

English 364

Jane Austen: Then and Now

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Required Texts:

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811; Oxford World Classics, 2008)
Edited by Margaret Anne Doody, Claire Lamont, and James Kinsley. ISBN: 9780199535576

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813; Oxford World Classics, 2008)
Edited by Fiona Stafford and James Kinsley. ISBN: 9780199535569

Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814; Oxford World Classics, 2008)
Edited by Jane Stabler and James Kinsley. ISBN: 9780199535538

Jane Austen, *Emma* (1815; Norton, 2012, Fourth Edition)
Edited by George Justice. ISBN: 9780393927641

Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817; Norton, 2004)
Edited by Susan Fraiman. ISBN: 9780393978506

Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (1817; Oxford World Classics, 2008)
Edited by Deidre Shauna Lynch and James Kinsley. ISBN: 9780199535552

The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen, 2nd Edition (Cambridge, 2011)
Edited by Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster. ISBN: 9780521746502

Several other critical readings, indicated on the schedule with an asterisk (*), are available on e-reserve.

Course Description:

This course will explore the historical context and enduring popularity of the works of Jane Austen. We will discuss Austen's six published novels, some of her juvenilia, five film adaptations, some scholarly criticism, and some other recent adaptations of her work. We will focus on analysis of Austen's work in relation to the social and cultural conditions of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain and its place in the development of the English novel. But we will also consider its continued relevance to our lives. Since the 1995 BBC *Pride and Prejudice* mini-series, Austenmania has hardly abated. Why do adaptations of her work remain so popular? This course will explore not only the ways in which Austen's work responds to and reflects the major social issues of her time (the Napoleonic wars, the abolition of the slave trade, gender inequity in property laws and customs, the human costs of maintaining the landed gentry, etc.), but also the ways in which modern adaptations either incorporate or, more often, *ignore* these themes. We will examine closely how and why many contemporary Austen adaptations whitewash these difficult issues. This class serves as a British Literature elective for English majors and minors, fulfills the university core literature requirement (upper-level course required for honors scholars), and serves as an elective for the Gender and Diversity Studies minor.

Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives:

- By the end of this course, students should be able to:
- read and write more critically, closely, and effectively;
 - present ideas orally;
 - conduct and evaluate research in the field;
 - understand literature in its historical context;

- analyze and apply current theories (including feminist, queer, Marxist/materialist, and postcolonial);
- connect new approaches to older texts;
- understand film as an art form, crafted by myriad people and cultural forces; and
- think more critically about popular media.

Course Requirements:

Since this course aims to hone and develop your skills for critical reading, writing and speaking, you will do a great deal of each. There will be periodical 1-page analytical quizzes and short close-reading papers due for some of the assignments, particularly the films. Quizzes will be administered at the beginning of class. If you are late for class on a quiz day you will have to work within the allotted time limits for that quiz and may receive a zero. We will also have periodical graded in-class activities that are part of your exercise grade, including a game based on historical context readings and a pop culture artifact presentation. Please note that due to the nature of the quizzes and in-class activities, they **cannot be made up under any circumstances**. You will also write a brief critical review (2-3 pp.) of one of the contemporary critical essays we are reading, leading the class discussion of that particular essay with several peers who have also reviewed it. Based on our discussion of *Northanger Abbey* and our interpretation of its significant themes, you will craft a scene for a film adaptation and analyze it. A research paper proposal with an annotated bibliography is required in preparation for completing a fully documented and researched critical essay (8-10 pp.), due at the end of the semester. Finally, there will be a comprehensive in-class final exam where you will be asked to synthesize your ideas about the texts we have read and viewed.

Film Screenings: You must view each of the films on the schedule *before* the class period in which we will begin class discussion. We will view many film clips in class, but our class time will be devoted to active discussion, not screenings. I will schedule a class viewing time prior to our discussion of a film and I will leave the films on reserve at the library (in building use only) so that those who are unable to make it to these screenings can view the films whenever they choose. You may, of course, rent or download the films, too, if you prefer to watch in the comfort of your own homes!

