

English 345
 Instructor: Hannah Rogers
 Tuesday/Thursday 3:05-4:20
 Allen 103
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SYLLABUS: NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH NOVEL

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“England is not the jewelled isle of Shakespeare’s much-quoted message, nor is it the inferno ... More than either it resembles a family, a rather stuffy Victorian family, with not many black sheep in it but with all its cupboards bursting with skeletons. It has rich relations who have to be kow-towed to and poor relations who are horribly sat upon, and there is a deep conspiracy of silence about the source of the family income. It is a family in which the young are generally thwarted and most of the power is in the hands of irresponsible uncles and bedridden aunts. Still, it is a family. It has its private language and its common memories...”
 -George Orwell, “England Your England”

Stereotypically described, “a rather stuffy family” tends to drive the plots of nineteenth-century Britain’s most famous novelists — Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, the Brontës, and Wilkie Collins (to name a few). Yet, as Orwell hints in his memorialization of Victorian stock characters, the nineteenth century did not only novelize marriage plots or petty domestic disputes. Cupboards “bursting with skeletons,” indeed, cloud the supposed bliss of the typical family. From marriage markets to evil twins to horrifying mysteries, British narratives show the precariousness of the nuclear family. The Victorian family, nevertheless, became a location to celebrate English values, becoming not only the main drama of the novel form but also illustrating how the national community was *imagined*. As England’s greater empire infiltrated British narratives more prominently in the later part of the century, novels thought about these problems from within the domestic sphere. In this class, we will consider major novel genres of the period (gothic, sensation/mystery, romance), in conjunction with contemporaneous non-fiction selections, in order to track the tension between England forming a national, exclusionary community and seeking ties with the greater globe.

In examining novels from the beginning of the nineteenth century (*Pride and Prejudice*) all the way up to the end of the Victorian period (*Dracula*), we will be able to trace how thought rapidly developed and shifted in less than a century. How did the relationships within the family change throughout this period? To imagine itself as a nation with limits, did something have to be omitted from the ideal Victorian family? When the family becomes regulated to the background or transformed into something fantastical, in novels such as *Dracula*, does this change how we imagine a national community? By using how the nineteenth century defined the family as a starting point in our own scholarship, we will think about the problems of the period, including gender, empire, and citizenship.

As we move through the course, we will also consider why the nineteenth-century novel still matters. In a world of superhero comic books and bingeable television shows such as *Lost*, *Game of Thrones*, and *Grey’s Anatomy*, why should we still care about an old medium and its old products? Can reading *Jane Eyre* illuminate popular contemporary novels such as *Harry Potter*? Are the societal and political issues that haunted the Victorians still a specter in our own lives? And, if so, how?

COURSE GOALS

By the end of the course, you will be able to:

- 1) Recognize common literary terms used for critical engagement with the novel genre
- 2) Identify the major concerns of the nineteenth-century novel and place it into a general historical context
- 3) Demonstrate the ability to critically respond to texts for the purpose of in-class discussion and written assignments
- 4) Argue an original claim using textual evidence and analysis in order to write a clear essay

COURSE ORGANIZATION

This course is meant to be an introduction to nineteenth-century novels and their major sub-genres, themes, and structures. We will read five major novels that span the period — *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Little Dorrit* (1855-57), *The Moonstone* (1868) and *Dracula* (1897). In examining these novels, we will trace how nineteenth-century thought changed from the Regency period that defined the beginning of the century to the later Victorian era. These novels will be occasionally supplemented by short non-fiction readings that will improve our understanding of the text by placing it in a historical context. We will also visit Duke's Special Collections learn about original versions of the works we are reading and related nineteenth-century artifacts. This visit will also introduce you to a research resource that may help you complete your final paper. Toward the end of the course, we will specifically focus on a selection of adaptations of the works we have read to see how the nineteenth century still speaks to us today and we to it.

