

English 035: The Rise of the Novel (and the rise of social media)

- instructor: Rachel Sagner Buurma
- semester: Fall 2017
- time: MWF 10:30-11:20
- location: LPAC 301
- office: LPAC 302 and Parrish 205W
- office hours: M 1- 3 + W 1-3 in Parrish 205W and by appointment
- email: rbuurma1@swarthmore.edu
- eligible for GSST and INTP credit; fulfills the 18th/19th c distribution in the English major and minor

Why do we read novels? Why did people in the past read novels? How has the history of novel-reading shaped the way we think about ourselves, about other people, and about the world? In order to answer these questions, this course covers the long history of the novel in English considered as an aesthetic form, as a record of social life, and as the scaffolding on which we build our experience of the world.

We will examine the development of the novel from its origin in a multiplicity of different literary genres in the eighteenth century to its Victorian incarnation as a “realist” and middle-class form. We will then go on to examine the appropriation of the novel as high art by Modernist writers and its subsequent return to its multi-genre roots later in the twentieth century. We will trace changes in the novel’s treatment of themes such as publicity and privacy, the role of gender and sexuality in social life, the significance of monetary exchange, and the proper relation between the author and his or her text. We will pay close attention to questions of realism and fantasy, and will think about how the novel’s form and content work together to create literary meaning. First surveying the main critical narratives of the novel’s “rise” or development, we will move on to see how the novel’s production, circulation, reception, and materiality – how it was composed, printed, published, bought, sold, borrowed, and read - might offer us a counter-narrative to more conventional interpretations of the novel and its origins. We will do this through a close attention to careful reading of landmark canonical novels and authors, a survey of the main critical and theoretical approaches to the novel, and an investigation of printing and publication history.

In addition to reading canonical novels and watching the core concepts of the genre unfold over the course of three centuries, we will play with early editions of old books in digital and physical form, explore text analysis techniques for

the “distant reading” of large corpuses of novels, be critical about all kinds of accounts of the novel’s “rise,” and read literary criticism in order to understand some of the most important arguments about the novel and its history.

We will also spend some time asking what forms and mediums carry on the core functions of the novel today. This class seeks to test a new argument: that some of the most important functions the novel performed in the past are carried on today not by novels, but by social media practices and platforms. By asking questions about the relation between the history of novelistic form and the forms of contemporary social media, we will see if we can uncover both some major continuities and some very significant differences between the social and aesthetic functions of novels and social media platforms.

This class is suggested for readers, writers, critics, and reviewers of fiction, fans of experimental-genre literary criticism, aspiring librarians and information scientists, social media philes and phobes, and students interested in exploring humanities applications of computational techniques.

Week 1: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)

September 4

- Welcome and introduction
- Course overview
- The rise of the novel in title pages
- “Rise”? “Novel”?
- Canon and archive: How does what we are reading in this course compare with other similar courses taught elsewhere?

September 6

- *Robinson Crusoe*, 3 (Preface)-56
- RC’s republishing history in title pages
- Fiction and the novel
- Close reading a novel
- exercise 1 assigned

September 8

- *Robinson Crusoe*, continued
- Exercise 1 due, exercise 2 assigned

Week 2: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)

September 11

- *Robinson Crusoe*, 57-241

September 13

- *Robinson Crusoe*, continued
- selection from Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*

September 15

- *Robinson Crusoe* continued (possibly also begin reading *Pamela*)
- Social media 1: formal realism
- exercise 2 due

Week 3: *Pamela* (1740)

September 18

- *Pamela*, 11-238
- Short paper assigned

September 20

- *Pamela* chapter summary (pdf)
- *Pamela* 476-503
- Ferguson, from “Rape and the Rise of the Novel” (short excerpt)

September 22

- Selection from Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*
- Exercise 3 assigned

Week 4: *Pamela* and *Shamela* (1741)

September 25

- *Shamela*, all
- Social media 2: interiority

September 27

- *Shamela*, continued
- Exercise 3 due; exercise 4 assigned
- From Tenen, *Plain Text: The Poetics of Computation*

September 29

- McKeon, “Generic Transformation and Social Change”

Week 5: *Tristram Shandy* (1778)**October 2**

- *Tristram Shandy*, first 100 pages
- Social media 3: questions of truth and questions of virtue signaling

October 4

- *Tristram Shandy*, continued
- Plain-text authoring: an introduction
- Exercise 4 steps 1-5 due; exercise 5 assigned

October 6

- Exercise 4 writeup due.

