

English 387W

Marilyn Francus, English 387W, Spring 2008

Professor Francus

English 387W

Spring 2008

Topics in Women's Literature: Jane Austen and Popular Culture

Tuesdays-Thursdays, 11:30-12:45

102 Oglebay Hall

Office: 227 Colson Hall

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2:30-4:00, and by appointment

E-Mail: mfrancus@mix.wvu.edu

Januray 15 Introduction

January 17 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford edition, pp. 1-52; Vol. I, Chapter I through Vol. I, Chapter

January 22 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford edition, pp. 52-123; Vol. I, Chapter XV through Vol. II, Ch
Handout: Young, Kay. "Word-Work, Word Play, and the Making of Intimacy" in *The Talk in Ja*
Weinlos Gregg (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2002), pp. 57-70

January 24 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford edition, pp. 123-184; Vol. II, Chapter III-XIX)

January 29 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford edition, pp. 185-250; Vol. III, Chapter I-X
Draft of Critical Article Analysis Due (3 pages minimum)

January 31 Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford edition, pp. 251-298; Vol. III, Chapter XI-XIX)

February 5 Writing Workshop Day

February 7 Reading film; Film: *Pride and Prejudice* (1995)
Brownstein, Rachel. "Out of the Drawing Room, Onto the Lawn" (Troost and Greenfield, pp. 13
Nixon, Cheryl L. "Balancing the Courtship hero: Masculine Emotional Display in Film Adaptati
Greenfield, pp. 22-35).

February 12 Film: *Pride and Prejudice* (1995)
Critical Article Analysis Due (5 pages)

February 14 Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary* (pp. 1-74)

February 19 Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary* (pp. 75-195)

February 28 Film: *Bride and Prejudice* (2004)
Draft of Film Scene Analysis Due (3 pages minimum)

March 4 Austen, *Emma* (Penguin edition, pp. 7-93; Vol. I, Chapters I-XI)

- March 6 Austen, *Emma* (Penguin edition, pp. 94-142; Vol. I, Chapters XII-XVIII)
- March 11 Austen, *Emma* (Penguin edition, pp. 144-244; Vol. II, Chapters I-XII)
- March 13 Austen, *Emma* (Penguin edition, pp. 245-291; Vol. II, Chapter XVIII)
Film Scene Analysis Due (5 pages)
- March 18 Austen, *Emma* (Penguin edition, pp. 295-396 ; Vol. III, Chapters I-XII)
Thesis Statement and Outline for Research Essay Due (1 Page)
- March 20 Austen, *Emma* (Penguin edition, pp. 397- 453; Vol. III, Chapters XIII-XIX)
- March 25-27 Spring Break
- April 1 Film: *Emma* (1996)
Draft of Research Essay Due (5 pages minimum)
- April 3 Film: *Clueless* (1995)
Ferriss, Suzanne. "Emma Becomes Clueless" (Troost and Greenfield, pp. 122-129).
Dole, Carol M. "Austen, Class, and the American Market" (Troost and Greenfield, pp. 58-78).
- April 8 Austen, *Persuasion* (Oxford edition, pp. 9-98; Vol. I)
- April 10 Austen, *Persuasion* (Oxford edition, pp. 99-203; Vol. II)
- April 15 Writing Workshop Day
- April 17 Film: *Persuasion* (1994)
Looser, Devoney. "Feminist Implications of the Silver Screen Austen" (Troost and Greenfield, pp. 100-116)
- April 22 Fowler, *The Jane Austen Book Club* (Plume edition, pp. 1-116)
- April 24 Fowler, *The Jane Austen Book Club* (Plume edition, pp. 119-199)
- April 29 Fowler, *The Jane Austen Book Club* (Plume edition, pp. 200-250)
- May 1 Conclusion
Research Essay Due (10 pages minimum)

Course description: Jane Austen's novels have been popular since their publication in the early 19th century. Her works have been adapted to stage and the screen, in Regency and modern versions. Austen's plots and characters (and Austen herself) have been appropriated by authors for mysteries, sequels, prequels, and Internet fan fiction. In this course, students will focus on three of Austen's novels--Pride and Prejudice, Emma, and Persuasion--and the multiple manifestations of each of these works in contemporary culture. Students will learn about the

gender codes of Austen's period, and the ways that gender codes are re-envisioned through time and across culture. Students will study female authorship, female audiences, and "chick lit"; the mechanisms of adaptation; and the relationship between the canon and popular culture.

English 387W fulfills the University's "W" requirement, elective requirements for the English major and minor, and the advanced elective requirement for the Women's Studies major.