Generally, class will begin with a short exercise or game before we begin. You may receive short lectures to put the day's reading into context with the greater period or genre. However, the bulk of class time will be used for class discussion of the day's reading. Because graded individual assignments are all based on writing, you will have time in class to do activities and workshops that will help you successfully complete these projects. I will use the short written responses to look at your writing to see what types of activities will best develop writing skills. As the semester progresses, you will have opportunities to shape our discussions with your own interests; for example, the class will vote on which adaptation we will watch for our penultimate day of class.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen, ISBN 978-0393264883

Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë, ISBN 978-0141441146

Little Dorrit, Charles Dickens, ISBN 978-0199596485

The Moonstone, Wilkie Collins, ISBN 978-0140434088

Dracula, Bram Stoker, ISBN 978-0393970128

As some of these novels are quite long, please try to obtain these editions of the texts so we can all be on the same page.

Additional required and optional readings will be posted on the Sakai website. Any films/television selections will be available through the Duke Library streaming services. **If you cannot access the Sakai course site, please let me know promptly so we can resolve this issue.**

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance: You may miss two classes without penalty (including STINF and athletic absences), but missing more than two classes will result in a half-point drop in your final participation grade (B+ to B). If you miss class, it is your responsibility to make up all work and collect notes from a classmate. Consistent late arrival will also result in a drop to your participation grade. You may view Duke's official absence policy here: <https://trinity.duke.edu/undergraduate/academicpolicies/class-attendance-and-missed-work>.

Accommodations: Students who may need special accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the Student Disability Access Office (<http://www.access.duke.edu/students/index.php>) as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion. All disabilities will be kept confidential. I will do my best to accommodate all other requests. Please speak to me as soon as possible if you need to request an accommodation.

Behavior: As this course will partially rely on in-class discussion, I expect you to come to class having read the material and prepared to participate. All readings should be brought to class. Please **do not use cellphones** during class, and please only use electronics such as laptops or tablets for class activities.

Deadlines: All due dates for major assignments are marked on the syllabus. All deadlines are considered final unless I make an alternation to accommodate the class. Work submitted late without an agreed extension will be automatically penalized a half-letter drop in your grade (e.g. B- to C). After a week from the deadline, the grade will then drop by a full grade further (e.g. C to D).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic writing is seldom self-contained with respect to its ideas and proof. Quoting and citing sources strengthens your writing by explicitly situating your argument within an ongoing conversation and body of evidence. In this course, we will learn and employ MLA-style citation. We will discuss quotation, paraphrase, and citation in class.

Recall the Duke Community Standard: 1. I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors, nor will I accept the actions of those who do; 2. I will conduct myself responsibly and honorably in all my activities as a Duke student. Please ask me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism. See <https://plagiarism.duke.edu/>, <http://trinity.duke.edu/undergraduate/academic-policies/academic-integrity> and <http://integrity.duke.edu/> for more information on plagiarism policies and academic integrity.

Copying without attribution from the work of a classmate, from a printed text, or an electronic text weakens your integrity as a student and writer and prevents you from engaging properly with other scholars through writing. If I suspect anyone of plagiarism, I am *obligated* to report it to the Duke University Office of Student Conduct. Plagiarism can result in failure of the course and/or suspension from Duke University.

Be sure to cite all work that is not your own using MLA. You can find more information on how to properly cite within your papers here: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/02/>

CLASS ASSIGNMENTS

Participation: You should come to class on time with copies of the day's reading assignments, ready to listen and engage respectfully in discussion. You should also be prepared to participate in collaborative learning exercises with your classmates, which will help you engage with the text and prepare you for independent written assignments.

Written Responses: Written responses will be paragraph assignments you turn in once a week during weeks with an asterisk denoting them on the syllabus. These responses will offer you early feedback on your writing and allow you to explore ideas for the larger papers. (You will be able to reuse this work on another assignment if you wish.) These responses, in other words, are building blocks to the main course assignments. I will also use your responses to help focus class discussion based on your interests.

Comparative Project: You will write a short, 2-3 page comparative project that will compare either a novel, non-fiction work, or topic of interest (e.g. the marriage plot, serialization, imperialism) from the nineteenth century to a relevant object of interest from the contemporary. For example, you may be interested in an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* such as *Bridget Jones's Diary* or *Pride, Prejudice, and Zombies*. You could also discuss serialization of novels in the Victorian period and the serialization of television, comic books, or other forms of media. This assignment is an opportunity to be creative and talk about topics of interest to you. The last day to turn this assignment in is November 21, although you may turn it in beforehand.