Week 6: *Evelina* (1778)**October 9**

- *Evelina*, 1-200

October 11

- *Evelina*, 200-300

October 13

- Selection from Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*
- Short paper due by midnight October 13th
- Descriptive bibliography project assigned
- Exercise 5 assigned

Week 7: October Holiday

Note: you may wish to read ahead and begin *Northanger Abbey* as well as *Evelina*.

Week 8: *Evelina* (1778)

October 23

- *Evelina*, 300-450
- Social media 4: epistolarity

October 25

- *Evelina*, continued
- Exercise 5 due
- Narrative monologue handout based on Cohn, *Transparent Minds*

October 27

- Barthes, “The Reality Effect”

Week 9: *Northanger Abbey*

October 30

- *Northanger Abbey*, 36-240 (all)
- Exercise 6 assigned
- Social media 5: free indirect discourse and other minds; reality effects

November 1

- *Northanger Abbey*, continued
- Short excerpt from Ferguson, “Jane Austen, Emma, and the Impact of Form”

November 3

- Selection from Anderson, *Imagined Communities*
- Descriptive bibliography plan due (one paragraph, post to Known)

Week 10: *The Moonstone* (1868)

November 6

- *The Moonstone*, 3-271
- Exercise 6 due
- Social media 6: imagined communities?

November 8

- Exercise 7 assigned
- Topic modeling lab
- *The Moonstone*, continued

November 10

- *The Moonstone*, continued
- Selection from Gallagher, “The Rise of Fictionality”

Week 11: *The Moonstone*

November 13

- *The Moonstone*, 272-472
- Social media 7: not being fictional
- final paper/project assigned

November 15

- *The Moonstone*, continued
- Exercise 7 due; exercise 8 assigned

November 17

- Selection from Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*
- Selection from Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (chapter 2, 41-45, 52-57)

Week 12: Daisy Miller (1878)

November 20

- *Daisy Miller*, all
- *descriptive bibliography projects due (by Sunday night, November 22st)*
- Social media 8: surveillance
- Exercise 8 due; exercise 9 assigned

November 22

- tba

November 24

- No class – Thanksgiving break

Week 13: James, “The Figure in the Carpet” and Joyce, *Ulysses* (1922)

November 27

- James, “The Figure in the Carpet”
- Jameson, “The Realist Floor-plan”
- Exercise 9: CS21/ENGL35 collaborative Austen assignment assigned

November 29

- *Ulysses*, “Nausicaa” chapter
- optional: take a look at Infinite Ulysses

December 1

- Master of None, Season 2, Episode 6
- Social media 8: the invention of the everyday
- Discuss criticism exam

Week 14: A House for Mr. Biswas (1961)

December 4

- A House for Mr. Biswas, 5-291
- Final paper plans due; final paper meetings with me this week

December 6

- Exercise 9
- Homi Bhabha, “The World and the Home” handout
- Social media 9: platform

December 8

- In-class criticism exam

Week 15: *A House for Mr. Biswas*

December 11

- *A House for Mr. Biswas*, 292-564
- Brief descriptive bibliography project presentations
- Conclusions

Final papers/projects due by midnight, Dec 23

Texts and Assignments

Course texts: novels and short stories

- Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*. London: Penguin, 2003. ISBN: 0141439823
- Samuel Richardson, *Pamela*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. ISBN: 978-0199536498
- Eliza Haywood and Henry Fielding, *Anti-Pamela and Shamela*. Toronto: Broadview Press, 2004. ISBN: 155111383X
- Laurence Sterne, *Tristram Shandy* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009. 978-0199532896
- Frances Burney, *Evelina*. London: Penguin. ISBN: 0140433473
- Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*. Broadview. ISBN 1551114798
- Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*. Penguin. ISBN 0140434089
- Henry James, *Daisy Miller and Other Tales*. Penguin. ISBN 978-0141389776
- Henry James, "The Figure in the Carpet." Available on Dropbox.
- V. S. Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Vintage. ISBN 0375707166