Course Objectives:

- To introduce students to popular culture studies and the canon.
- To evaluate gender studies across time and cultures.
- To introduce students to literary research methods.
- To practice in critical thinking and writing about literature, with an emphasis on multiple interpretations and theories.
- To provide practice in academic writing, with an emphasis on writing as an intellectual process, and the integration of research into writing.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

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

- Identify and analyze the methods of literary and cultural appropriation and cultural circulation.
- Analyze representations of gender in different times and cultures.
- Develop a thesis about a literary or cultural text, and support that thesis with evidence.
- Engage in primary research on literary and cultural topics.
- Draft, edit, and write an extended analysis of a literary or cultural text.
- Analyze scholarship, and integrate research into writing, according to the conventions of academic discourse.
- Recognize and develop multiple analyses for a single literary or cultural text.

Course Texts:

Austen, *Emma*

Austen, *Persuasion*

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Fielding, *Bridget Jones' Diary*

Fowler, *The Jane Austen Book Club*

Troost and Greenfield, *Jane Austen in Hollywood*

Bride and Prejudice (directed by Gurinder Chadha, 2004)

Bridget Jones' Diary (directed by Sharon Maguire, 2001)

Clueless (directed by Amy Heckerling, 1995)

Emma (directed by Douglas McGrath 1996)

Persuasion (directed by 1994)

Pride and Prejudice (directed by Simon Langton; 1995)

All books are available in the WVU Bookstore.

Films are available in Media Services in Wise Library (Lower Level). Media Services is open on Mondays through Thursdays from 8:00 A.M. until midnight; on Fridays from 8:00 A.M. until 5:00 P.M.; on Saturdays from noon until 6:00 P.M.; and Sundays from 1:00 P.M. until 11:00

P.M. There are six viewing rooms in Media Services Center that are equipped with DVD and VHS players.

Course Requirements:

You will be expected to keep up with the course readings and film viewings, attend and participate in class, bring the text(s) that will be discussed to class, and to check your MIX e-mail account at least twice a week.

-- For your first assignment, you will write a short essay (5 pages) in which you analyze a recent scholarly article on *Pride and Prejudice* (note: I will provide a list of scholarly articles for you). You will be expected to develop a thesis about the article, and support your thesis with evidence. (Note: please do not summarize the article in your essay). You will be asked to submit a draft of your essay (which will count for 10% of your course grade) and a final version (15% of your course grade). Please note that you will receive comments on your draft within a week of submission, and that you will have at least a week to edit your draft before submitting the final version. The goals of this assignment are to familiarize you with the conventions of academic writing, and to practice your critical thinking and writing skills.

-- In your second assignment, you will write a short essay (5 pages) in which you analyze a scene from one of the recent film adaptations of Austen's novels. You will be expected to develop a thesis about the scene, and support your thesis with evidence, and engage in primary research. (Note: please do not summarize the film scene in your essay). You will be asked to submit a draft of your essay (which will count for 10% of your course grade) and a final version (15% of your course grade). Please note that you will receive comments on your draft within a week of submission, and that you will have at least a week to edit your draft before submitting the final version. The goals of this assignment are to provide practice in choosing a topic (and setting parameters of analysis), in working with film as a cultural medium and a manifestation of cultural appropriation, in locating and incorporating scholarly sources in your writing, and to further practice critical thinking and writing skills according to the conventions of academic writing.

-- In your third assignment, you will write an extended essay in which you analyze Jane Austen in contemporary culture. You may choose to focus on sequels to Austen's novels, modern versions of Austen's novels, Austen in film, Austen fan fiction, Austen products, etc. You will be expected to develop a thesis, and support your thesis with evidence, and engage in primary research. You will be asked to submit a thesis statement and research outline (which will count towards 10% of your final grade), a draft of your research paper (15% of your course grade), and a final research paper (25% of your course grade). Please note that you will receive comments on your draft within a week of submission, and that you will have more than a week to edit your draft before submitting the final version. The goals of this assignment include providing practice in choosing a topic (and setting parameters of analysis), thinking critically and analytically about popular culture; integrating research into your writing, and practicing writing skills according to the conventions of academic writing.

