

English 329.1: Selected Figures in British Literature: Reading and Viewing the Novels of Jane Austen

Spring 2008: Professor: Jan Susina

Class Meets: Tuesday & Thursday 12:35 —1:50 p.m.

Meeting Place: Williams 308

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Office Hours: Tuesday 2:00 p.m.--3:00 p.m.; Thursday 11:00 a.m.--noon

Tentative Syllabus

Jan. 15: Introduction and Review of the Course
“Great Women Writers: Jane Austen”

Jan 17: Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*. Volume 1 (5-87) chapters 1-15
Introduction (vi--ixiv) Backgrounds: Biography section (177-196);
Context section: Anne Radcliffe (235-240)

Jan. 20: PBS showing of “Northanger Abbey”

Jan. 22: Austen’s *Northanger Abbey* Volume 2 (88-174) chapters 16-31

Jan. 24: Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*
BBC version of “Northanger Abbey” and Victor Munez’s “Ruby in Paradise”
(Ashley Judd as Catherine role)
**** Sign Up for Film Paper****
Go to Jane Austen Society of North American website “Austen on Film” for
choices

Jan. 27: PBS showing of “Mansfield Park”

Jan. 29: Austen’s *Mansfield Park*: Volume 1 (5-120) chapters 1-18
Introduction section xi-xxi

Jan. 31: Austen’s *Mansfield Park*: Volume 2 (121-210) chapters 19-31

Feb. 3: PBS showing of “Miss Austen Regrets”

Feb. 5: Austen’s *Mansfield Park*: Volume 3 (211-321) chapters 32-conclusion

Feb. 7: Sarah Curtis’s “Mansfield Park” and Whit Stillman’s “Metropolitan”
****Analysis of Film Version of Austen Novel Due (5-7 pages)****

Feb. 10: PBS showing of “Pride and Prejudice” Part 1

- Feb. 12 Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: Volume 1 (3-89) chapters 1-23
Biography and Sources section (257-286)
- Feb. 14 Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: Volume 2 (89-158) chapters 24-43
- Feb. 17: PBS showing of "Pride and Prejudice" Part 2
- Feb. 19: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*: Volume 3 (158-254) chapter 45-
conclusion
- Feb. 21: Joe Wright's "Pride & Prejudice" (Keira Knightly as Elizabeth) &
Sharon Maguire's "Bridget Jones Diary" (Renee Zellweger as Elizabeth role)
- Feb. 24: PBS showing of "Pride and Prejudice" Part 3
- Feb. 26: Gurinder Chadha's "Bride and Prejudice" (Aishwarya Rai as Elizabeth role)
& Nora Ephron's "You've Got Mail" (Meg Ryan as Elizabeth role)
- Feb. 28: Jon Spence's *Becoming Jane Austen*
**** Proposal for Research Paper Due (1-2 pages)****
- March 4 Jon Spence's *Becoming Jane Austen*
Julian Jarrold's "Becoming Jane" (Anne Hathaway as Jane Austen)
- March 6: **Mid-term exam**
- March 10: Spring Break: no class, but Jane Austen making excellent beach reading.
- March 12: Spring Break: no class, but Jane Austen makes excellent beach reading.
- March 18: Austen's *Emma*: Volume 1 (1-98) chapters 1-18
- March 20: Austen's *Emma*: Volume 2 (98-204) chapters 19-37
- March 23: PBS showing of "Emma"
- March 25: Austen's *Emma*: Volume 3 (205-319) chapters 38-conclusion
- March 27: Patrick Cassavetti's "Emma" (Gwyneth Paltrow as Emma) & Amy
Heckerling's "Clueless" (Alicia Silverstone as Emma role)
- March 30: PBS showing of "Sense and Sensibility" Part 1
- April 1: Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*: Volume 1 (5-98) chapters 1-22
Modern adaptation paper (5-7 pages) due. Graduate students only

