

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

- instructor: Rachel Sagner Buurma
- semester: Fall 2018
- time: MWF 10:30-11:20
- location: LPAC 301
- office: LPAC 302 and Parrish W201
- office hours: 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

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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.

By the end of the semester you will be able to close read a novel (and explain why, given the history of close reading and novels, this is a strange thing to do); understand the place of literary criticism in literary history; tell multiple stories about the history of prose fiction in English and construct your own; construct a corpus and perform basic text analysis on it; analyze and critique social media platforms and practices; and interpret material form as aspect of literary meaning. Final project options include work with natural language processing and social media platform design.

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.

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## **Week 1: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)**

### **September 3**

- welcome and introduction
- 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 5**

- *Robinson Crusoe*, 3(Preface)-56
- Social Media Lecture 1: The Novel and Social Media
- close reading a novel
- exercise 1 assigned

### **September 7**

- *Robinson Crusoe*, continued
- selection from Watt, *The Rise of the Novel*
- exercise 1 due, exercise 2 assigned

## **Week 2: *Robinson Crusoe* (1719)**

### **September 10**

- *Robinson Crusoe*, 57-241
- republication history of Robinson Crusoe

### **September 12**

- *Robinson Crusoe*, continued
- Social Media Lecture 2: Everyday People are Celebrities, Too

### **September 14**

- *Robinson Crusoe* continued (possibly also begin reading *Pamela*)
- Gallagher, excerpt from “The Rise of Fictionality”
- exercise 2 due

## **Week 3: *Pamela* (1740)**

### **September 17**

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

### **September 19**

- *Pamela* chapter summary (pdf)
- *Pamela* 476-503
- selection from Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*
- Exercise 3 assigned

### **September 21**

- note: Professor Buurma will be away; refer to in-class instructions

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

### **September 24**

- *Shamela*, all; bring *Pamela* text back to class as well
- in class: excerpt from Ferguson, “Rape and the Rise of the Novel”

**September 26**

- *Shamela*, continued
- Social Media Lecture 3: Fictional Characters Make You Real
- Exercise 3 due; exercise4 assigned

**September 28**

- McKeon, “Generic Transformation and Social Change”

**Week 5: *Evelina* (1778)****October 1**

- *Evelina*, 1-200

**October 3**

- *Evelina*, 200-250
- Social Media Lecture 3: Questions of Truth and Questions of Virtue Signaling
- Plain-text authoring: an introduction Exercise 4 steps 1-5 due; exercise 5 assigned

**October 5**

- *Evelina*, 250-300
- tiny tiny bit of Tristram Shandy
- Selection from Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*
- Exercise 4 writeup due.

**Week 6: *Evelina* (1778) continued****October 8**

- *Evelina*, 300-450
- Free indirect discourse and narrative monologue handout based on Cohn, *Transparent Minds*

**October 10**

- *Evelina*, 300-450
- Social Media Lecture 4: A Private Oriented to a Public
- Short paper due by midnight October 13th

- Exercise 5 assigned

## October 12

### Week 7: October Holiday

Note: read *Northanger Abbey* and excerpts from *A Woman of Color*.

### Week 8: *Northanger Abbey* (1778)

## October 22

- *Northanger Abbey*, 36-240 (all)
- *A Woman of Color* (excerpt)

## October 24

- *Northanger Abbey*, continued
- Exercise 5 due
- reminder of Dorrit Cohn handout on narrated monologue and free indirect discourse
- Social Media Lecture 6: Other People Hold You in Mind

## October 26

- *Northanger Abbey*, continued
- Selection from Anderson, *Imagined Communities*
- Exercise 6 assigned

### Week 9: *The Moonstone*

## October 29

- *The Moonstone*, first half

## October 31

- *The Moonstone*, continued

## November 2

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

**Week 10: *The Moonstone*, second half**

**November 5**

- *The Moonstone*, second half

**November 7**

- Exercise 6 due; exercise 7 assigned
- Exercise 7 assigned (optional)
- Lecture 7: We Are Watched From Above
- *The Moonstone*, continued

**November 9**

- *The Moonstone*, continued
- Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect”

**Week 10: Henry James, *Daisy Miller***

**November 12**

- *Daisy Miller*, all
- final paper/project assigned

**November 14 Professor Buurma at Cornell**

- *Daisy Miller*, continued

**November 16**

- *Daisy Miller*, continued
- Jameson, “The Realist Floor-plan”
- Exercise 7 due; exercise 8 assigned

**Week 11: Virginia Woolf, *To The Lighthouse* (1927)**

**November 19**

- *To The Lighthouse* first half

**November 21**

- *To The Lighthouse*
- Social Media Lecture 8: The Realist Detail
- Exercise 8 warm-up: command line the hard way, exercises 1-7
- [public books roundtable on Description in the Novel] <http://www.publicbooks.org/virtual-roundtable-ondescription-in-the-novel/>

