

English 262: What is Progress? English Literature since 1800 Spring 2018

Dr. Erika Wright
Meeting Times: MWF 11:00-11:50
Class Location: THH 108

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Office & Hours: THH 402H
W 10-11 & by appt.

This survey examines literary responses to momentous events, ongoing arguments, and hot topics in Britain from 1800 (and a bit before) to roughly the present day. Part one examines the revolutionary roots of Romantic poetry, theories about the poet's political and social role, and the rise of the novel. Part Two focuses on the reforming impulses of Victorian writers as they responded to shifting attitudes about class, gender, sexuality, and Empire. Part Three builds on the issues raised throughout the 19th century, exploring how the uncertainty wrought by two Great Wars and developments in technology during the 20th and 21st centuries transformed (or not) individual and national identity.

The texts we study will introduce us to a range of viewpoints that seek to define what it means to be human—to live and love in a world that, depending on one's experience, is changing too fast or not fast enough. In an effort to tease out these competing desires and perspectives about change, we will organize our close reading around the concept of **progress**. We will explore how key works define and depict progress or are progressive, as they ask us to consider what we gain and lose when seek to improve, to move forward with or against a community. Does the text lament progress? Does it rebel against established traditions and social codes? Does it do both? And how? What formal conventions help to shape the content of these stories? We will ask questions such as these throughout the semester, but ideally we will form new questions, as we seek to develop a more nuanced understanding of British literature and culture.

Required Texts

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (ISBN: 978-0393977516)
Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (ISBN 9780141439563)
Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go* (ISBN: 978-1400078776)
Norton Anthology of English Literature 9th ed. vols. D, E, F (ISBN: 978-0393913019)

Learning Objectives

- Identify key historical issues and literary texts (fictional and non-fictional) that have shaped British culture since the late 18th century until the present;
- Reflect on what it means to be human through close study of human experience from the late 18th century until the present;
- Cultivate a critical appreciation for various forms of human expression, including literature, politics, philosophy, and the arts, as well as develop an understanding of the historical and social contexts from which these forms emerge;
- Engage with lasting ideas and values that have animated humanity throughout the centuries for a more purposeful, more ethical, and intellectually richer life;
- Learn to read and interpret actively and analytically, to think critically and creatively, and to write and speak persuasively;
- Learn to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and to formulate informed opinions on complex issues of critical importance in today's global world.

English Department Learning Objectives and Priorities

- A student with a major in English should graduate with an appreciation for the relations between representation and the human soul; the relations between words and ideas; and the social utility of a sophisticated understanding of discourse. For further details, please consult our website at <http://dornsife.usc.edu/engl/undergraduate#English>

Course Requirements

Detailed instructions for all written assignments will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard. I am also available to review assignment instructions if you have any questions.

1. Participation. (150 pts.) Attendance and active participation in discussions are essential. This is a small, discussion-based seminar, so your presence will be missed and your silence noted. Arrive on time with all the relevant course materials, ask questions, express opinions, and respond to the comments of your classmates with respect and genuine curiosity. This portion of your grade includes any impromptu in-class activities, quizzes, or group work. You cannot make up missed in-class activities.
2. Discussion Leader. (100 pts.) You will facilitate the discussion of one of the texts on the syllabus. This grade will consist of your oral and written response to the text. You must submit a synopsis of your analysis on the day you lead discussion.
3. Three Essays. (600 pts.) (5-7 pages) These thesis-driven essays will demonstrate your ability to use close reading to develop a nuanced argument about a text. Each essay is worth 200 pts.
4. Take-Home Final. (150 pts.) Cumulative.

A: 930-1000; A-: 929-895; B+: 894-870; B: 869-830; B-: 829-795; C+: 794-770, etc.

Course Policies

Absences. If you have more than three unexcused absences (that's a week of class) or are chronically late, you will risk earning a "0" for Participation. More important, when you are absent or late, not only do you miss lectures and content, you miss the chance to articulate your ideas and discover what you know.

Office Hours. I am happy to meet with you during my office hour or by appointment to discuss the texts or your interests and literary musings. I encourage you to check in with me about your progress or to ask questions about the theories, texts, and assignments from the course. Office hours are also a fine time to discuss ideas for essays before you start writing; review drafts of your essay before it is due; clarify my comments after it has been graded. Before you come to discuss a graded essay, you must consult the "Office Hours" handout on Blackboard.

E-mail. I expect that you check your USC e-mail and Blackboard at least once in the morning and once in the evening. You can expect that I will check my email regularly. However, that does not mean I can respond instantly to all of your requests and questions, especially about essays. Those take time and thought, so give me a good 24 hours to respond.