- April 3: Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*: Volume 2 (99-180) chapters 23-36
- April 6: PBS showing of "Sense and Sensibility" Part 2
- April 8: Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*: Volume 3 (181-269) chapters 37- conclusion
- April 10: BBC version of "Sense and Sensibility" & Ang Lee's "Sense and Sensibility"
(Emma Thompson as Elinor, Kate Winslet as Marianne)
- April 15: Jane Austen's *Persuasion*: Volume 1 (3-107) chapters 1-12
- April 17: Austen's *Persuasion*: Volume 2 (107-168) chapters 13-conclusion
Original Ending of *Persuasion* (168-177)
- April 22: BBC version of "Persuasion"
**** Research Paper Due (10-12 pages UGrad; 15-20 Grad)****
- April 24: Karen Joy Flower's *The Jane Austen Book Club*
- April 29: Karen Joy Fowler's *The Jane Austen Book Club*
- May 1: Karen Joy Fowler's *The Jane Austen Book Club*
Robin Swicord's "The Jane Austen Book Club"
- May 8: Final Exam: 3:10-5:10 p.m.

Goals of Course:

Perhaps there is no more pleasurable and significant literary experience than a close and careful reading and lively discussion of the novels of Jane Austen. Austen is both a canonical author as well as a continuously popular author whose books are embraced both inside and outside the academy. She is both a writer's writer and a reader's favorite. Her novels are frequently adapted into successful films. While this course will examine Austen's six published novels within their historical and cultural context, we will also explore the reasons that Austen, more than any other major nineteenth century British novelist, continues to speak to twentieth and twentieth-first century readers of both genders. Why does Austen, more than any other British novelist, have her novels transferred to the screen as popular films? More importantly, who is the right actor to play Mr. Darcy? Why do Emma Thompson, Keira Knightley, Gwyneth Paltrow, Alicia Silverstone, and Anne Hathaway queue up to play Austen heroines? What is it about her work that allows Austen to illuminate her world, but allows contemporary readers/viewers to gain insight into their own lives?

In addition to reading the six Austen novels, the class will be reading a number of historical and critical essays on Austen and her work. Students will watch the BBC versions of the Jane Austen novels that will be shown on Sunday evenings on PBS throughout the semester. The class also will be viewing selections of other film adaptations of the novels as well as selections of films that are more loosely based on her

novels. These will include Amy Heckerling's "Clueless," Sharon Maguire's "Bridget Jones's Diary," Gurinder Chadha's "Bride & Prejudice," James Ivory's "Jane Austen in Manhattan," Whit Stillman's "Metropolitan," Victor Nunez's "Ruby in Paradise," Jason Faller's "Pride and Prejudice: A Latter Day Comedy," Nora Ephron's "You've Got Mail," Julian Jarrold's "Becoming Jane," and "Robin Swicor's "The Jane Austen Book Club." The course will also read a biography on the life of Austen, Jon Spence's *Becoming Jane Austen* and a contemporary novel that that use Austen novel in a contemporary setting, Karen Jay Fowler's *The Jane Austen Book Club*.

Required Texts:

- Jane Austen. *Sense and Sensibility: Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Claudia L. Johnson Norton, 2001.
- Jane Austen. *Pride and Prejudice: Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Donald J. Gray. Norton, 2000.
- Jane Austen. *Mansfield Park; Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Claudia L. Johnson. Norton, 1998.
- Jane Austen. *Emma: Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Stephen M. Parrish, Norton, 2000.
- Jane Austen. *Northanger Abbey: Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Susan Fraiman, Norton, 2004.
- Jane Austen. *Persuasion: Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Patricia Meyer Spacks. Norton, 1995.
- Karen Joy Fowler. *The Jane Austen Book Club*. Plume, 2005.
- Jon Spence. *Becoming Jane Austen*. Continuum, 2007.
- Joseph Gibaldi. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Sixth Edition. MLA, 2003.

In addition to reading the novels, students will be asked to watch the PBS "Masterpiece Classic" series of BBC film adaptations of Jane Austen novels that will be shown on Sunday evenings at 8 p.m.

