading, reviews of their work from the period, a portion of a biography or autobiography from the period, or any other historical documents you think are important. I will give you recommendations about which documents might be most helpful, but you should feel free to seek out others of interest to you. Once you have the documents, you will analyze them in a 3-4 page paper. As the assignment due date draws closer, we will discuss this assignment in more detail. The assignment is due Mon., March 17, at the beginning of class.

Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review: The annotated bibliography is a list of 8 secondary sources, with brief summaries and analyses of the contents of those sources, on any topic related to this course. The literature review is a 2-3 page essay, summing up the materials in the annotated bibliography and analyzing how these materials can provide a framework for the seminar paper. I recommend that you choose the topic you plan to develop in your seminar paper, since annotating the sources will take significant time and effort. I'll give you more details about this assignment in class. The assignment is due Mon., April 21, at the beginning of class.

Seminar Paper: The seminar paper is the major writing assignment for this class and acts as a capstone to the rest of the work you will do this term. Your seminar paper (8-10 pages for undergrads, 12-15 pages for grads) should articulate a clear but complex argument about one of the texts we've read in this class, in relationship to the literary, historical, or cultural contexts of the texts we have discussed this semester. You should demonstrate a critical awareness of the topic you choose by incorporating a range of secondary (and possibly primary) sources; the oral presentation and the short paper may serve as the initial inspiration for your seminar paper, and the annotated bibliography should help you gather the research materials for your paper. The paper will be due on Mon., May 5, at 7:15 pm.

Grading Scale and Criteria:

The grading scale for undergraduates is based on the grading system approved by LMU. I will assign numerical grades for all assignments, and I will use the final grade sheet attached to this syllabus to figure final grades. The numerical/letter grade correlation is as follows: 94-100=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 60-69=D, and 0-59=F. My primary grading criterion is this: for all assignments, I am looking for what I call "academic writing," writing that expresses a complex argument with specific examples as evidence and does so in an engaging, sophisticated manner. See attached handout for more about this. Graduate students should see me for more information about the grading scale and criteria for this course.

Late Assignments:

Expect deductions for late assignments. Typically, I deduct 10 points per 24 hours; for example, a paper that earns 90 points and is a day late will drop to an 80. No papers will be accepted via email, and no double submissions (same project submitted for another class) allowed.

Electronic Equipment and Visitors in the Classroom:

No cell phones, pagers, CD players, tape recorders, or other electronic equipment in the classroom. If you want to bring a laptop to class, record lectures, or bring a guest to class, you must get my approval first.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own. It is a serious academic offence and may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, and/or university disciplinary action. For more details about the university's policy on this issue and other forms of academic dishonesty, see the Undergraduate or Graduate Bulletin. If you are unsure about how to integrate others' ideas or words into your work without plagiarizing, consult your English handbook and/or come talk to me. I'll be glad to help you avoid plagiarism!

Drop policy:

If you do not want a "W" on your record and want a full tuition refund, you must drop the course before the end of the first week of classes. From week 2-10, you may drop, but you will receive a "W" and will not receive a full tuition refund.

Resources for Students:

Tutoring Center: The Tutoring Center is located in the Academic Resource Center, on the second floor of Daum Hall. Experienced tutors are available to help students who wish to improve their writing. For an appointment, call 338-2847.

Advising: For questions about the undergraduate English curriculum, see your adviser. If you are an English major and haven't talked to your adviser yet, you should do so as soon as possible. BCLA also has Student Ambassadors, who can help with certain aspects of advising.

Disabled Support Services: Persons with disabilities are welcome in this classroom. If you have a disability and need specific accommodations, please register with DSS and then come talk to me. DSS is located in the Academic Resource Center, Room 224 in Daum Hall. The phone number is 338-4535.

Class Schedule

The dates and activities listed below are subject to change, but I will do all I can to keep us on schedule. You are responsible for noting any changes in the syllabus.