These books, unless otherwise noted, are available at the Swarthmore bookstore. You are also welcome to buy these books online or at a different store. Be aware that you need to have your own copy of the specific edition of each of the books listed above. Sadly, ebook readers are not yet robust enough for the lightening-fast page-turning and passage-navigating we will be doing in the class, so they are not an alternative to printing pdfs or buying books, unless of course you are using an e-reader or other technology because of a documented accessibility requirement.

Course texts: criticism

- Benedict Anderson, from *Imagined Communities*
- Nancy Armstrong, from *Desire and Domestic Fiction*
- Janine Barchas, from *Graphic Design, Print Culture, and the Eighteenth-Century Novel*
- Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect"
- Homi Bhabha, from "The World and the Home"
- Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds*

- Frances Ferguson, “Rape and the Rise of the Novel”
- Frances Ferguson, “Jane Austen, Emma, and the Impact of Form”
- Michel Foucault, “Panopticism” from *Discipline and Punish*
- Catherine Gallagher, “The Rise of Fictionality”
- Jürgen Habermas, from *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*
- Fredric Jameson, “The Realist Floor-plan”
- Michael McKeon, “Generic Transformation and Social Change: Rethinking the Rise of the Novel”
- D.A. Miller, from *The Novel and the Police*
- Dennis Tenen, from *Plain Text: The Poetics of Computation*
- Ian Watt, from *The Rise of the Novel*

All of the critical readings will be available in pdf form in our Dropbox. I will be inviting you to the Dropbox shortly; if you prefer to use an email addresses other than your Swarthmore one, make sure you let me know.

Please be sure to print out the pdf format texts and bring them to class with you on the relevant days.

Additional reading

While it is in no way necessary for you to read ANY of these additional texts (except potentially during preparation for your final paper), in the “extra reading” course documents folder you will find some lists of texts should you wish to do more reading on a particular novel, or on the history of theory of the novel more generally. You should also feel free to consult me about what additional reading might best fit your interests.

Reading assignments

Because novels are, almost by definition, long, some of our reading assignments will necessarily be lengthy. Weekly reading assignments will generally be between 150 and (much less often) 250 pages of novel and between 5 and 20 pages of secondary reading. I recommend that you look at the syllabus and plan to start reading longer assignments ahead of time. There may be reading quizzes – covering both novels and critical/theoretical readings - as necessary.

Exercises

You will complete 9 short exercises designed to introduce you to some aspects of computationally-assisted literary study. No previous experience is required. These exercises include will be supported by optional open lab sessions allowing you to seek expert advice on questions you may have and/or work on your exercise in company with other students. They are graded as complete/incomplete, but cumulative excellent and creative work on them will be noticed and rewarded in your overall participation grade.

Informal writing

<http://rise17.rachelsagnerbuurma.org/>

We will use this site as our informal response-writing/link-and-image-sharing platform. I will invite you to create an account shortly. We will post our responses to exercises and other occasional short response assignments. You are also welcome - invited! encouraged! - to post links with comments, images, quick thoughts, etc as they occur to you.

Remember to keep your own copy of anything you post to Known.

When you post, think about adding hashtags. Assignments will have required hashtags, but you can also add your own. For example, your post for assignment 1 should include the tags #RobinsonCrusoe #Assignment1 #NER - but you may choose to add other generally relevant tags (#list) or tags that are particular to your findings and interpretation (#capitalism #bears etc).

The Known platform's privacy settings allow you to share your posts with "members only" (in this case, the other members of the class and anyone else for whom I create a guest account) or to make them "public." This is up to you; you may choose to share some posts publicly and not others. I may ask you to make responses to certain sites public.

For more on Known, visit their website and read this piece on Known by Audrey Watters. If you are interested in learning about hosting your own online writing platforms, consider a Reclaim Hosting account.