The schedule for the films is:

- Jan. 13: "Persuasion"
- Jan. 20: "Northanger Abbey"
- Jan. 27: "Mansfield Park"
- Feb. 3: "Miss Austen Regrets" -- a film biography
- Feb.10, 17 & 24: "Pride and Prejudice"
- March 23: "Emma"
- March 30 & April 6: "Sense and Sensibility"

This dates the films will be first shown, from the PBS schedules I have seen that also will be repeated.

Format of Course:

All students will be expected to regularly attend class and to actively contribute to class discussion. Undergraduates enrolled in the course will be required to write three critical papers. Undergraduates will write a critical paper on a film adaptation of the novels (5-7

pages) and a research paper based on an Austen text (10-12 pages) approved by the instructor. Graduate students will write a paper on a film adaptation of an Austen novel (5-7 pages) and a modern adaptation or revision of an Austen novel (5-7 pages) and a research paper (15-20 page) on a Jane Austen topic approved by the instructor. This may be a scholarly project or a creative writing project. Use the *MLA Handbook* for appropriate citation in the critical papers. The critical papers on Jane Austen need a minimum of five secondary sources. Only half of the secondary sources can be electronic. Throughout the semester there will be short written assignments related to the primary and critical readings and films. Graduate students will be asked to lead a class discussion on an Austen film.

Plagiarism/Cheating:

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses and may be punished by failure on a paper, exam, or project and in some cases may result in failure in the course and/or expulsion from the Illinois State University. Please read the Illinois State University policy in the *Undergraduate Catalog* or the *Graduate Catalog* under "Academic Integrity." All work submitted for grading in this class needs to be your own original work created for this course.

Class Discussion:

Class attendance is important and is intended to be a valuable experience. All students are asked to read the material prior to class and come prepared to discuss the assignments in class. Students are expected to participate in class discussion and a portion of the final grade will be based on class participation. Class participation will be factored into the final grade. The participation grade of students missing more than three sessions will be lowered. While students may need to miss class for significant reasons, there are no excuses absences.

Class Assignments:

All students will be asked to complete a series of class assignments linked to the readings. A student missing a class in which an in-class quiz or in-class assignment is given or a class when a homework assignment is due will be unable to makeup the missed quiz or turn in late the assignment.

Class Attendance:

Class attendance is an important and valuable aspect of the course. If you aren't in class, you ought to have a good reason for your absence. Since you can't be two places at the same time, avoid scheduling other activities during class time. It is your responsibility to get the information you missed during your absence from other members of the class. Since class participation will be evaluated as part of your responsibilities in this course, missing more than three class sessions will lower your final grade one half a letter grade for each additional class sessions missed. Turn off cell phones and pagers during class. Three or more interruptions during the course will lower a student's final grade.

Exams:

There will be two exams given in this course, a midterm and a final. The exams will include a series short identifications and analysis as well as essay questions. The final exam will be offered on Thursday, May 8 from 3:10—5:10 p.m. Please purchase at least one blue book for each exam.

Grading:

Grades on assignment will be assigned according to the following standard. Grades for papers: A+=100, A=95, A-=92; B+=87, B=85, B-=82; C+=78, C=75, C-=72; D+=67, D=65, D-=62; F=50. The final grade in the course will be assigned according to the following scale: A= 90 and above, B= 80 and above, C=70 and above, D=60 and above, F=50 or lower. Illinois State University does not assign plus or minus in terms of final grades.

The course grades will be based on the following assignments, which will be weighted as follows:

Undergraduate grades

Jane Austen film paper: 15%

Midterm exam 15%

Critical paper: 20%

Final exam: 20%

Class assignments: 20%

Class participation: 10%

Graduate grades

Jane Austen film paper: 15%

Modern print adaptation paper: 10%

Midterm exam 10%

Critical paper: 20%

Final exam: 15%

Class assignments: 20%

Class participation (including leading class discussion on an Austen film adaptation):
10%