

English 262--British Literature since 1800

Prof. David Treuer

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Office hours: Tuesday 12:30-2:00

Course Description: British Literature is a vast and varied genre, perhaps no more so than in the years the British Empire spread across the globe and influenced and was influenced by the cultures of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. How also to take into account for the profound effects of two world wars, the Crimean, Boer, Sudanese, and wars of 1812? How to account for a literary culture that saw the inclusion of India into the Commonwealth and then saw it leave when it achieved independence? Bizarrely enough, British literature from 1800 to the present includes Coleridge, Hanif Kureshi, Zadie Smith, and JK Rowling just to name a few.

Fun fact: there is simply no way to provide a comprehensive overview of 225 years of any genre of literature, especially one that obtains from the richness of the English literary tradition. Disclaimer: since it's not possible we will not attempt it. Rather: instead we will read particularly important (and FUN to read) books that will function less like a map and more like individual rooms in a vast house. Hopefully you will return to these rooms later in your life and see how they connect and explore the other rooms around them.

Our plan will be to work in reverse chronological order and to see the ways in which older work has influenced the new work with which we are familiar and that we love.

Course Requirements: Students will be expected to read (and read and read and read) and write and be prepared to discuss both the reading and writing. Students will write short weekly reaction papers keyed to the readings, to read about 200pp a week. There will be a midterm and final exam and a midterm and final paper.

Grading breakdown:

Weekly reaction papers:	20%
Midterm exam:	15%
Final Exam:	15%
Mld-term Paper:	15%
Final Paper:	25%
Class Participation:	10%

Reading List: Rowling--*Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*; McEwan--*On Chesil Beach*; Amis--*The Rachel Papers*; Hamid--*Exit West*; Greene--*The End of the Affair*; Woolf--*Mrs Dalloway*; selected poetry; Joyce--*Dubliners*; WWI--<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/articles/70139/the-poetry-of-world-war-i>; Doyle--Selected *Sherlock Holmes* short stories; Matthew Arnold--*On Dover Beach*; collected Lake Poets--Coleridge, Dorothy Lamb, Charles Lamb; Dickens--*Great Expectations*; essayists--Lamb, Stevenson--*Jekyll and Hyde*

Weekly Breakdown:

Weeks 1-2: "Modern" Britain as make-believe

Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone and bits of *Great Expectations* (we will begin reading GE in small bits so the whole thing doesn't slam us at the end of the term). We will start with HP as a way to look at what's happening or has happened in Brit Lit more recently and then, after that, we will search for echoes of the themes, central ideas, preoccupations, of the modern as we move backwards in time.

Weeks 3-4: Dirty England

Readings: *On Chesil Beach* and *The Rachel Papers*

It could be said that reading any country's national literature gives the reader the opportunity to put the country on the therapist's couch and to analyze it. How better to do that with two books that manage and mismanage sex and intimacy?

Weeks 5-6: England in the World and the World in England

Britain and more specifically the British Empire left a profound mark on the world. Tens of millions of people in Africa, Asia, and the Americas lived under British rule and were forced to accept the British version of the world. But then, after the fall of the British Empire, former British colonial citizens began speaking back to and critiquing England.

Weeks 7-8: (Mid-term quiz) The Great War and Modern Memory

Readings: *Mrs Dalloway* and *Dubliners* and selected poets. The years after WWI exhibited a fundamental shift in British self-regard. Many millions perished in the largest mechanized war in the history of humankind. Britain lost an entire generation of men. And the old myths and ideals--of bravery, of the importance of the individual--were destroyed.

Weeks 9-10: Ye Olde(r) England.

Readings: *Sherlock Holmes* and the Lake Poets. Victorian England was a strange place: serial killers, industrialization, urbanization, psychosis. We will begin to notice a

split between the pastoral and the urban, between bucolic England and its seedier violent aspect.

Weeks; 11-12: Neuroses out for a stroll

Readings: Selected British essayists--Lamb, Hazlitt, Stevenson

Montaigne may have invented the personal essay but the British stole it and ran with it. An overlooked and uniquely British form of expression, the personal essay is, arguably, one of England's most durable and popular literary exports. And these essays are weird and fun.

Weeks 13-14: Because you just Gotta read Dickens

Reading: Great Expectations. Charles Dickens--tragically paid by the word (tragic for us) sits at the center of Brit Lit after 1800. Big Chuck's novels are long, but--like a relative you must spend time with--weirder and funnier the more closely to you look at them and listen to them.

Weeks 15-16; The OG Crazy

Readings: Jekyll and Hyde. Robert Louis Stevenson wrote a small masterpiece in Jekyll and Hyde. And perhaps, after all we've been through, it might hold the key to the odd bifurcation that is England and English literature

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" <https://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.

<https://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. <http://www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org>

Relationship & 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. <https://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: <http://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. <https://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. <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support/>

Student Support & Advocacy – (213) 821-4710

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

Diversity at USC – <https://diversity.usc.edu/> Tabs for Events, Programs and Training, Task Force (including representatives for each school), Chronology, Participate, Resources for Students

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.

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**Definition of Excellence in Teaching
USC Department of English**

All writing is creative, and all civic engagement requires a sophisticated understanding of discourse and interpretation. The USC Department of English is committed to the power of the story, the word, and the image. We analyze and organize complex ideas, evaluate qualitative information, anticipate how real audiences respond to language, and study behaviors of

complex characters leading uncertain lives with competing values. We develop critical abilities for a successful life, but our stories tell us why life is worth living.

Excellence in teaching is an active engagement with these commitments, perspectives, and values. A student with a major in **English** should graduate with an appreciation for (1) the relations between representation and the human soul, and (2) the relations between words and ideas. Teachers will encourage this appreciation through their knowledge and conveyance of the subject, the appropriateness of instructional materials, and the quality of their students' responses. We expect our students to:

- understand the major representations in English discourse from earliest beginnings to the current moment; all literatures exist in conversation with earlier literatures;
- organize and interpret evidence;
- feel the experiences of others, both by engaging in literatures and by their own efforts to create new literatures;
- understand how periods, cultural intentions, and literary genres differ;
- grasp the skills and theories of interpretation, and the history of our own discipline;
- see how interpretive interests shift with time and place;
- attend to linguistic details of semantics, phrasing, and structure;
- assume there are reasonable alternative understandings of a text;
- adjudicate differences through reasoned arguments that honestly engage counter-arguments.

Our students will have lives in very different arenas, but all calling for skills in discourse, empathy, civil argument, and civic engagement. We cannot and should not say what those careers will be; we train students for jobs that have not yet been invented.

English Department students with an interdisciplinary major in **Narrative Studies** should expect instruction that inculcates an appreciation for all of the above, and coordinates with definitions of teaching excellence in USC's corresponding departments.

The Department of English adheres to the modalities of instruction published in the "USC Definition of Excellence in Teaching."

Approved September 18, 2018
Undergraduate Studies Committee
Department of English