Unless we have made arrangements ahead of time, please do not e-mail your essays. I expect hard copies of all of your essays on the date and time they are due.

Electronics. **No laptops or eBooks.** Also, no texting during class. If you have an emergency to deal with, please excuse yourself from the classroom.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

(NOTE: Unless otherwise noted, all readings, including Introductions, come from the Norton Anthology of English Literature. I may make changes to the reading list and assignment due dates as I deem necessary. I will announce in class and email any changes to the syllabus.)

PART ONE: The Romantic Age

Week 1 Revolution and the Romantics

M Jan. 8—Introductions

What is Progress?

Close Reading Guide (Handout)

Edmund **Burke**, *From* "Reflections on the Revolution in France" (handout)

W Jan. 10—Introduction to "The Romantic Period" (pp. 3-10)

"The Revolution Controversy and the Spirit of the Age" (pp. 183-84)

Burke cont'd

Mary **Wollstonecraft**, *From* "A Vindication of the Rights of Men"

William **Wordsworth**, "Anecdote for Fathers"

F Jan. 12—**Wordsworth**, "We Are Seven," "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," & "Lines Written in Early Spring"

Sign up for Wordsworth or Coleridge

Week 2 Lyrics, Landscapes, and Longing

M Jan. 15—MLK Day NO CLASSES

W Jan. 17—Finish Intro to "The Romantic Period" (pp. 10-27)

Wordsworth, *Lines Written a few miles above Tintern Abbey*,

Preface to the Lyrical Ballads

Dorothy **Wordsworth**, *Grasmere Journals*

DUE: Close Reading Wordsworth

F Jan. 19—Samuel Taylor **Coleridge**, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*,

"This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," *Biographia Literaria*, CH 14 and excerpt from CH 17 (491-499), and "On the Slave Trade" (pp.108-110).

Due: Close Reading Coleridge

Week 3 Sensibility and the Estate

M Jan. 22—John Keats, "Ode on Melancholy" & "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"

Assign Sense and Sensibility Discussion Groups

W Jan. 24—Jane **Austen**, *Sense and Sensibility* CH (Quiz 1)

F Jan. 26—*Sense and Sensibility* (Vol 1)

S&S Group Summaries

Week 4

- M. Jan. 29—S&S (Vol II)
Group Close Reading
W Jan. 31—S&S Finish
F Feb. 2—Essay 1 Prep: “From Close Reading to Thesis”

PART TWO: The Victorian Age

Week 5 Disease, Desire, and Domesticity

- M Feb. 5—Intro to “The Victorian Age”
Alfred, Lord **Tennyson**, “Ulysses” & “Mariana”
W Feb. 7—Robert **Browning**, “Porphyria’s Lover” & “My Last Duchess”
F Feb. 9—“The ‘Woman Question’: The Victorian Debate About Gender” (pp. 1607-1612)
John **Ruskin**, From “Of Queens’ Garden” (p. 1614-)
JS **Mill**, From “The Subjection of Women” (p. 1105)
Elizabeth **Gaskell**, Lizzie Leigh (pdf)

Week 6 Reformed and Reforming Women

- M Feb. 12—“Industrialism: Progress or Decline?” (pg. 1580-81)
Thomas Babington **Macaulay**, from “Review of Southey’s Colloquies”
Friedrich **Engels**, From “The Great Towns”
DUE: Essay 1
Character Adoption Blogging Assignment
W Feb. 14—Christina **Rossetti**, “The Goblin Market”
F Feb. 16—Charles **Dickens**, *Great Expectations* (through CH V)

Week 7 Middle Class Fictions & The Rise of the Novel

- M Feb. 19—Presidents Day (NO CLASSES)
W Feb. 21—GE (Norton CH XIX, end of Vol I)
F Feb. 23—GE (Norton CH XXVI; Vol II CH vii)

Week 8 Gentlemen & the Law

- M Feb. 26—GE (Norton CH XXXIX; Finish Vol II)
W Feb. 28—GE (Norton XLIX; Vol III CH x)
F Mar. 2—GE (finish)

Week 9 Empire & Interiority

- M Mar. 5—“Empire and National Identity” (pg.1607-1609)
Thomas Babington **Macaulay**, “Minute on Indian Education” (1835)
T.N. **Mukharji**, from “A Visit to Europe”
Tennyson, “Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition . . .”
Briefel, “On the 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition” (BRANCH)
W Mar. 7—Robert Louis **Stevenson**, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (to p.1686)
Labouchere Amendment from the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885(aka Blackmailer’s Charter) (handout)
F Mar. 9—*Jekyll and Hyde* (finish)

