

Professor Francus
English 235: Academic Novel
Fall 2014
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:00-2:15, 112 Armstrong Hall
Office: 227 Colson Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:15 and by appointment.
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- August 19 Introduction
August 21 Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-48)
- August 26 Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Chapters 4-8, pp. 49-161)
August 28 Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Chapters 9-10, pp. 162-210)
- September 2 Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Chapters 11-15, pp. 211-313)
September 4 Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Chapters 16-17, pp. 314-348)
- September 9 Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (Chapters 18-22, pp. 349-435)
September 11 **Exam**
- September 16 Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Chapters 1-4, pp. 1-104)
September 18 Spark, *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie* (Chapters 5-6, pp. 105-137)
- September 23 Perrotta, *Election* (Chapters 1-6, pp. 1-79)
September 25 Class Cancelled
- September 30 Perrotta, *Election* (Chapters 7-12, pp. 81-154)
October 2 Perrotta, *Election* (Chapters 13-15, pp. 155-200)
- October 7 Amis, *Lucky Jim* (Chapters 1-9, pp. 7-104)
October 9 **Exam**
- October 14 Fall Recess
October 16 Class Cancelled
- October 21 Amis, *Lucky Jim* (Chapters 10-19, pp. 104-204)
October 23 Amis, *Lucky Jim* (Chapters 20-25, pp. 204-251)
- October 28 Russo, *Straight Man* (Prologue, Chapters 1-9, pp. xi-101)
October 30 Russo, *Straight Man* (Chapters 10-14, pp. 102-151)
- November 4 Russo, *Straight Man* (Chapters 15-25, pp. 152-256)
November 6 **Exam**
- November 11 Russo, *Straight Man* (Chapters 26-32, pp. 257-340)
November 13 Russo, *Straight Man* (Chapters 33-Epilogue, pp. 341-391)

November 18 Byatt, *Possession* (Chapters 1-7, pp. 5-141)
 November 20 Byatt, *Possession* (Chapters 8-10, pp. 142-220)

November 25 – Thanksgiving Recess
 November 27 – Thanksgiving Recess

December 2 Byatt, *Possession* (Chapters 11-17, pp. 221-331)
 December 4 Byatt, *Possession* (Chapters 18-19, pp. 332-413)

December 9 Byatt, *Possession* (Chapters 20-Postscript, pp. 414-555)

December 14 **Take Home Final Due via email.**

Changes in the course schedule at the instructor's discretion.

Course texts:

Amis, Kingsley. *Lucky Jim*

Byatt, A.S. *Possession*

Perrotta, Tom. *Election*

Rowling, J.K. *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*

Russo, Richard. *Straight Man*

Spark, Muriel. *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*

The course texts are available at the University Bookstore.

Course Description: English 235 will focus on novels that depict education from the perspective of students, faculty, and administration—and through the lens of comedy, satire, drama, and romance. These 20th-century British and American novels will allow us to examine the novel in terms of narration, characterization, style, and form, and assess the ongoing popularity of the novel as a genre in Western culture. And perhaps we will shed some light on our own experiences of academia as well.

Course Objectives:

To define the novel as a genre

To identify and evaluate the major themes, topics, and issues of the academic novel

To evaluate novels within their historical and cultural contexts, to make evident the connections between the novel and other areas of knowledge

To assess the development of the novel as a genre

To apply and test critical and theoretical models of the novel to a variety of novels, in order to develop critical thinking and analytical ability

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Develop a thesis about a novel, or a set of novels, and support that thesis with evidence.
- Analyze a novel within its historical and cultural context
- Identify and analyze the conventions of the academic novel
- Write an analysis of a literary text
- Recognize and develop multiple scholarly analyses for a single literary text

GEC Objectives: English 235 fulfills GEC Requirement 5 (Artistic Expression: Apply methods and principles of critical inquiry to the analysis of literary or artistic expression) and elective requirements for the English Major and Minor. Please note: English 101 and English 102 (or equivalents) are not prerequisites for English 235, but they will enable your success in this course.