Paper #1: Your first paper will be 5-7 pages and perform a close reading of *Pride and Prejudice*. No outside sources are required. This paper will go through two drafts. The first draft will be turned in for my review, and then we will meet to discuss how you will revise this paper. You will then turn in a final draft for a grade.

Paper #2: Your final paper will be 8-10 pages and will perform a close reading, aided by research, of *Jane Eyre*, *Little Dorrit*, *The Moonstone*, or *Dracula*. This paper should include at least five sources outside of the novel, some of which may be the non-fiction material we have read for or in class. Your final paper should build on the skills you have learned from your first paper and written responses. You will turn in a draft of this paper, which I will return to you with suggestions for revision, but meeting with me to discuss it is optional. You will then turn in a final draft for a grade.

***Detailed instructions for assignments are posted to Sakai under the "assignments" folder.**

GRADING

Your grade will be based on the following:

Participation: 20%

Written Responses: 20%

Comparative Project: 15%

Paper #1: 20%

Paper #2: 25%

Students must complete all major assignments, including all draft stages, to pass the course.

CONTACT

I will be available to answer question via email (hannah.l.rogers@duke.edu) throughout the semester. Please allow one business day for a response. I will also use email and Sakai to make important class announcements and to send reminders.

In the event that the class schedule needs to be changed, I will make the announcement in class and through email. You are responsible for all schedule changes. The schedule may be changed to accommodate the class (for example, we may encounter weather that disrupts our deadlines). I will not discuss grades over email, but I will be happy to make an appointment to answer your questions.

I will hold office hours in 303D Allen on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2-3 p.m. I am also happy to make myself available by appointment.

SCHEDULE*

August 29	Introduction
August 31	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , Vol. I
September 5*	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , Vol. II
September 7	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> , Vol. III
September 12*	<i>Jane Eyre</i> , Chapters I-XIII Charlotte Brontë on Jane Austen (Sakai)
September 14	<i>Jane Eyre</i> , Chapters XIV-XX
September 19	<i>Jane Eyre</i> , Chapters XXI-XXVII Paper #1 Due by 8 p.m. in Sakai Dropbox
September 21	<i>Jane Eyre</i> , Chapters XXVIII-XXXIII
September 26*	<i>Jane Eyre</i> , Chapters XXXIV-End Mary Prince and Friedrich Engels, Selections (Sakai)
September 28	<i>Little Dorrit</i> , Book I; Chapters I-XIV Sarah Stickney Ellis, Selection (Sakai)
October 3*	<i>Little Dorrit</i> , Book I; Chapters XV-XVIII Paper #1 Due by 5 p.m. in Sakai Dropbox
October 5	<i>Little Dorrit</i> Book I; Chapters XIX-XXV
Fall Break	

October 12*	<i>Little Dorrit</i> Book I; Chapters XXVI-XXXVI Jeremy Bentham, Selection (Sakai)
October 17	<i>Little Dorrit</i> , Book II; Chapters I-VII
October 19*	<i>Little Dorrit</i> , Book II, Chapters VIII-XIX
October 24	<i>Little Dorrit</i> , Book II, Chapter XX-End “Debtors Prison Not A Tale Of Charles Dickens” (Sakai)
October 26*	<i>The Moonstone</i> , Prologue-105 (stop before Chapter XII) “A Sermon for Sepoys” (Sakai)
October 31	<i>The Moonstone</i> , 105-271
November 2	<i>Little Dorrit Miniseries (Watch in Class)</i>
November 7*	Archives Visit Meet in Rubenstein Library Room 150
November 9	<i>The Moonstone</i> , 272-356 (up to Chapter VIII) Matthew Arnold, Selections (Sakai)
November 14*	<i>The Moonstone</i> , 356-End Reviews, Selections (Sakai) (Spoiler Alert! Finish Novel!)
November 16	<i>Dracula</i> , Chapters I-VIII
November 21*	<i>Dracula</i> , Chapters IX-XVII Final Day to turn in Collaborative Project
Thanksgiving	
November 28*	<i>Dracula</i> , Chapter XVIII-End <i>Powers of Darkness, Selection (Sakai)</i>
November 30	<i>Bride and Prejudice</i>
December 5	Adaptation Day II: To Be Determined By Class Vote Paper #2 Due by 8 p.m. in Sakai Dropbox
December 7	Victorian Parlor Game Day
December 11	Final Paper #2 Due by 5 p.m.