Week 10

Mar. 11- 18 **Spring Recess**

Week 11 (Im)Proper Ladies and Gentleman

M Mar. 19—**Elfenbein**, “On the Trials of Oscar Wilde: Myths and Realities” (BRANCH)
Close Reading Workshop (Essay 2)

W Mar. 21—George Bernard **Shaw**, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*

F Mar. 23—Introduction to the Twentieth Century (pp. 1887-1910).
EM **Forster** TBD

PART THREE: Twentieth Century and After

Week 12 Nostalgia Revisited

M Mar. 26—Focus on the “Fiction” section of the Intro to the 10th c (pp. 1901-1906)
Virginia **Woolf**, *Mrs. Dalloway* (pp. 2156-2167 “. . . but what word was it writing?”)

W Mar. 28—*Mrs. Dalloway* (to p. 2213 “. . . she did not like that man.”)

F Mar. 30—*Mrs. Dalloway* (to p. 2233 “. . . so that was Dr. Holmes.”)
Due: Essay 2

Week 13 War Neurosis and Hysteria at Home

M Apr. 2—“Voices From World War I” (pp. 2016-17)
Jessie **Pope** (handout)

Siegfried **Sassoon**, “Glory of Women”

Wilfred **Owen**, “Dulce Et Decorum Est”

W Apr. 4—*Mrs. Dalloway* (finish)

F Apr. 6—Reading Day

Week 14 Outsiders

M Apr. 9—*The Imitation Game* (dir. Morten Tyldum)

DUE: Choose one poem from Sitwell, Reed, or Douglas (“Voices from WWII”).
Discuss in one page how your chosen poem resonates with the film.

W Apr. 11—George **Orwell**, “Shooting an Elephant”

Overview “Nation, Race, Language”

Ngugi Wa **Thiong’o**, From “Decolonizing the Mind”

F Apr. 13—*Never Let Me Go* (Quiz)

Week 15

M Apr. 16—NLMG (Part One)

W Apr. 18—cont’d

F Apr. 20—NLMG (Part Two)

Week 15 Imagined Futures

M Apr. 23—NLMG (Part Three)

W Apr. 25—*The Black Mirror*, “The Entire History of You” (Netflix)

F Apr. 27—Review Final Exam

DUE: Essay 3

W May 2—Final Exam emailed as a Word doc to ewright@usc.edu by 1:00 pm.

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct Plagiarism – presenting someone else's ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Section 11, Behavior Violating University Standards <https://scampus.usc.edu/1100-behavior-violating-university-standards-and-appropriate-sanctions/>. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, <http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct/>.

Discrimination, sexual assault, and harassment are not tolerated by the university. You are encouraged to report any incidents to the Office of Equity and Diversity <http://equity.usc.edu/> or to the Department of Public Safety <http://capsnet.usc.edu/department/department-publicsafety/online-forms/contact-us>. This is important for the safety whole USC community. Another member of the university community – such as a friend, classmate, advisor, or faculty member – can help initiate the report, or can initiate the report on behalf of another person. The Center for Women and Men <http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/cwm/> provides 24/7 confidential support, and the sexual assault resource center webpage sarc@usc.edu describes reporting options and other resources.

Support Systems –A number of USC's schools provide support for students who need help with scholarly writing. Check with your advisor or program staff to find out more.

- Students whose primary language is not English should check with the American Language Institute <http://dornsife.usc.edu/ali>, which sponsors courses and workshops specifically for international graduate students.
- The Office of Disability Services and Programs http://sait.usc.edu/academicsupport/centerprograms/dsp/home_index.html provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange the relevant accommodations.
- If an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible, USC Emergency Information <http://emergency.usc.edu/> will provide safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued by means of blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technology.
- For students in the USC community who are experiencing anxiety, depression, or other mental health struggles, please contact Student Counseling Services [\(740-7711\)](tel:740-7711) or the Eric Cohen Student Health Center at [\(323\) 442-5631](tel:323-442-5631).

Student Behavior –Behavior that persistently or grossly interferes with classroom activities is considered disruptive behavior and may be subject to disciplinary action. Such behavior inhibits other students' ability to learn and an instructor's ability to teach. A student responsible for disruptive behavior may be required to leave class pending discussion and resolution of the problem and may be reported to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. These strictures may extend to behaviors outside the classroom that are related to the course.

Emergency Preparedness/Course Continuity in a Crisis –In case of a declared emergency if travel to campus is not feasible, USC executive leadership will announce an electronic way for instructors to teach students in their residence halls or homes using a combination of Blackboard, teleconferencing, and other technologies.