**November 23**

- Thanksgiving break begins after class

**Week 13: *To The Lighthouse*, finish****November 26**

- *To The Lighthouse*, continued

**November 28**

- Exercise 8 due; exercise 9 assigned

**November 30**

- Erich Auerbach, “The Brown Stocking” from *Mimesis*
- Discuss criticism exam

**Week 14: *A House for Mr. Biswas* (1961)****December 3**

- *A House for Mr. Biswas*, 5-292
- Final paper/project plans due; final paper meetings with me this week

**December 5**

- Social media 9: Global Platform
- exercise 9 due
- Henry James, from the Preface to *The Portrait of a Lady* (1908) handout
- Homi Bhabha, “The World and the Home” handout

**December 7**

- In-class criticism exam

## Week 15: *A House for Mr. Biswas*

### December 10

- *A House for Mr. Biswas*, 292-564
- The end of the novel
- Conclusions

*Final papers/projects due by midnight, Dec 22*

### 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. (Rachel Scan) ISBN: 155111383X
- Frances Burney, *Evelina*. London: Penguin. ISBN: 0140433473 Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*. Penguin. ISBN 978-0141439792
- Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*
- Henry James, *Daisy Miller and Other Tales*. Penguin. ISBN 978-0141389776
- Henry James, "The Figure in the Carpet." Available on Dropbox.
- Virginia Woolf, *To the Lighthouse* (Harvest Books 0156907399)
- V. S. Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas*. Vintage. ISBN 0375707166
- optional: Tommy Orange, *There There* or Olivia Laing, *Crudo*

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*
- Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect"
- Homi Bhabha, from "The World and the Home"
- Dorrit Cohn, from *Transparent Minds*
- Frances Ferguson, "Rape and the Rise of the Novel"
- 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*
- Ian Watt, from *The Rise of the Novel*
- Erich Auerbach, from *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*

All of the critical readings will be available 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 critical 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 (between about 25,000 and 100,000 words) 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://rise18.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 tags. 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 or talk to me; I will schedule an informal workshop for anyone who is interested.

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; it will focus on detailed readings of a single novel. Specifics of the assignment to be discussed further in class.

### **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. You may choose to write a more traditional research paper; you may write a paper in the form of a (lengthy) book review; you may draft your own theory of the novel; you may draft a plan for a new social media

platform; you may build on our text analysis exercises to complete a project based in part or in whole on text analysis of a corpus.

### **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 content.

### **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 related to the week's novel along with contextualization and background, sometimes partially in the form of lecture but including discussion. Wednesdays we will tend to delve into particular passages in more depth and discuss our computationally-assisted exercises, and make time for considering questions related to social media; on eight Wednesdays there will be a fifteen-minute lecture on social media drawing on the previous weeks' novel theory. 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**

- 35% class participation (includes in-class discussion, quizzes, exercises, and Known posts)
- 20% short paper
- 10% criticism exam
- 25% final paper or project
- 10% your allocation

#### **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 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 offense. 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. It is eligible for GSST and INPT credit.

### **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 you need accommodations for a disability or a chronic medical condition, please contact Student Disability Services (Parrish 113W, 123W) via e-mail at [studentdisabilityservices@swarthmore.edu](mailto:studentdisabilityservices@swarthmore.edu) to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, the office will issue students with documented disabilities or medical conditions a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Services website. You

are also welcome to contact me [the faculty member] privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged, in advance, through Student Disability Services.

### **Dean's Discretionary Fund and Dean's Office resources for basic needs**

If purchasing your textbooks or other materials for this or any other class present a serious financial difficulty for you, you should be aware of the Dean's Discretionary Fund and other resources such as the Course Book Collection in Underhill Library in Lang Music.

The Dean's Office describes the fund this way:

The spirit of this funding is primarily to support emergency circumstances and priority is given to students in the highest financial need tiers. Funding is usually limited to under \$500 and most grants are under \$300. Please note the Dean's Office may not be able to fulfill all requests.

Examples of eligible non-academic requests include, but are not limited to, expenses associated with emergency medical, dental, vision procedures, unanticipated trips home due to a family emergency, and various fees related to postgraduate opportunities.

The Student Life office at Swarthmore is very committed to making sure that all students having living situations that support their ability to work and live here successfully. If you find that you are having sustained difficulties with your food or housing situation and believe that this may affect your course performance, you should contact your class dean; you are also free to contact me if you wish so that I can help you find the support you need.

If you have trouble accessing the Discretionary Fund or other resources in the Dean's Office, please feel free to come to me and I will assist you.

### **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-2018>

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