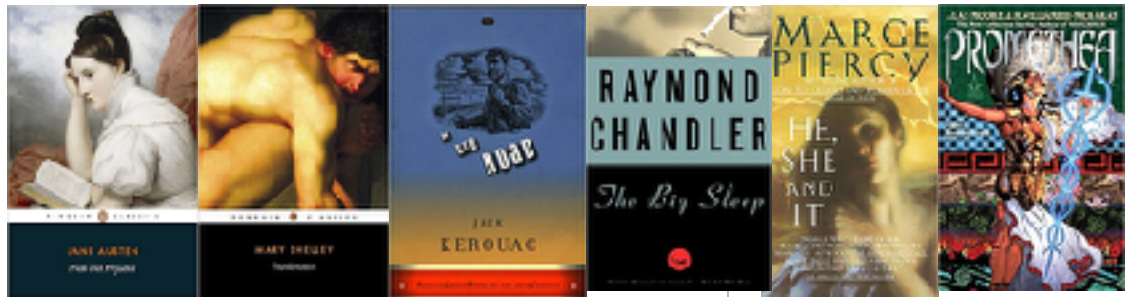


Required Texts

OTHER
READINGS AND
MEDIA
AVAILABLE ON
OUR CANVAS



POPULAR FICTION AND THE ACADEMY

Course Objectives

The course material is designed around the complex question of how the “Academy” determines which works are worthy of intellectual study and which are not. Since this is an English class, we are primarily concerned with text-based art forms, but the question is relevant to many disciplines in the Humanities. Is it possible for a text with widespread popularity and appeal to be or become “serious” literature? Can young adult literature be considered serious? What makes one book more artistic than another? Maybe you have participated in a conversation in which someone disparaged a popular book, film, or song, pointing out its inferiority to the “Classics” or to an obscure film with subtitles. Perhaps you have even looked down upon certain works you considered less intelligent or not “deep” enough. In this course, we will read a variety of works that either are now or were in their time deemed less worthy than more “high brow” literature: We will read and analyze these texts in terms of their themes/arguments, and in addition, we will discuss some of the criteria that go into making such a judgment. The question may seem like an academic one; however, the central goal of the course is to practice the skill of reading texts and understanding with clarity the intended audience, socio-political context, and arguments of any text you encounter. And since we encounter numerous and varied texts on a daily basis that can have great effects on our lives and those around us, this skill is essential.

Class Business

Attendance

Because understanding the literature we read is reliant upon participation in active discussions, attendance is an important aspect of this class. Therefore you will be allowed a maximum of three absences. Your final grade will drop three points for each absence after the third. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.

Deadlines for Assignments

Assignments are due on Canvas on the date specified on the itinerary.

Academic Integrity

All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. The primary objective for this course is that you engage with the literature, and writing is one of best ways to work through the ideas these writers are communicating.

Oxford has an Honor Code, and turning in any assignment for any course means you are agreeing to abide by that Code. It is your responsibility to know and understand that Code, which is in the College Catalog.

Requirements and Grading

All work will be graded and every assignment will count towards the final grade. I grade on a plus/minus scale. Your final grade for this course will be figured as follows:

- 30% Six 2-3 page papers on literature
- 20% Discussion posts and leading class discussion
- 30% One 8-10 page paper
- 20% Final Exam

Once you sign up to lead discussion, you'll also schedule to meet with me for coffee (either in the library or at Bread and Butter on the square) to discuss the text, your reading questions, and your approach to leading the class.



Assignments

SHORT PAPERS

2 page analyses of the text. **USE NO OTHER SOURCES.** These papers are to give you practice analyzing the literature **ON YOUR OWN.** These are analysis papers: you must have a thesis that answers a question at issue about the novel.

LONG PAPER

This is a 5 page paper that explore a novelist in more detail. We will develop the questions for this paper as a class. For this paper, you may consult reliable academic sources and cite them in your writing. You will get the assignments for the paper well in advance of the due date, and you will go through at least two drafts.

PARTICIPATION

You will be asked to lead class discussion in pairs two times during the semester. As part of this assignment, you will develop reading questions and meet with me before the class you'll be leading.

You will also be assigned online discussion posts on Canvas. For each novel, half the class will post, and the other half will respond.

Itinerary

AUGUST 29

Course Introduction

WEEK 2: SEPTEMBER 3

Labor Day Holiday; *Pride and Prejudice*

WEEK 3: SEPTEMBER 10

Pride and Prejudice

WEEK 4: SEPTEMBER 17

Pride and Prejudice; [Short Paper 1 due](#)

WEEK 5: SEPTEMBER 24

Frankenstein

WEEK 6: OCTOBER 1

Frankenstein; [Short Paper 2 due](#)

WEEK 7: OCTOBER 8

Fall Break Monday, October 8; *The Big Sleep*

WEEK 8: OCTOBER 15

The Big Sleep; [Short Paper 3 due](#)

WEEK 9: OCTOBER 22

On the Road

WEEK 10: OCTOBER 29

On the Road; [Short Paper 4 due](#)

WEEK 11: NOVEMBER 5

He, She, and It

WEEK 12: NOVEMBER 12

He, She, and It

WEEK 13: NOVEMBER 19

He, She, and It; [Short Paper 5 due](#)

WEEK 14: NOVEMBER 26

Promethea

WEEK 15: DECEMBER 3

Black Panther; [Long Paper Draft due](#)

WEEK 16: DECEMBER 10

[Long Paper due](#); Prepare for Final