Course Requirements: Three in-class exams and a take-home final. You will be expected to keep up with the course readings, think and write about course texts, attend and participate in class, and to check your MIX e-mail account daily.

Quizzes at the discretion of the instructor.

Grading:

1. The three in-class exams each count for 20% of your final grade (or 60% for all three); the take home final exam for 40% of your final grade.
2. Class participation will be taken into consideration for students with borderline grades. If a student's final grade falls between a B and a B+, and the student has been an active, insightful class participant, the student will receive a B+ for the course. This policy only holds for final grade calculations, and only raises the student's borderline grade to the next immediate grade level (so a B will not be raised to an A- or an A based on class participation).

Grading Criteria:

A (90-100) – Excellent work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner. The assignment has a clear, relevant thesis and organization, chooses compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engages with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions.

B (80-89) – Good work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner. The assignment has a viable thesis and shows substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is partially incomplete, involving weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

C (70-79) – Average work; the assignment has been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The assignment shows effort by the student, but the analysis is incomplete, includes inappropriate evidence (or a lack of evidence), or shows significant difficulties with organization. Written work requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions.

D (60-69) - Less than average work; the assignment has not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The assignment shows a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment. Written work lacks analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are needed.

F (<59) – Inadequate work; the assignment has not been completed. Work, when submitted, shows a significant lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

Submission of Assignments:

1. Please bring blue books for your in-class exams, and write legibly and in ink.
2. If you cannot attend an in-class exam, please contact me at once so that we can make alternate arrangements.
3. Your take home final should be typed (11 or 12 point font), with one-inch margins for comments. You will receive a confirmation email from me stating that I have received your final. If you do not receive an email from me, that means I have not received your work. Please resubmit your work until you receive confirmation.
4. Please keep a photocopy or a back-up disk of your take home final.
5. Please submit your final on time. Late submissions will receive a lower grade unless the student has a viable reason (such as illness, familial emergency) for his/her lateness and notifies me in advance. Your grade will be lowered a fraction for every day your work is late (ex. B to B- for one day late).
6. Do not summarize the plot of a work or rephrase your class notes in your exams. The exams do not require external research. They require knowledge of the course texts, clear, careful thinking, and writing.
7. Please use the Editing Guidelines and Stylesheet attached to this syllabus. They will help you hone your critical thinking and writing skills, and strengthen your essays. Please keep in mind that in addition to yours truly, there are resources at the University to help with your writing, including the Writing Center in Colson Hall.

Professional Responsibility:

1. Class attendance contributes significantly to academic success. Students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades and have higher passing rates in courses. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. You are granted a maximum of three absences during the course of the semester before absenteeism affects your grade. If you accumulate more than seven absences (excused and unexcused), you will automatically fail the course.
2. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding your absences. If you disappear—if you miss class for three or four sessions in a row, or more—it is not my responsibility to find you.
3. If you send me an e-mail, I will respond within 24 or 48 hours. If I have not responded in that time, I have not received your posting. Please e-mail me again.
4. Please come to class on time. Do not leave in the middle of class; it is distracting and disrespectful. Do not schedule appointments (medical, advising, etc.) during class time.
5. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during class.
6. Should you need assistance during a time of difficulty or crisis, please contact Tom Sloane, Associate Dean, in the Office of Student Life in E. Moore Hall, 304-293-5611.

Academic Dishonesty:

The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the Student Conduct Code at <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html>. Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see me *before* the assignment is due to discuss the matter.

Social Justice Policy. West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veterans status, religion, sexual orientation, color or national origin. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Disability Services (293-6700).

Editing Checklist

1. Evaluate your thesis.

- is your thesis clearly stated at the beginning of your essay?
- is your thesis appropriate for the writing assignment?
- does your thesis “make sense”?