Attendance and Participation: Class discussions and in-class activities are essential to this course. Thus if you wish to succeed in this class, you need to attend and participate every day. Participation includes not only coming to class but also arriving **prepared, on time**, and ready to **contribute** to class discussions and activities. Your contribution will be measured by the “step up/step out” method. That is, you’ll be expected to offer thoughtful comments during discussion (step up), but you should do so without monopolizing the class or blurting out whatever crosses your mind (step out). Also note that for the duration of the class period, you will be expected to disconnect from your personal technology. No phone calls or texts should be coming in or going out during class. Laptops should be stowed unless you have a documentable need for one. Adult comportment is expected of all students.

If you must miss class, consult as soon as possible with a trusted classmate for any notes and announcements. Attendance will also be taken into consideration when calculating participation grades. Sustained habitual absences, defined as missing a week’s worth of consecutive classes, will result in a grade of *VF* (vanishing failure).

Grading:

You are responsible for your own grade in this course. You must be actively engaged in claiming an education. I cannot help you with problems in this class if you do not tell me what they

are. You are encouraged to make individual appointments to see me, to come to my office hours, to call me at my office, to send me e-mail messages, and, of course, to speak up in class! Be aware that e-mail is not an appropriate venue for discussing certain issues and I do not always check my email on the weekends.

I do not accept late assignments or e-mail attachments. Late is defined as anything turned in after the beginning of the class period in which it is due and I must receive a hard copy of your work at that time. Except in the most dire, unavoidable and **documentable** circumstances, you must have **prior** approval from me for **any** late or missed assignments.

Plagiarism, the use of another person's words or ideas as one's own (yes, this applies to anything you find on the internet, too), will not be tolerated. It is against the law. If you plagiarize, it will result in, at the very least, **failure of this course** and may result in further academic discipline from the University. Don't do it.

Everything will be graded on a 100-point scale (e.g., 80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+). Assignments will be weighted as follows:

- Quizzes, Exercises, Short papers — 15 %
- Analysis of Criticism Essay/Presentation — 15 %
- Screenplay Assignment — 15 %
- Research paper proposal and annotated bibliography — 10 %
- Research paper — 25 %
- Final exam — 10 %
- Class participation — 10 %

Tutoring:

A valuable resource for all students is the Writing Center. Tutors can help you on an individual basis with any aspect of your writing at any stage in the writing process. They will not write papers for you nor will they proofread.

Students with Disabilities:

Anyone who feels he/she may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability (e.g.: sensory, learning, psychological, medical, mobility) should contact me to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs as soon as possible. I rely on the Disability Services Office for assistance in verifying your eligibility for academic accommodations related to your disability. If you have not previously contacted Disability Services, I encourage you to do so to coordinate reasonable accommodations.

Tentative Schedule

All assignments are to be read or completed for the day on which they are listed. Any changes to the schedule will be discussed and announced in class.

WEEK I

M Questions about syllabus and assignments (turn in signed statements indicating that you've read and understood the online syllabus). Introductions. Introduction to the period. Regency Country Dancing!

W Preface to *Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* (CCJA, xi-xii) and Jan Fergus, "The Professional Woman Writer" (CCJA, 1-20). Introduction to period cont.

F Claudia Johnson, "Austen Cults and Cultures," (CCJA, 232-247 and on e-reserve*). Pop Culture Artifacts I: Austen Action Figure, P&P Paper Dolls, I ♥ Mr. Darcy, *The Republic of Pemberley*, Out Of Print Clothing and the afterlife of Hugh Thomson's illustrations.

WEEK II

M MLK Day—no class

W *Sense and Sensibility* (novel), Vol. I.

F *Sense and Sensibility*, Vol. II.

WEEK III

M *Sense and Sensibility*, Vol III.

W Analyzing Film: Form and Content (the shot and the cut, scripting, casting, adaptation and interpretation). Begin discussion of *Sense and Sensibility* (2008 BBC film adaptation). Read Q&A with Andrew Davies: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/austen/askandrew.html> and watch the interview: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/austen/davies.html>

F Analyzing Film, cont. (casting, adaptation, scripting—including journey from page to screen). Read script of Emma Thompson's *Sense and Sensibility* (1995), focus on the following scenes: from p. 64, "LUCY (low) Dear Miss Dashwood, perhaps now we might have our—discussion," to p. 67 "ELINOR I give you my word" (more TBA).* Watch Emma Thompson's Golden Globe Award acceptance speech: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BD_9RyiRe_o
View clips and compare: script to film and Thompson to Davies.

