

Engl 153B – The Nineteenth-Century British Novel

Fall 2006, San José State University

T/R 9-10:15am, BBC 122 (moving to FO 104)

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

With the Industrial Revolution in full swing, the nineteenth century saw many technological improvements and even more class disparity. With the mechanization of paper-making and the distribution of various reading materials, many British citizens became literate, some even clawed their way into the middle class, as was recorded by Dickens and George Eliot. However, the nineteenth century isn't all about great expectations and marches through the middle. We'll visit with Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Dickens' lesser known *Old Curiosity Shop* to discover the impact of technology. By this time, it was agreed that women had a soul, thanks to Mary Wollstonecraft. But the problem of "uppity" women who wanted to be authors was inexhaustible. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* will introduce the "woman question" that so plagued their minds. By its conclusion, the nineteenth century had novelists declaring that "art is for art's sake" in a decadent flourish of bloodsucking (Stoker's *Dracula*). Other novelists were inviting readers to solve mysteries (Wilkie Collins' *Woman in White*) and go on adventures for the first time -- and many went because they couldn't afford the actual travel. H. Rider Haggard hosts such an adventure in his novel, *She*, and invites readers to unmapped regions of Africa where the main character, "She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed," dominates two of Britannia's most masculine citizens. *Prerequisite: Upper-division standing*

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To promote awareness of the novel's engagement in historical and cultural processes;
- To examine the creative and textual production, dissemination and reception of the novel;
- To alert students to a range of theoretical and critical approaches;
- To extend students' understanding of the techniques of fiction;
- To encourage close reading and understanding of individual novels.

REQUIRED BOOKS & MATERIALS

Browning, Elizabeth B. *Aurora Leigh*. Ed. Margaret Reynolds. Norton Critical Editions (ISBN 0393962989)

Carroll, Lewis. *Alice in Wonderland*. 2nd ed. Ed. Donald Gray. Norton Critical Edition (ISBN 0393958043)

Collins, Wilkie. *Woman in White*. Penguin Classics (ISBN: 0141439610)

Dickens, Charles. *Old Curiosity Shop*. Penguin Classics (ISBN 0140437428)

Haggard, H. Rider. *She*. Ed. Daniel Carlin. Oxford World's Classics (ISBN: 0192835505)

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein*. Ed. J. Paul Hunter. Norton Critical Edition (ISBN: 0393964582)

Stoker, Bram. *Dracula*. Ed. Nina Auerbach. Norton Critical Edition (ISBN 0-393-97012-4)

Victorian Print Media, A Reader. Eds. Andrew King & John Plunkett. Oxford UP, 2005 (ISBN: 0199270384)

Working Email address

Suggested:

A Research Guide for Undergraduates in English & American Literature. MLA, 2006 (ISBN: 0873529243)

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference* (or other writing handbook)

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

- | | |
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| 10% | Class Discussion, Participation & 3 Questions |
| 10% | In-Class Response Essays |
| 20% | Presentation & 3 Short Essays |
| 15% | Mid-Term Exam |
| 20% | Final Exam |
| 25% | Final Essay (10-12pp) |

Class Discussion, Participation & 3 Questions

This course traces the various political, social and cultural upheavals of the nineteenth century as reflected in the novel. Since we will build on our definition of the novel and nineteenth-century culture from the first day of class, your participation in each class meeting is imperative. At the beginning of every class meeting, three questions (handwritten) about the day's readings are due. These questions are meant to help you think about the texts for that day's discussion as well as let me know if you understand the texts. I will collect, read and return your questions without comments except a check mark at the bottom to indicate credit. Keep these questions; they could potentially become an interesting topic for your final essay! You must attend class to receive credit for that day's questions.

In addition to the 3 questions, a student's participation is assessed by his/her contribution throughout the semester. Use the following as guidelines for this portion of your final grade:

- To earn a "C," do the minimum: miss no 3-question submissions, read and prepare assigned readings so you are never at a loss if you are asked a question, but speak only when called upon, do "ordinary," plain-vanilla presentations and responses. This is the "bottom line" for getting a "C" in this part of the course.
- To earn a "B," miss no 3-question submissions, prepare assigned readings thoroughly, initiate discussions about them by asking good questions or suggesting ways to interpret readings, do presentations that reveal that you have done good additional work that you can make both interesting and meaningful to our discussions, and participate actively in those discussions.
- For an "A," take it up another level entirely: miss no 3-question submissions, prepare readings thoroughly, find and talk about connections among them and among other aspects of culture (then and now), take a real leadership role in class discussions, including working actively to get others involved in the talk, make your presentations and responses "sparkle" by bringing to them something really special in terms of your own contributions, interests, skills, and abilities to think in broad even interdisciplinary terms. Most of all, remember that an "A" indicates the very best grade a person can get; that should tell you what sort of work you need to do to earn the grade of "A."

If you miss class, contact a classmate for notes, reading assignments and handouts – or check our Course Website. (Please do not email me to ask “Did I miss anything important?”)

In-Class Response Essays

Every Thursday, we will spend the first 10-20 minutes writing an essay response to an assigned question about the current reading assignment. Each in-class essay will receive a grade based on the *quality* of your response. This weekly writing will also allow you to practice your in-class writing skills and prepare you for our essay exams. We will discuss what makes an effective response. *There will be no make-up for an in-class response essay; you simply receive a zero for that essay.* The lowest in-class response grade will be dropped.