2. Evaluate your argumentative strategy.

- are you using logical and rhetorical strategies that build the most convincing case for your thesis? (and remember, you may use more than one in an essay; if you choose multiple strategies, make sure that they work together)
- do you have the appropriate data to support your argument? (and if not, can you justify its absence?)
- is the data cited properly? (check the content and the form of your notes)

3. Evaluate your essay structure.

- does your essay structure lead the reader through your argument clearly?
- does your essay structure work with/reinforce your argumentative strategy?
- does your introduction suggest the structure of your argument? If so, does the body of your essay follow through on the structure suggested by the introduction?
- are the transitions between the parts of your argument clear?
- does the conclusion pull your argument together? (try to avoid repetitive, summary conclusions)

4. Evaluate your paragraph structure.

- does each paragraph function as a unit of your argument? (i.e. is each paragraph unified in its purpose?)
- is the topic sentence clear?
- does the body of the paragraph follow through on the subject of the topic sentence?
- are the transitions from paragraph to paragraph clear?

5. Evaluate your sentence structure.

- is each sentence an independent unit of thought? (i.e. avoid repeating yourself in successive sentences)
- does one sentence lead to the next? Are the transitions between sentences clear?
- check the grammar of our sentences
 - make sure that every sentence has a subject and a verb (avoid fragments!)
- check for subject-verb agreement
- check for tense consistency
- check that you are varying the grammar of your sentences (so that not every sentence begins with a prepositional phrase, for instance)

6. Check your spelling and punctuation.

- and remember the distinctions between their/their/they're; it's/its; are/our; etc.

Some General Comments on Writing Style and Grammar

- a. Please note that “it’s” is a contraction for “it is” or “it has.” “Its” is a possessive, which makes life confusing, but it is important to learn this distinction.
- b. Please learn the distinctions between possessive, plural, and plural possessive. “Knight’s” is singular possessive; “knights” is plural; “Knights” is plural possessive.
- c. Try to avoid wordiness. Phrases like “The point the speaker is making is” or “What this means is that” are generally unnecessary. Such phrases are like long wind-ups before the pitch, and they often clog your prose.
- d. Try to avoid “talking” writing. What “sounds” right to a readerly ear does not necessarily read properly or grammatically to the eye. People do not speak grammatically (and sometimes without even punctuation). Therefore, writers should avoid writing as they speak (unless they are writing dialogue in fiction). Talking writing also frequently leads to tone drops and diction that generally is not appropriate for academic prose. (Ex. “ she doesn’t stick up for herself”).
- e. Please avoid freestanding quotations. Every quotation should be integrated into a text, preferably with a lead-in phrase, rather than placed alone in the middle of a paragraph without any connection to anything around it.
- f. Try to avoid “we” and “you” in your essays. Both terms tend to include the reader in the argument without convincing the reader. (In other words, these terms usually signal strategies of collusion on the part of the writer).
- g. When referring to words as words, please use quotation marks. (I.e. if you are discussing the use of the word “man” in a particular passage, then “man” should be placed in quotation marks).
- h. “It” and “This” are weak sentence starters. Any noun in the previous sentence can serve as a referent for “it” – and if the previous sentence has a number of nouns in it, havoc results. “This” has a similar effect as the first word in a sentence, but if a noun is added after “This,” the problem of reference is usually solved.
- i. “Thing” is a very vague word. Try to find a specific noun whenever possible.
- j. “He himself” is an unnecessary and ungrammatical doubling. “He” will generally do.
- k. Try to avoid using “is” (or “was”) as a main verb. Choose a stronger, more precise word.
- l. “A woman” -- not “A women.” “Woman” is singular; “women” is plural.
- m. Remember that a semicolon connects two highly related sentences.
- n. Avoid “how” and “what” at the beginning of subordinate clauses—depending on your meaning, use “which,” “that,” “who,” or “where.”