

English 262: What is Progress? English Literature since 1800 Fall 2019

Dr. Erika Wright
Meeting Times: TuTh 9:30-10:50
Class Location: WPH 106

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Office & Hours: THH 436
Tues. 11-1 & 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 of this course focusing on the revolutionary roots of Romantic poetry, theories about the political and social role of the poet and poetry and the rise of the novel. Part Two studies 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 perspective, is changing too quickly or not quickly enough. In an effort to tease out these competing desires and responses to 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 the status quo. 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 in order to develop a more nuanced understanding of British literature and culture.

Required Texts – You must have a hard copy of the texts. No eBooks or online versions for class discussion. Copies of these books are available through the university and public libraries.

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (ISBN: 978-0393977516)

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (ISBN: 9780141439563)

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (ISBN: 978-0375703867)

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 & Grading

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 Essays—30% (300 pts).** You will write **two** short, close reading essays (approx. 650 words/2 pages, double-spaced). Analyze one isolated passage, word, or image. You may choose the texts on which you write (one from Part One and one from Part Two) but note that the essay is due one week after the primary discussion (see Short Essay Due Dates). These rolling due dates allow you some freedom to organize your schedule. However, because of this accommodation, I do not accept e-mail submissions or excuses for late papers. Assume that you will have printer and other problems and plan accordingly. I will deduct 5 pts for each class period your paper is late.
- 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 (125 pts), you will pose 1-2 questions about a specific aspect of the text for the class to answer and turn in a 1-page close reading (approx. 300 words). Come to class a few minutes early and write the question(s) on the board. Be sure you coordinate with your co-leader. I will select two respondents at random on the day of the discussion. As a respondent (25 pts), you will be the first to answer one of the leaders' questions (see Blackboard for Respondent duties). NOTE: You may use your discussion or response as prep for one of your short essays.
- 3. Participation —15% (150 pts.).** Participation includes any in-class exercises, quizzes, and discussion board posts. You cannot make up any missed in-class work. You are always welcome to meet with me to discuss your progress.
- 4. Mid-Semester Progress Report—10% (100 pts.).** You will write a 650-word/2-page reflection essay. This assignment is designed to help you articulate what you have learned and to reflect on how you might apply the course content and skills outside of class.
- 5. Final Project—30% (300 pts.).** This final project (8-10 pages) is made up of two parts—critical and creative. It must focus on one of the texts from Part Three of the course reading, but it will necessarily refer to and reflect an understanding of earlier texts and their themes.

A: 940-1000; A-: 939-895; B+: 894-870; B: 869-830; B-: 829-795; C+: 794-770, etc.

Course Policies

Participation. This class is a discussion-based 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 absences (that's 2 classes), you will miss course content, announcements/instructions, and, most of all, the chance to articulate your ideas and discover what you know. You cannot make up missed in-class activities and discussion, so your grade will necessarily suffer when you are absent. That said, some absences are unavoidable and should not significantly affect your grade. If you find that you are falling behind in class, please contact me immediately. If I don't know what is going on with you, I can't help. Pro Tip. NEVER ask a professor: "Did I miss anything?"

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. Some questions 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. Please also turn off notifications on your smart watch.

Course Content

Discomfort is an inevitable part of the process of learning. Our course readings and classroom discussions will often focus on mature, difficult, challenging, and potentially sensitive topics. Please contact me if you are concerned about the content of the texts for this course.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

Unless otherwise noted, all readings, including Introductions, come from the Norton Anthology of English Literature (NAEL). 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. 27—Introductions

Close Reading Guide (handout)

In-Class Exercise: William **Wordsworth**, "We Are Seven," "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," & "Lines Written in Early Spring" (handout)

TH Aug. 29—Course Policies/Syllabus Quiz

NAEL Intro "The Romantic Period" (Read through "The New Poetries: Theory and Practice" section & "The Revolution Controversy and the 'Spirit of the Age'")

Discussion: Edmund **Burke**, *From* "Reflections on the Revolution in France"

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

Read also Price and Paine for context.