Research Presentation & Character Analysis Presentations/Essays

The Presentation and three Character Analysis Presentations/Essays are collectively worth 20% of your final grade. For the Research Presentation, each student will research the production, illustrations, reviews, etc. of a novel and present those findings on that novel's first day (15 mins). A brief piece of writing (300 words) will be submitted to mark your presentation. Each Research Presentation will be graded on its effectiveness and clarity. On assigned days, each student will also present a character analysis for three different novels (5 mins each) as well as submit a written Character Analysis Essay (600 words). Each Character Analysis Essay will be graded on standard English Department grading policy (see below). We will discuss both the Research Presentation and the Character Analysis Essays/Presentations at our first class meeting and will sign up for presentations dates at our second class meeting.

Final Essay

You have the option of writing a 10-12 page typed essay or creating a hypertextual project due at the end of the semester. (See Student Projects online for examples.) No outside research will be required although you may certainly research primary sources or the historical aspects of a text, individual, theme, motif, etc. A project proposal and first draft will be submitted at different points in the semester and returned with comments. Thorough instructions will be discussed at a later date. My office door is always open to discuss potential topics, give web

designing tutorials or workshop a draft. (*Note:* Graduate students are expected to write a 20-25pp graduate-level essay.)

Mid-term and Final Exams

Each exam will consist of definitions, short answer and essay questions. Portions of the Final Exam will be comprehensive. Keywords defined in lectures and a study guide will aid in studying for these exams.

GRADING POLICY

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. For final grades, 100-90 is an A, 89-80 is a B, 79-70 is a C, 69-60 is a D, and below 60 is an F. Pluses and minuses are the middle of each range. In calculating for the final grade, a set number will represent each letter grade; for example, B+ is 87.5, B is 85, and B- is 82.5.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance (no extra credit offered) and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

- The “A” essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.
- The “B” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some describably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.
- The “C” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.
- The “D” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.
- The “F” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Assignments/Essays

If you cannot meet a deadline, you must contact me *at least 72 hours prior* to our class meeting to discuss the situation. If this is not done, for *every day* that an essay is late, you will be penalized one grade step: A becomes A-, A- becomes a B+, etc. The weekend will count as one day. Unless you have prior permission or the assignment specifically requests it, *absolutely no assignment will be accepted via email*.

Academic Honesty

Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San José State University, and the University’s Academic Integrity Policy requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the Office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The

Policy on academic integrity can be found at: http://sa.sjsu.edu/student_conduct.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of somebody else's words or ideas and is considered an instance of academic dishonesty that instructors must report. You commit plagiarism by

- buying, stealing, or borrowing a paper;
- hiring someone to write a paper;
- building on someone's ideas without providing a citation;
- or copying from another source or using a source too closely when paraphrasing.

In other words, submit only your own work. In addition, please know that submitting work from another course (recycling) is also against the Academic Honesty Policy. To learn how to cite sources accurately and forthrightly, consult your handbook. If you have any questions about when or how to document a source, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification. Turning in plagiarized work may result in immediate failure in the course and could result in dismissal from San José State University. See King Library's definition, the University policy and a plagiarism tutorial: www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/plagiarism.htm

Plagiarism checks will be performed by asking students to submit various written exercises or essays to Turnitin.com, a service which scans documents for all references to Web sources and other essays. The instructor reserves the right to revise the requirements and to notify students of such revision in a timely manner.

Classroom Environment

Respect your fellow students and I: Attend class, arrive on time (excessive tardiness will affect your participation grade) and do not partake in disruptive behavior. If you are late, wait for an appropriate moment to enter so you do not disturb the class. Turn off cell phones or put them on silent mode during the class period.

Email

Email is the best possible way to contact me (9am-5pm) and has the added bonus of recording our conversations. When emailing me, please consider it a formal communication: include the appropriate salutation, your name and your question/comment. Know that long conversations over email are not fruitful merely because of the limitations of technology. If you have an extended question or dilemma, please visit me during office hours. I will amass a class email list and will occasionally send out information regarding our meetings or the readings. *Please provide an email address that you check daily.*

Course Website – <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/>

As we move along in the semester, course materials will be posted on the course website. After you have entered, simply click on our class title to print the current schedule or handouts, visit outside web projects, print copies of lost documents, find the campus computer rooms, check my office hours, find writing help, discover local literary events or double-check the meaning of “plagiarism.”

LARC (Learning Assistance Resource Center)

The Learning Assistance Resource Center is an on-campus facility that provides peer tutoring for San José State University students. LARC offers assistance with writing, and if you feel as if you need intensive help beyond what I can offer during office hours, please request a writing tutor. The Center is located in The Student Services Center in the 10th Street Parking Garage, Room 600. The phone number is (408) 924-2587.

Disabilities Policy

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the DRC to establish a record of their disability.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Indicate if you are an English major, minor or other. Are you a sophomore, junior or senior?
 2. Do you have access to a computer at home? Yes No
(If not, become familiar with SJSU's computer labs.)
 3. **Briefly** summarize the important policies presented on this syllabus.
 4. Write one or two sentences defining “plagiarism.”
 5. Have you taken any literature courses on the novel or 18th/19th-century literature? If so, what course(s)?
 6. Write a **brief** paragraph explaining what “literature” means to you.
 7. Do you have a favorite author? Who? Why?

By signing below, the individual acknowledges receiving a copy of the class syllabus and understands the schedule of work, participation requirements, grading criteria and other important information. The individual also acknowledges understanding plagiarism and its consequences.

Name: _____

Signature: _____