

English 466 Fall 2018 Syllabus
The 19th-Century English Novel
Professor Schor
Tuesday/Thursday 12:30 – 1:50 THH 105

Office hours: Tuesday 3-4:30 and by appointment
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Affinities and Adaptations: The After-Life of the Victorian Novel in Literature and Film

What it's about:

This class bears two unofficial titles. The first is, “How to have fun with 19th century novels?” And the second is, “How did 19th century novels teach us to think about consciousness?” So you might say, the argument of this class is that thinking is fun, and thinking and about thinking is fun, and thinking about writing about thinking is the most fun you can have! You might not agree with any one of those ideas, but hey – they’re questions, and we will be answering them together. This class is very much about puzzling and playing and much less about knowing things, except about how we know things through words, images, associations, and ghosts... which is to say, it is about (see above) the after-life of the Victorian novel in literature and film.

To that end, we will be reading a series of novels that I think of as “ghost stories,” in the sense that they are all about the stories we tell ourselves, when we are reading, or thinking, or just being. The class begins with the greatest fabulist(s) of all, Jane Austen and her narrating heroine, Emma; it goes on through that “visionary boy,” Pip, on to a series of insane dreamers, Heathcliff and Cathy and Lockwood and Nelly Dean, and then goes to the last great dreamer of the 19th century, Henry James’s Isabel Archer in The Portrait of a Lady. These are all haunted stories in a series of haunted houses (Miss Havisham, anyone?) but they also haunt our vision, like the after-image when we turn our eyes too quickly away from something, and its ghost lingers. So, a series of contemporary ghost-tellings: “Clueless,” Remains of the Day (now, alas, optional due to time!), Fingersmith, “Spark House,” “To Walk Invisible” and Mrs. Osmond (ditto). The heart of the class is the four big novels – but we will collectively read some re-tellings, we will read some seminal critical discussions of doubling, consciousness and the Gothic, and you will explore other variations on your own, and report back to us.

What you will do:

Reading: The class has a rigorous but not ridiculous schedule of reading and viewing. The expectation is we will read about 250 pages (more or less) a week; some weeks, there will be reading and viewing. All reading is to be completed before the date on the syllabus; viewing, likewise. Our collective conversation depends on your attentive reading of the text, so learn to read in the best possible circumstances: reading should be done in a quiet place (or a noisy one, if you like ambient noise, which I do – coffee houses!), in large blocks of time, with no electronic devices. Reading is not something done well while multi-tasking: learn to set time aside and devote yourself, no, immerse yourself in the text. Always read with a pen in your hand and note key words and ideas; write questions to yourself; feel free to argue with the book! They’re annoying books – they’re living objects – we encounter them as if in a free-range zoo... fight back!

There are two kinds of texts in this class: those read by everyone, and those read only by you (or a few of you). You are expected to read **two** extra books (or see two films, or one of each) by the end of the semester. You will find many of them on the “supplemental” list below – you may add others at

your request; just clear them with me. At least one of them must be a part of one of your formal written assignments (see below) and both must be part of our discussion (see below). But this allows you to create your own version of the syllabus – hooray!

Discussion (aka class prep): A lively and engaging seminar depends on preparation – yours and mine. But the primary responsibility is of course yours – I am here to guide, prod, and provoke (sometimes just to rave enthusiastically!) but the questions must come from you. To that end, you are responsible for one written comment per class session. It can be as little as a few sentences; as much as a page (probably no more!) but it is to be **e-mailed to me (schor@usc.edu) by 10 p.m. the night before class**. I will build our class around your ideas – please have them? They need not be coherent or elegant or even well thought out – but they must be thought, and they must respond to that day's assignment. Every night before class. Every night. Every. You write them; I read them; we discuss. Period. Please be on time for class and remain in the room for the entire course session, and be sure to bring the day's texts with you. Please leave all electronic devices at home or in your bags.

Writing: You will write **three short papers** in the course of the semester. The dates are given on the syllabus below. They will be 3-5 pages in length; they are to be based on the readings and viewings; no more than one of them can be “only” about a film; at least one of them must be about a single assigned text. Don't worry about that now. In deference to repeated student requests, and out of curiosity, I will be offering “assignments” or “prompts” for the papers to give you ideas, but you are always free to pursue your own ideas. The papers must be based on close textual analysis, whether it is of a novel or a film; they must be clearly and carefully written; they must have an argument. They also must be **double-spaced and single-sided and carefully proofread**. **Papers that are not will not receive a grade!** Other than that, they must be about something that interests you – your interest is what will make me want to read the paper! Do not worry about this – assignments will be clear! Just don't plagiarize, okay? Do your own work – and if you have difficulties, come see me early!

Finally, you will complete **a final project**. It can be a longer paper about a single text, a comparative paper about several texts, a creative project growing out of the books and films. It should be about 10-12 pages, and we will have lots of time to discuss it, and you will have lots of practice in analysis by then. It should be “cumulative” in that it reflects a semester's serious thought, but it can be as small as a single image repeated throughout a series of texts or as expansive as finishing one of the novels differently... We will have plenty of time to discuss this, but **a proposal is due before Thanksgiving. Final assignments are due by noon, December 11th**.

Grading: This is a rough outline; I reserve the right to grade for improvement.

Informed, generous class participation: 10%; Informal writing (twice weekly): 20%; Short papers, 40%; Final paper: 30%. Maximum two absences. Perfect attendance is expected.