DUE: ½-1-page Close Reading of Wordsworth

Week 2 Lyrics, Landscapes, & Longing

T Sept. 3—Finish NAEL Intro to "The Romantic Period"

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

Dorothy **Wordsworth**, *Grasmere Journals*

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

TH Sept. 5—**Coleridge**, "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison"

Jane **Austen**, *Sense and Sensibility* (CH 1-4)

Week 3 Illness & the Estate

T Sept. 10—Jane **Austen**, *Sense and Sensibility* (Vol 1)

TH Sept. 12—*Sense and Sensibility* (Vol 2)

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

Week 4 Domestic Politics

T. Sept. 17—S&S Finish

TH Sept. 19—Percy Bysshe **Shelley**, "England 1819," "To Sidmouth and Castlereagh," "To Wordsworth," and "Mutability"

PART TWO: The Victorian Age

Week 5 Dying Men, Fallen Women

T Sept. 24—NAEL Intro to "The Victorian Age"

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

Robert **Browning**, "Porphyria's Lover" & "My Last Duchess"

TH Sept. 26—Elizabeth **Gaskell**, "Lizzie Leigh" (handout)

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

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

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

Adopt a Character: *Great Expectations*

Week 6 Industry, Empire, & Identity

T Oct. 1—Christina **Rossetti**, *Goblin Market*

Charles **Dickens**, *Great Expectations* (Vol I Ch 1-8)
TH Oct. 3— NAEL Section: “Industrialism: Progress or Decline?”
Thomas Babington **Macaulay**, from “Review of Southey's Colloquies”
Friedrich **Engels**, From “The Great Towns”
Great Expectations (Vol I Ch 9-18)

Week 7 Middle Class Morality & the Rise of the Novel

T Oct. 8—*Great Expectations* (Ch 19-39)
TH Oct. 10—*Great Expectations* (Ch 40-46)
“Empire and National Identity”
Thomas Babington **Macaulay**, “Minute on Indian Education” (1835)

Week 8

T Oct. 15—*Great Expectations* (Finish)
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)
TH Oct. 17—Fall Recess ~ NO CLASS

Week 9 (Im)Proper Ladies & Gentleman

T Oct. 22— 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)
TH Oct. 24—Introduction to 20th and 21st Centuries
Virginia **Woolf**, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Discussion focus: through “What are they looking
at? . . . the maid who opened her door.”)

PART THREE: Twentieth & Twenty-First Centuries

Week 10 Memory & Modernity

T Oct. 29—*Mrs. Dalloway* (Focus: through “So that was doctor Holmes”)
NAEL “Voices From World War I”
Jessie **Pope** (handout)
Siegfried **Sassoon**, “Glory of Women”
Wilfred **Owen**, “Dulce Et Decorum Est”
TH Oct. 31— *Mrs. Dalloway* finish
TS **Eliot**, “Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock” and “The Hollow Men”

Week 11 Modern Love & War

T Nov 5—“Voices from WWII”
Morten **Tyldum** (dir.), *The Imitation Game*
Woolf, Sitwell, Reed, and Douglas (“Voices from WWII”)
TH Nov 7— EM **Forster**, *The Other Boat*

Week 12 (Popular) Culture and Identity

T Nov. 12—Zadie **Smith**, *White Teeth* (“Archie” Ch 1-5)
TH Nov. 14— *White Teeth*, (“Samad” Ch 6-10)

Week 13

T Nov. 19—*White Teeth* ("Irie" Ch 11-15)

TH Nov. 21—*White Teeth* ("Magid, Millat, and Marcus") Finish

Week 14

T Nov. 26—*White Teeth* cont'd

TH Nov. 29—Thanksgiving Break

Week 16 Imagined Futures

T Dec 3—Black Mirror, "Entire History of You," "Be Right Back," and "San Junipero"

Th Dec 5—Wrap Up & Review

Final Project Due Thursday, December 12th by 1:00 pm in my box in the English Department. If you are planning to be out of town by then, you must either turn it in early or arrange to have someone turn it in for you. I will not accept e-mailed projects.

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/ssa

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