Critical article analysis: Draft: 10%; Final Version: 15%

Film scene analysis: Draft: 10%; Final version: 15%

Research Paper: Outline: 10%; Draft: 15%; Final Version: 25%

Submission of Assignments:

1. Your papers should be typed (11 or 12 point font), with sufficient space in the margins for comments. (One-inch margins will do). Papers should be double-spaced.
2. Your papers should reflect careful reading and thinking about your subject. Do not summarize the plot of a work or rephrase your class notes in your course assignments.
3. It is highly recommended that you keep a photocopy or a back-up disk of every assignment that you hand in.
4. Hand in papers 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 has notified me within 24 hours of the original due date. Your grade will be lowered a fraction for every day your work is late (ex. B to B- for one day late).
5. Use the Editing Guidelines and Stylesheet—they will help you hone your critical thinking and writing skills, and strengthen your essays. Please keep in mind that there are additional resources at the University to help with your writing, including the Writing Center in Colson Hall, and the Term Paper Clinic in Wise Library.

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. Excessive absences will jeopardize students' grades or their ability to continue in their courses.
2. Accordingly, 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 six absences (excused and unexcused), i.e., an absence rate of 20%, you will not be able to earn more than a "B" for this course. If you accumulate nine absences (excused and unexcused), i.e., an absence rate of 33%, you will not be able to earn more than a "C" for this course.
3. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding your absences. If you disappear—that is, if you miss class for three, four, five sessions in a row, or more--it is not my responsibility to find you.
4. If you send me an e-mail, I will respond within 24 or 48 hours. If I have not responded to you in that time, it means that I have not received your posting. Please e-mail me again.

5. Do not leave in the middle of class; it is distracting and disrespectful. Do not schedule appointments (medical, advising, etc) during class time.

6. Come to class on time.

Grading Criteria:

A (90-100) – Excellent work; the assignments for this course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses are clearly organized, choose compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engage 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 assignments for the course have been completed in a professional and timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses show substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is either 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 assignments for the course have been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses show 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 assignments for the course have not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The written assignments and exam responses show a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment (exam, quiz, or essay). Written assignments lack analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are necessary.

F (<59) – Inadequate work; the assignments for the course have not been completed. Written assignments and exam responses, when submitted, show 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.

Social Justice Policy:

West Virginia University is committed to social justice. I concur with that commitment and expect to foster a nurturing learning environment based upon open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Our University does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, age, disability, veteran 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 Disability Services (293-6700).

Plagiarism:

The following definitions of Academic Dishonesty are taken from the West Virginia University Academic Integrity/Dishonesty Policy (available online at <http://www.arc.wvu.edu/admissions/integrity.html>):

1. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined in terms of proscribed acts. Students are expected to understand that such practices constitute academic dishonesty regardless of motive. Those who deny deceitful intent, claim not to have known that the act constituted plagiarism, or maintain that what they did was inadvertent are nevertheless subject to penalties when plagiarism has been confirmed. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to: submitting, without appropriate acknowledgement, a report, notebook, speech, outline, theme, thesis, dissertation, or other written, visual, or oral material that has been copied in whole or in part from the work of others, whether such source is published or not, including (but not limited to) another individual's academic composition, compilation, or other product, or commercially prepared paper.
2. Cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and projects, including but not limited to:
 - a. Obtaining help from another student during examinations.
 - b. Knowingly giving help to another student during examinations, taking an examination or doing academic work for another student, or providing one's own work for another student to copy and submit as his/her own.
 - c. The unauthorized use of notes, books, or other sources of information during examinations.
 - d. Obtaining without authorization an examination or any part thereof. Forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud:
 - a. Forging or altering, or causing to be altered, the record of any grade in a grade book or other educational record.
 - b. Use of University documents or instruments of identification with intent to defraud.
 - c. Presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for admission, registration, or withdrawal from the University or from a University course.
 - d. Knowingly presenting false data or intentionally misrepresenting one's records for personal gain.
 - e. Knowingly furnishing the results of research projects or experiments for the inclusion in another's work without proper citation.
 - f. Knowingly furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding.

Cases of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of "F" for the course and appropriate academic discipline. If you have any questions about academic dishonesty, and how to avoid it, please contact me.

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

1. 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.

2. Please learn the distinctions between possessive, plural, and plural possessive. “Knight’s” is singular possessive; “knights” is plural; “Knights” is plural possessive.
3. 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.
4. 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”).
5. 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.
6. Try to avoid “we” and “you” in your essays. Both terms tend to include the reader in the essay’s argument without convincing the reader. (In other words, these terms usually signal strategies of collusion on the part of the writer).
7. 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).
8. “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.
9. “Thing” is a very vague word. Try to find a specific noun whenever possible.
10. “He himself” is an unnecessary and ungrammatical doubling. “He” will generally do.
11. Try to avoid using “is” (or “was”) as a main verb. Choose a stronger, more precise word.