Summary: This class is designed so that you and I have fun. Together. With books and movies. Lots of them by women. It's going to be a LOT of fun. It is designed so that we read books (not too much, but steadily), think about them the night before class, stumble out of bed, throw on clean-ish clothes and talk about them. Then we watch some movies and weird British TV and talk about that. (We can call it the ‘telly,’ and be nerds...) Then we write things to find out what we think. Then we do something creative and wacky and intense at the end, because we don't want to take a final, do we? That's it – fun with novels and films and telly! And sometimes we write! The end! (And they all live happily ever after! Except Cathy and Heathcliff – they're ghosts!)

Texts: Books you must purchase are bold. Please buy the required editions.

Jane Austen, Emma (Penguin)

Amy Heckerling, "Clueless"

Optional Austen texts: Any "straight" adaptation (Gwyneth Paltrow; Kate Beckinsale; Romola Garai); any novel or romantic comedy in which the heroine is completely confused about whom she loves and why (yes, Shakespeare counts – you just have to read or watch it anew and connect it). Two very different novels are possible inter-texts: Frankenstein (which is an optional text for any of these books) and Cold Comfort Farm, one of the two funniest books ever written – and absolutely an Emma parody. There is a very amusing film version with Kate Beckinsale, herself a wonderful Emma.

Charles Dickens Great Expectations (Penguin)

Sarah Waters, Fingersmith

Chan-wook Park/ Seo-kyeong Jeong, "The Handmaiden" (Korean film version of Fingersmith)

Optional Dickens texts: Peter Carey's re-telling of Great Expectations, Jack Maggs, is genuinely interesting if flawed. My personal favourite among Great Expectations revisions is Kazuo Ishiguro's Remains of the Day, a brilliant and perfect novel (cut for time, alas!). There is a pretty awful (I think, but you may not) film version of Remains of the Day, which does have a very fine performance by Emma Thompson. There is a BBC TV production of Fingersmith which I haven't seen (you could tell me about it!) Of the making of film versions of Great Expectations, there is no end. The classic David Lean version is beloved by many – not by me. However, it is really important – many re-tellings of GE have more to do with Lean than Dickens – amongst them, the "South Park" version, which we will probably watch. There is an interesting contemporary updating by Alfonso Cuarón, starring Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow and Robert deNiro as Magwitch. It features the modern art world and is about as subtle as you'd think – Anne Bancroft plays Miss Havisham in a decaying Miami house. Worth checking out! But if I recommended one film, it would actually be the brilliant David Lean version of Oliver Twist, which is central to Fingersmith – well, well worth seeing! There is also a wonderful TV show called Dickensian, in which a young Inspector Bucket investigates the murder of Jacob Marley; the young Miss Havisham, her brother and Compeyson are in the program!

Emily Bronte, Wuthering Heights (Penguin)

Sally Wainwright, "To Walk Invisible"

Sally Wainwright, "Spark House"

Optional texts: Alice Hoffman wrote an interesting updating of Wuthering Heights called Here on Earth. If you were interested in the problem of nested narratives, you could consider Frankenstein and any number of other books; ditto the Gothic. (You may want to read another Bronte novel – Jane Eyre comes to mind?) The classic film adaptation of WH starring Laurence Olivier and Merle Oberon (boring); there are several more recent versions, including one with Juliette Binoche and Ralph Fiennes, which attracted a lot of attention because JB is French (gasp!); there's a sexy one with the beautiful Kaya Scodelario and a Black Heathcliff; it's directed by the fascinating woman director Andrea Arnold. Another, starring Ian McShane ("Deadwood") has great moors! There's another with Tom Hardy... Lots!

Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady (Penguin)

Jane Campion, "The Portrait of a Lady"

Optional texts: We were originally all going to read John Banville's Mrs. Osmond, which finishes the novel. If we have time, we will... But there's a whole series of relevant texts: George Eliot's Middlemarch and Daniel Deronda; Jane Eyre, which is a source text for everything; and there's a BBC "Portrait" from 2002 that sounds pretty dreadful. And there is Jane Campion's The Piano, which is her tribute to 19th century British fiction. Amazing.

Reading and writing schedule:

August 21 Intro – Emma, chapter one

August 23 Emma Volume One (to p. 142)

August 28 Emma Volume Two (to p. 291)

Norman Page, The Language of Jane Austen

August 30 Emma begin Volume Three (to p. 353)

Marshall McLuhan, “Narcissus as Narcosis” from Understanding Media

Sept 4 Emma Volume Three

Sept 6 “Clueless” and other adaptations

Sept 11 Rosh Hashanah NO CLASS

Sept 13 Great Expectations ch 1-5 **First paper due**

Sept 18 Great Expectations Volume One

Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny”

Sept 20 Great Expectations Volume Two

Sept 25 Great Expectations finish Volume Two; begin Volume Three

Sept 27 Great Expectations finish Volume Three

Oct 2 Great Expectations; adaptations

Friedrich Kittler, “Romanticism—Psychoanalysis—Film: A History of the Double,” Literature, Media, Information Systems

Oct 4 Fingersmith (Volume one)

Oct 9 Fingersmith

Terry Castle, “Spectral Politics, Apparition Belief and the Romantic Imagination”

Oct 11 Fingersmith

Oct 16 Fingersmith

Oct 18 “The Handmaiden”

Oct 23 Wuthering Heights; “To Walk Invisible” **second paper due**

Oct 25 Wuthering Heights

Oct 30 Wuthering Heights

Eve Sedgwick, The Coherence of the Gothic

Nov 1 Wuthering Heights

Nov 8 “Spark House”

Nov 10 Portrait of a Lady (to p. 170)

Nov 15 Portrait of a Lady (334)
Nov 17 Portrait of a Lady (458) **third paper due**

Nov 20 Portrait of a Lady; final **paper proposal due**
Nov 27 Finish Portrait of a Lady; **Campion**
Nov 29 **Campion and Conclusion**

FINAL PAPER DUE: December 11th

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/sssa

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