**Nineteenth-Century Novel**

**ENGL 4373/5373**

**CRN 29429/29435**

**Spring Semester, 2016**

**Irby Hall 304**

**Richard Gaughan**

When we talk about novels as belonging to this or that century, we don’t mean to suggest that some magic switch is thrown that changes the themes, style, and formal characteristics of novels. While it’s true that literary forms, like all artistic forms, have a history, that history has more to do with the inner logic of that form and the ways it can be explored and developed than with the calendar. But, literature is also responsive to its times, and the novel tends to be even more responsive than the more established genres. In fact, since the modern novel originated as a parody of high culture and without any particular literary pedigree, it may well be the most adaptable and improvisational of the genres and has never been shy about using whatever is happening around it as raw material. So, as the eighteenth century, with its Great Chains of Being and checks and balances, gave way to the revolutionary turmoil of the nineteenth century, it stands to reason that the novels would also change their concerns and the manner in which they told their stories.

The novels we will be reading come from all parts of a very busy, from a literary and cultural point of view, century. We will begin with a novel that still reflects the calm reserve and decorum of the Augustan Age, Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*. With her mistrust of excess of any kind, her awareness of the insuperable limits humans face, and her preference for balance and intelligence, Jane Austen presents us with a world and a worldview that was soon to be challenged by those whose tastes ran more to the extreme: the novelists who could loosely be called Romantic, if for no other reason than that they emphasize larger-than-life characters and their struggles with the limits life imposes on their desires. Mary Shelley and Charlotte Bronte give us some of the more memorable characters of nineteenth-century literature in Victor Frankenstein, his monster, Rochester, and Jane Eyre. These are characters who have to struggle mightily to achieve peace, if they ever do. After this dose of Romanticism, we will look at four novels from the Victorian period, a period less concerned with the frustrations the individual faces in life and more with the question of whether there is such a thing as an individual at all. The great English novelists of mid-century (Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, and Trollope) were all social realists, which is to say they were interested in the ways social pressures influence character and may overwhelm, control, or destroy it. One reason for this concern with society was the simple fact that society was changing profoundly and rapidly as a result of the ascendency of the capitalist classes and the Industrial Revolution. A social, economic, historical, and cultural process that probably began in the late seventeenth century (if not before) was coming to fruition and raising a lot of important questions. Foremost among them was the value of personal identity when identity could change, or be changed, so quickly in the new, more socially mobile society. With the exception of George Eliot’s *Silas Marner*, which we will read first, the novels of this part of the course tend to be more interested in the city, even if they are ambivalent about it. We will read Elizabeth Gaskell’s look at the contrast between the genteel and rural south of England with the boisterous and industrialized north in her *North and South*. Then, we will look at Dickens’s own look at industrialization in his *Hard Times* and then his somewhat nostalgic look back at village life in *Great Expectations*. Finally, we will end our semester with Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, an unsparing look at the fate of the individual in a world controlled by large impersonal forces, some of them as old as humanity and others as new as the latest state-of-the art machine. For some people, Hardy takes the social realism of the Victorians to the next phase of naturalism, which is to say that the struggle between the individual and society becomes not really a struggle at all but the inevitable defeat of the individual. I’m not convinced by this view, but Hardy certainly does not make Tess’s life an easy one. In any case, Hardy points us in the direction of the somber and disillusioned novels of the twentieth century.

**Reading Schedule:**

*Pride and Prejudice* 6 classes

*Frankenstein*, 3 classes

*Jane Eyre*, 5 classes

*Silas Marner* 3 classes

*North and South* 6 classes

*Hard Times*, 3 classes

*Great Expectations*, 6 classes

*Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, 6 classes

The average amount of reading for each class will be between 60 and 100 pages.

**Course Requirements:**

**Undergraduates:**

There will be three in-class essays, one the final exam, and a 5-7 page paper on one of the novels that will require some research. All of these exams will test your ability to analyze and interpret the novels we are reading.

**Graduate Students:**

Graduate students will take the same exams as the undergraduates, but will also be responsible for an annotated bibliography and a somewhat longer research paper. The bibliography is intended to be preparation for the paper. Graduate students will compile a list of critical works, books and articles, and this will provide them with a context for writing an extended analysis of one of the novels. I will be meeting with the graduate students regularly so that they can identify their interests and begin work on the bibliography and the novel they will have chosen.

Final grade will be determined mostly by the written assignments, but regular class attendance and participation can help your grade, if it is borderline.

The reading for this class will be on the heavy side. I figure we will be reading, on average, about 80 pages per class. For some of the novels the number will be a bit higher, for others a bit lower. We will begin at a pretty leisurely pace—60 pages per class—so enjoy it while you can. You should also bear in mind that I chose the small novels for this course.

**Reading List:**

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre*

George Eliot, *Silas Marner*

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*

The University of Central Arkansas adheres to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. If you need an accommodation under this Act due to a disability, please contact the UCA Office of Disability Services, 450-3613.

You should familiarize yourself with all the policies set forth in the *Student Handbook*, especially those concerning academic integrity and sexual harassment.

The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the university’s Academic Integrity Policy, as approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the Student Handbook. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student’s acceptance of the university policy.

An Emergency Procedures Summary (EPS) for the building in which this class is held will be discussed during the first week of this course. EPS documents for most buildings on campus are available at <http://uca.edu/mysafety/bep/>. Every student should be familiar with emergency procedures for any campus building in which he/she spends time for classes or other purposes.

 **Title IX disclosure**: If a student discloses an act of sexual harassment, discrimination, assault, or other sexual misconduct to a faculty member (as it relates to “student-on-student” or “employee-on-student”), the faculty member cannot maintain complete confidentiality and is required to report the act and may be required to reveal the names of the parties involved.  Any allegations made by a student may or may not trigger an investigation.  Each situation differs and the obligation to conduct an investigation will depend on those specific set of circumstances.  The determination to conduct an investigation will be made by the Title IX Coordinator.  For further information, please visit:  <https://uca.edu/titleix>.  *\*Disclosure of sexual misconduct by a third party who is not a student and/or employee is also required if the misconduct occurs when the third party is a participant in a university-sponsored program, event, or activity.*

Evaluations (Fall & Spring)
Student evaluations of a course and its professor are a crucial element in helping faculty achieve excellence in the classroom and the institution in demonstrating that students are gaining knowledge. Students may evaluate courses they are taking starting on the Monday of the twelfth week of instruction [insert date] through the end of finals week by logging in to myUCA and clicking on the Evals button on the top right.

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