- M, 1/13: Syllabus and Introduction to Course
- M, 1/20: No class—Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday—but start reading *Northanger Abbey*.
- M, 1/27: Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, pp. 15-119 (Volume 1, Chapters 1-15).
- M, 2/3: Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, pp. 123-235 (Volume 2, Chapters 1-16), pp. xi-lvii (Introduction and Note on the Text), and pp. 3-9 (Biographical Notice and Postscript)
- M, 2/10: Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, pp. 3-153 (Volume 1, Chapters 1-14).
- For today's class, we'll meet in Special Collections in the William H. Hannon Library, third floor. We will discuss the novel with Director of Special Collections, Cynthia Becht, who will show us some fantastic items related to Brontë's novel, as well as the other novels we're reading this semester. We also will discuss how to do the Historical Documents assignment.
- M, 2/17: Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*. Read pp. 157-337 (Volume 2, Chapters 20), pp. xv-liv (Introduction and Prefatory Materials).
- M, 2/24: Eliot, *Silas Marner*, pp. 5-183 (the entire novel) and pp. vii-xxiv (Introduction).
- M, 3/3: No class—Spring Break
- M, 3/10: Collins, *The Moonstone*, pp. 3-162 (Prefaces—won't ruin anything—and First Period, Chapters 1-18).
- M, 3/17: Historical Documents Assignment due at the beginning of class.
- In class, we'll share our research findings and also discuss how to do the Annotated Bibliography/Literature Review assignment.
- M, 3/24: Collins, *The Moonstone*, pp. 162-327 (First Period, Chapter 19 – Second Period, Chapter 4).
- M, 3/31: No class—Cesar Chavez Day
- M, 4/7: Collins, *The Moonstone*, pp. 328-472 (Second Period, Chapter 5 - end) and pp. vii-xxx (Introduction).
- M, 4/14: Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, pp. 9-196 (Parts 1-3).

- M, 4/21: Annotated Bibliography/Literature Review is due at the beginning of class.
In class, we'll share our research findings and discuss how to proceed with the seminar paper.
- M, 4/28: Hardy, *Jude the Obscure*, pp. 199-408 (Parts 4-6) and pp. vii-xlii (Prefatory Materials and Introduction).
- M, 5/5: No class, but seminar papers are due in my office by 7:15 pm. There is no final exam for this class.

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Below are the grading criteria for the assignments in this class. When I refer to the paper's thesis, I am referring to the main statement of your argument, which I expect to see early in the essay. When I refer to the argument, I mean the way in which the thesis is developed in the rest of the essay, through clear statements about where the argument is going at key points in the essay. Finally, when I refer to supporting evidence, I mean the specific examples from the text you are using to flesh out your argument. If you have not written this type of paper before, please come talk to me about how to go about it.

A= All material required for the assignment is present. The paper's thesis goes way beyond the obvious, and the argument presents a precise, informed, incisive, and satisfying critical investigation of the topic. The implications of the thesis are fully developed through the use of supporting evidence. The ideas within the essay are well-organized, and the language used in the essay is appropriate to the audience. The essay is written in MLA format, with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.

B= All material required for the assignment is present. The paper's thesis goes beyond the obvious, and the argument presents a clear and accurate investigation of the topic. There is some strong supporting evidence for the thesis, but the ideas may not be fleshed out as fully as they might be, or some readings may not be as precise as they could be. The ideas within the essay are well-organized, and the language used in the essay is appropriate to the audience. The essay is written in MLA format, with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.

C= All material required for the assignment is present. The essay has a thesis and details to support that thesis. The argument is adequate, but does not fully explore the implications of the topic or does not present a critical viewpoint that goes very far beyond the obvious. The supporting evidence for the argument may be adequate but not as fully developed as it could be and less convincing than it could be. The ideas within the essay are appropriately organized, and the language used in the essay is appropriate to the audience. The essay is written in MLA format, with in-text citations and a Works Cited page.

D= Material required for the assignment may be missing. The essay has a weak thesis, and details to support the thesis are not developed adequately. The thesis does not go beyond the obvious or is more descriptive than analytical. Supporting evidence for the thesis may be missing or is so far off-base to be unconvincing. The ideas within the essay are not well-organized, and the language used in the essay may not be appropriate to the audience. The essay may lack items related to MLA format.

F= Material required for the assignment may be missing. The essay has a very weak thesis or no thesis, and details to support the thesis are not developed adequately or are missing. The thesis does not go beyond the obvious or is more descriptive than analytical. Supporting evidence for the thesis may be missing or is so far off-base to be unconvincing. The ideas within the essay are not well-organized, and the language used in the essay may not be appropriate to the audience. The essay may lack items related to MLA format.

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Student _____

	Numerical Value		Percentage Weight		Total Weight
Participation	_____	x	____.20_____	=	_____
Short Paper	_____	x	____.15_____	=	_____
Oral Presentation	_____	x	____.10_____	=	_____
Historical Documents Assignment	_____	x	____.10_____	=	_____
Annotated Bibliography/Lit Review	_____	x	____.20_____	=	_____
Seminar Paper	_____	x	____.25_____	=	_____
			Numerical Total		_____
			Final Grade		_____

Final Grade Scale

94-100	A
90-93	A-
87-89	B+
84-86	B
80-83	B-
77-79	C+
74-76	C
70-73	C-
60-69	D
0-59	F

Directions

1) Fill in the appropriate numerical value for each assignment; 2) Multiply that value by the percentage weight in the second column; 3) Add the amounts in the "total" column; 4) Use the "final grade scale" to calculate your final letter grade.