

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

Dr. Erika Wright
Meeting Times: TTH 9:30-10:50
Class Location: THH 215

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Office & Hours: THH 402H
TH 11-12 & 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)
Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (ISBN: 978-0140434248)
EM Forster, *Howards End* (ISBN: 978-0-14-118213-1)
Hanif Kureishi, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (ISBN: 978-0140131680)
Norton Anthology of English Literature 10th ed. vols. D, E, F (ISBN: 978-0393603132)

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 listed below will be handed out in class and posted on Blackboard. I am also available to review assignment instructions and drafts if you have any questions.

1. **Short Papers—30% (300 pts).** You will do three short, close reading papers, 500-750 words, one for each unit/period (Romantic, Victorian, 20th-21stC). In these papers, you will do a close analysis of one isolated passage, word, or image (we will discuss the assignment more in class). You may choose the text on which you write, but note that the paper is due one week after our final discussion (see Short Paper Due Dates). These rolling due dates allow you some freedom to organize your schedule. However, because of this accommodation, I cannot accept late papers, e-mail submissions, or excuses. You must submit the paper on the due date listed, so plan accordingly.
2. **Discussion Leader/Respondent—15% (150 pts.)** You will sign up to facilitate the discussion of one of the texts on the syllabus. As a leader (100 pts), you will pose 1-2 questions about a specific aspect of the text for the class to answer. You must come to class a few minutes early and write the question(s) on the board. In most cases, you will need to coordinate your question with your co-leader. I will select two respondents at random on the day of the discussion. As a respondent (50 pts), you will be the first to answer one of the leaders' questions. NOTE: You may use your discussion or response as prep for one of your short essays.
3. **Weekly Reading Quizzes and In-class Assignments—15% (150 pts.).** I will regularly update the list of these graded assignments (with point value) on blackboard so that you can keep a running tally of this portion of your grade.
4. **Mid-semester Progress Report—10% (100 pts.).** You will write a 750-word statement of your personal goals for the rest of the course. This assignment is designed to give focus to your further work in the course and to prepare you for the final writing project.
5. **Final Paper—30% (300 pts.).** 8-10 pages in length due on the date and by the end time scheduled for the final exam of this course.

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

Course Policies

Participation. This class is a discussion seminar. Your physical and mental presence is required for it to run smoothly and for all of us to get the most out of our time together. If

you have more than one week of unexcused absences (that's 2-3 classes, depending on our schedule), your final grade will be lowered. 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. That said, if you find that you are falling behind in class, please come and see me immediately. If I don't know what is going on, I can't help.

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 assignment, 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 & the Romantics

T Aug. 21—Introductions

What is Progress?

Close Reading Guide (handout)

William **Wordsworth**, "We Are Seven" (handout)

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

TH Aug. 23—Introduction to "The Romantic Period"

Norton Intro to "The Revolution Controversy and the Spirit of the Age"

Burke, *Reflections* (finish)

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

Read also Price and Paine for context.

Wordsworth, "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," & "Lines Written in Early Spring"

Short Essay Prep

Sign up for "getting to know you" office hours

Week 2 Lyrics, Landscapes, & Longing

T Aug. 28—Finish Intro to "The Romantic Period"

Wordsworth, *Lines Written a few miles above Tintern Abbey*,
Preface to the Lyrical Ballads

Dorothy **Wordsworth**, *Grasmere Journals*

Samuel Taylor **Coleridge**, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*

Reading Quiz (RQ) Prep

TH Aug. 30—**Coleridge**, "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison"

Week 3 Sensibility & the Estate

T Sept. 4—Jane **Austen**, *Sense and Sensibility* (CH 1-4)

RQ#1

Reading Group Sign Ups

TH Sept. 6—*Sense and Sensibility* (Vol 1)

John **Keats**, "Ode on Melancholy"

Week 4 The Marriage Plot & the Novel

T. Sept. 11—S&S Vol 2

Group Close Reading

TH Sept. 13—S&S Finish

Group Close Reading

PART TWO: The Victorian Age

Week 5 Fallen Women

T Sept. 18—Intro to "The Victorian Age"

Alfred, Lord **Tennyson**, "Ulysses" & "Mariana"

RQ#2

TH Sept. 20—Robert **Browning**, "Porphyria's Lover" & "My Last Duchess"

The 'Woman Question': The Victorian Debate About Gender"

John **Ruskin**, From "Of Queens' Garden"

JS **Mill**, From "The Subjection of Women"

Saints v Sinners (in class)

Week 6 Domesticity & Doubt

T Sept. 25—Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1855) (Vol I, CH VIII)

RQ#3

TH Sept. 27—*North and South* (finish Vol I)

Week 7 Industry & Identity

T Oct. 2—"Industrialism: Progress or Decline?"

Thomas Babington **Macaulay**, from "Review of Southey's Colloquies"

Friedrich **Engels**, From "The Great Towns"

N&S (Vol II, CH XI)

RQ #4

TH Oct. 4—N&S Finish

Week 8 Empire & Interiority

T Oct. 9—"Empire and National Identity"

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" (Blackboard)

Due: Midterm Progress Report

TH Oct. 11—NO CLASS

DUE: (Midnight) Discussion Board Assignment on Robert Louis **Stevenson**, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Labouchere Amendment from the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885 (aka Blackmailer's Charter) (Blackboard)

PART THREE: Twentieth & Twenty-First Centuries

Week 9 (Im)Proper Ladies & Gentleman

T Oct. 16—Jekyll and Hyde cont'd

EM **Forster**, *Howards End* (CH I-VII)

RQ#5

TH Oct. 18—Introduction to the Twentieth and Twenty-First Centuries

Howards End (through CH XV)

Week 10 Middle Class Morality

T Oct. 23—*Howards End* (through CH XXX)

TH Oct. 25—*Howards End* (Finish)

Week 11 War Neurosis

T Oct. 30—Claude **McKay**, "If We Must Die" and "Old England"

RQ#6

TH Nov. 1—"Voices From World War I" (pp. 2016-17)

Jessie **Pope** (handout)

Siegfried **Sassoon**, "Glory of Women"

Wilfred **Owen**, "Dulce Et Decorum Est"

Week 12 Outsiders

T Nov. 8—"Voices from WWII"

Morten **Tyldum** (dir.), *The Imitation Game*

Woolf, Sitwell, Reed, or Douglas ("Voices from WWII").

RQ#7

TH Nov. 10—Derek **Walcott**, "A Far Cry from Africa"

Seamus **Heaney**, "Casualty"

Hanif **Kureishi**, *The Buddha of Suburbia* (through CH 2)

Week 13

T Nov. 13 —Hanif **Kureishi**, *The Buddha of Suburbia*, finish Part One: "In the Suburbs" (through CH 8)

TH Nov. 15—*Buddha*, begin Part Two: In the City (through CH 11)

RQ#8

Week 14 Pop Culture/Counter Culture

T Nov. 20—*Buddha* (finish)

W Nov. 21-F Nov. 23 Thanksgiving Break

Week 15 Imagined Futures

T Nov. 27—Black Mirror, "White Christmas," "Entire History of You" and "Be Right Back"

TH Nov. 29—Wrap Up

TH Dec. 6 **DUE:** Final Essay (hard copy and email 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 Part B, Section 11, "Behavior Violating University Standards" policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. 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>.

Support Systems:

Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255

Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call. Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center

For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086 Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support

Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs

Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

USC Support and Advocacy (USCSA) – (213) 821-4710

Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssu

Diversity at USC

Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information

Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime. Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu