



SYLLABUS

Spring Semester

NINETEENTH AND TWENTIETH CENTURY BRITISH NOVEL

Instructor: Dr. Susie Thomas

Contact Hrs: 45

Language of Instruction: English

LONDON, ENGLAND

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course looks at the nineteenth and twentieth century English novel in terms of historical context and literary technique. The novels have been selected, not only because they are among the greatest English novels of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but also because they provide a coherent illustration of the development of the genre itself.

Each novel is primarily concerned with the spiritual odyssey of its hero/heroine; each reflects its own historical period, is a product of its own moral and cultural Zeitgeist; and, in addition, each novel reflects in its own way the 'Englishness' of Englishness literature. Each of these novels relies on the reader's knowledge of the English character and climate, class system and religion; each uses the English landscape (city and rural) as an integral motif. Finally, the course examines new definitions of national identity in the post-Imperial period through Hanif Kureishi's *The Buddha of Suburbia*, which opens: 'My name is Karim Amir and I am an Englishman born and bred, almost.'

Each novel will be subject to close critical appraisal and analysis in its own right. As the course progresses, however, each novel will then be considered in relation to its predecessors. Thus, through comparison and contrast students will become aware of the different fictional techniques and styles, and will become involved in a general consideration of the art and nature of narrative and the changes that the novel has undergone in the past century or more.

By the end of the semester the general discussion topics will have included: narrator's voice, point of view, manipulation of reader's response, narrative technique and style, symbolism, realism, modernism, postmodernism and postcolonialism. Literary style and form will be seen in relation to social and historical conditions including: the Industrial Revolution, growth of Empire, Victorianism, the impact of Darwin, The Great War, changes in the class system, the role of women, and post-war immigration.

OBJECTIVES

This course seeks to provide a coherent account of the nineteenth and twentieth century English novel as a genre by focusing on key texts in chronological order. In addition to the close analysis of each novel we will consider influential critical essays in order to explore how feminist and historicist perspectives can extend our range of interpretive strategies.

Students who successfully complete the course will have developed:

- reading, writing and analytical skills
- an understanding of different critical approaches
- an in-depth understanding of the novels on the course
- an overview of the development of the English novel as a genre

INSTRUCTIONAL METHODOLOGY

Teaching is conducted mainly through seminar discussion and it is expected that everyone will participate fully. There will be short introductory lectures throughout the semester in order to provide the social, historical, literary and biographical background to each text.

METHOD OF EVALUATION (GRADING)

Essay I (Approx. 1500 words. Topic of your choice)	20%
Essay II (Ditto)	20%
Exam I (Close analysis of passage from text)	20%
Exam II (Open book. One essay covering all the novels)	20%
Seminar Paper (Class presentation on one novel)	20%

The final grade will reflect class participation and attendance

COURSE OUTLINE

Week 1	Orientation. Social and historical background. History of the novel; critical terms and approaches.
Week 2	Background to Charlotte Bronte. Romanticism and Gothic Novel. Discuss <i>Jane Eyre</i> , chapters 1-20 : style, symbolism, character analysis and religious imagery. Concept of reliable and unreliable narrator (see Wayne Booth, <i>The Rhetoric of Fiction</i>).
Week 3	Discuss <i>Jane Eyre</i> , chapters 21-end . Introduce ideas of psychoanalytic and feminist criticism: the red room, phallic imagery, the 'mad' Mrs Rochester, gender roles. Passion vs. Reason.
Week 4	Background to Charles Dickens. Serial publication; public readings. Discuss <i>Great Expectations</i> , chapters 1-19 . Introduce concept of linguistic analysis (Derrida and Lacan) through Pip's establishing 'the identity of things'. Theme of guilt; narrator's point of view; Dickens's use of rhetoric.
Week 5	Dickens Walk; visit Doughty Street.

- Discuss *Great Expectations*, chapters **20-39**. Comparison of specific passages from Bronte and Dickens. Introduce Marxist theory; Victorian concept of the gentleman; the bourgeois work ethic.
- Week 6 Discuss *Great Expectations*, chapters **40-end**. Consideration of the endings; reader's expectations and reader-orientated theories (see Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader*).
- Week 7 EXAM I
DUE ESSAY I
- Week 8 Background to Virginia Woolf and the Bloomsbury Group. Definition of stream of consciousness; comparison with opening of James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Modernism; Post-Impressionism. *Dalloway Walk*
- Week 9 Discussion of *Mrs Dalloway* as a response to the Great War; impact of Freud; madness and civilization; the female flaneuse. Extracts from *A Room of One's Own* and Elaine Showalter's critique of literary androgyny.
- Week 10 Background to Jeanette Winterson as self-appointed heir to Woolf. Introduce concepts from postmodernist theory: parody, subversion, metafiction. Discussion of use of fantasy and fairy tale; disruption of linear narrative. Extracts from the biblical Book of Ruth and celebration of female loyalty. *Jane Eyre* as an intertext of *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.
- Week 11 Discuss *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* as a lesbian text. Patricia Duncker on the difference between lesbian feminism and queer theory. Compare Winterson and Woolf on gender and sexual stereotypes; Jeanette's defiant lesbianism and Clarissa's 'respectable suicide'.
- Week 12 Background to Hanif Kureishi. Discussion of the ways in which the Empire has informed the English novel (Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*). Immigration as 'colonisation in reverse'; the Empire writes back. Discuss *The Buddha of Suburbia* (Part 1): suburbia, the lower middle class, postwar immigration from British India, racism; new definitions of Englishness.
- Week 13 *The Buddha of Suburbia* (Part 2): London as the postmodern playground. Introduce concepts from postcolonial theory: mimicry, cultural hybridity, assimilation vs. integration, national identity as performance. Discussion of bi/sexuality (queer themes contrasted with *Oranges*). Compare *The Buddha* and *Great Expectations*: "Fuck you, Charles Dickens, nothing's changed".
- Week 14 DUE ESSAY 2 - FINAL EXAM
- COURSE READINGS**

Bronte, Charlotte (1847) *Jane Eyre* (Penguin Classics)
Dickens, Charles (1861) *Great Expectations* (Penguin Classics)
Kureishi, Hanif (1990) *The Buddha of Suburbia* (Faber)
Winterson, Jeanette (1985) *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (Vintage)
Woolf, Virginia (1925) *Mrs Dalloway* (Penguin Modern Classics)

SELECTED SECONDARY SOURCES

Eagleton, T. (2005). *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontes*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Froula, C. (2002). "Mrs. Dalloway's Postwar Elegy: Women, War, and the Art of Mourning".
Modernism/Modernity. 9: 1: 125-163.
Gilbert, S. and Gubar, (2000).S. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the
Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (Yale University Press.
Makinen, M. (2005). *The Novels of Jeanette Winterson: Readers' Guide to Essential
Criticism*. Palgrave Macmillan.
Thomas, S. (2005). *Hanif Kureishi: Readers' Guide to Essential Criticism*.Palgrave
Macmillan.
Tredell, N. (2000). *Great Expectations: Readers' Guide to Essential Criticism*. Palgrave
Macmillan.
Zwerdling, A. (1986). *Virginia Woolf and the Real World*. University of California Press.