WEEK IV

M Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Jane Austen and the Masturbating Girl."* **Presentation:**

W Juliet McMaster, "Class" (CCJA, 111-126), Edward Copeland, "Money" (CCJA, 127-143), David Selwyn, "Making a Living" (CCJA, 144-158), and Maggie Lane, "Daily Life in Jane Austen's England," Norton *Emma*, pp. 346-351.

F E. J. Clery, "Gender" (CCJA, 159-175). In-class activity: House Hunters: Highbury Edition.

WEEK V

M Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (novel), Vol I.

W *Pride and Prejudice*, Vol II.

F *Pride and Prejudice*, Vol III.

WEEK VI

M Devoney Looser, “Feminist Implications of the Silver Screen Austen;”* **Presentation:**

_____, _____, _____,
_____.
W Discuss multiplicity of *P&P* adaptations, including scenes from BBC 1995 miniseries, *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, “The Lizzie Bennet Diaries,” and film posters from 1940 version.

F Postcolonial applications: discuss *Bride and Prejudice* (2004 film).

WEEK VII

M Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (novel), Biographical Notice of the Author and Vol I.

W *Northanger Abbey*, Vol II.

F Isobel Grundy, “Jane Austen and Literary Traditions” (*CCJA*, 192-214).

WEEK VIII Spring Break

WEEK IX

M Austen, *Mansfield Park* (novel), Vol I

W *Mansfield Park*, Vol II.

F *Mansfield Park*, Vol III. Explore the *Jane Austen’s Fiction Manuscripts* website, especially opinions of *Mansfield Park*: <http://www.janeausten.ac.uk/index.html>.

WEEK X

M Edward Said, “Jane Austen and Empire.”* **Presentation:** _____,

_____, _____, _____,

_____. **Provisional Paper Topic/Thesis Due.**

W and F — no class (ASECS conference)

WEEK XI

M Misty Anderson, “‘The Different Sorts of Friendship’: Desire in *Mansfield Park*.”* **Presentation:**

_____, _____, _____,

_____.

W Read selections from Austen’s *Juvenilia* (pp. 197-212 of Norton *Northanger Abbey* and on e-reserve). * Discuss *Mansfield Park* (1999 film).

F Gillian Russell, “Sociability” (*CCJA*, 176-191). 8:30 p.m.: Optional Evening Performance @ Playhouse in the Park: *Pride & Prejudice*

WEEK XII

M Austen, *Emma* (novel), Vol. I.

W *Emma*, Vol. II.

F *Emma*, Vol. III as well as “Opinions of *Emma*” and Sir Walter Scott, “Review of *Emma*,” 363-5.

WEEK XIII

M John Mosier, “Clues for the Clueless;”* **Presentation:** _____,

_____, _____,

_____. Discuss *Clueless* (1995 film). **Paper Proposals Due.**

W Discuss *Clueless* and Kathryn Sutherland, “Jane Austen on Screen” (*CCJA*, 215-31).

F Austen, *Persuasion* (novel), Vol. I.

WEEK XIV

M *Persuasion*, Vol. II.

W Discuss *Persuasion* (1995 film). ***Northanger Abbey* Screenplay due.**

F Easter Break — no class

WEEK XV

M Easter Break — no class

W Roger Sales, “In Face of All the Servants: Spectators and Spies in Austen”* **Presentation:**

_____ , _____ ,

_____ , _____ .

F Pop Culture Artifacts II: Janeites and Beyond. “Jane Austen’s Fight Club,” and Mitchell and Webb, “Posh Dancing,” (more TBA?). Judy Simons, “Jane Austen and Popular Culture.”*

WEEK XVI

M Final papers due. In-class activity: House Hunters: Highbury Edition Redux.

W Pop Culture Artifacts III: **Show and Tell.**

F Exam review, Course evaluations.

Comprehensive Final Exam — Final Exam Period, TBA