Known supports Markdown, a lightweight plain text formatting syntax designed to be read by both people and machines. Documents formatted in Markdown convert easily to html, pdf and other formats (Word, etc). We will discuss this more in class. (If you are interested before then, very quick basics are here; for more comprehensive info look at Commonmark, an effort to better specify and document Markdown.)

Short paper

This is a 4-5 page paper; specifics of the assignment to be discussed further in class.

Descriptive bibliography project

The research project designed to acquaint you with bibliographic description and ask you to think about other possible ways of describing or representing an eighteenth-century book; we will discuss specifics in class. It is a public assignment, which means that you should know and agree that it will be published on a website accessible to the general public.

Final paper or project

This assignment will incorporate secondary sources and some independent research (specifics of the assignment to be discussed further in class). It can take many different forms.

Criticism exam

This 50-minute exam is designed to test your knowledge of the critical and theoretical readings. We will devote a day to reviewing for it at the end of the semester. I will be very clear about the exam's format and contents.

Weekly class format

Though this will certainly vary as needed, in general our Mondays will be dedicated to some overview of major questions and issues along with contextualization and background, often partially in the form of lecture but including discussion. On Mondays we will also generally make time to consider a social media question from the perspective of the previous meeting's (usually Friday's) critical reading. Wednesdays we will tend to delve into particular passages in more depth and discuss our computationally-assisted exercises, and Fridays we will discuss critical readings together (sometimes in smaller groups at first) before coming to a modicum of closure via those critical readings and briefly setting up for the following week. At the end of each class we will aim to briefly remind ourselves what we've learned, connect it back to previous concepts and texts, and record the results in some form.

Policies and Advice

Grading

- 30% class participation (includes in-class discussion, quizzes, exercises, and Known posts)
- 20% 4-5 page paper
- 15% descriptive bibliography project
- 10% criticism exam
- 25% 10-12 page final paper or project

Laptops and phones

This policy is constantly in flux for me across courses and semesters, but this year in this class I am going to ask that you do not use a laptop, tablet, or phone for note-taking (or anything else) during class time unless we specifically need one for our class activities. We may change this policy over the course of the semester. If you are a hardcore computer note-taker come discuss your strategy

for preventing your computer from distracting you and I may make an exception. I'll also ask that you silence and put away your mobile phone for the duration of class. Disability accommodations requiring the use of a computer are of course an exception.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a very serious offence. It includes both the direct copying of the words of another person without crediting him or her and paraphrasing the ideas of another person without giving credit. See the English department's guidelines on how to properly cite sources here: <http://www.swarthmore.edu/x10027.xml> If you have any questions about how to properly cite another person's work, please do not hesitate to ask me.

Attendance and due dates

Because this is a discussion-oriented class, attendance is essential. Missing more than three class sessions will result in a lowered grade (1/3 of a grade per additional unexcused absence) unless you have a valid excuse confirmed by your advisor or class dean. Remember to reserve some of your absences for the possibility of missing class due to routine illness like the flu or a bad cold. Late papers will incur a penalty (1/3 of a grade per class day late) unless you have a similarly valid excuse. So if a paper is due on Friday midnight and you don't turn it in until the following Thursday, that's 2/3 of a grade late, making an actual B+ paper, for example, into a recorded B-.

English Major/Minor distribution requirement

This course fulfills the 18th/19th c distribution in the English major and minor.

Accommodations for disability

I want to work to make sure that everyone in this class has the access to the materials, resources, and support they need in order to learn most effectively. You are always free to talk to me about your own situation. A key Swarthmore resource in this area is the Office of Student Disability Services. Their accommodations policy is here:

If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113W) or email studentdisabilityservices@swarthmore.edu to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, the Office will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning

and are not retroactive, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service Website at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/academic-advising-support/welcome-to-student-disability-service>. You are also welcome to contact me [the faculty member] privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Student Disability Services.

Syllabus acknowledgements

The first version of this course was inspired by Sanjay Krishnan's syllabus for his Rise of the Novel class. Some of the other syllabi I have read while constructing this one are listed on my Pinboard.

The archival version of our syllabus will be deposited in our Dropbox folder. The most up-to-date copy of our syllabus and exercises will be available on github: <https://github.com/rbuurma/rise-2017>

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