LIT 437
Studies in Genre: The Novel
Spring 2016

Course Description

• Still a relatively recent form, the novel has become the most popular and accessible western literary genre in the past two centuries. Why? And what, exactly, is a novel?

• This course traces the origin of novel-writing as a literary practice from the eighteenth century to its complex, global forms in the twentieth and twenty-first, emphasizing the various historical, cultural, economic, and philosophical contexts that shaped its development. Along the way, we'll examine the interplay between enlightenment, romantic, realist, modernist, and postcolonial conceptions of what literature is and what it can do, enabling us to map theories of the novel alongside our six core texts.

• LIT 437 is primarily a reading course, a seminar experience designed to give upper-division English majors the chance to read deeply in a single genre. Accordingly, apart from a final seminar paper and weekly digital conversations, the principal work of the course will be maintaining a reading journal to track responses to the novels and actively participating in seminar discussion.

Novels

• Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe. Toronto: Broadview, 2010. [9781551119359]

• Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (1818 Text: 3rd Ed.). Toronto: Broadview, 2012. [9781554812592]


Learning Outcomes

*An advanced, restricted elective 400-level course, “Studies in Genre” is based on the seminar model, and the reading load can be heavy (up to 250 pages per weekly meeting). The course requires independent planning for the final paper, and I highly recommend attending office hours (W 2-5 in LA 425) regularly – especially if you need help with your writing or are unfamiliar with literary theory. The expectations for the seminar paper are high, but I’m here to assist you in whatever way you need.

* By enrolling in this class, you agree to all terms, assignments, and responsibilities. You agree to treat the course as professional work, including all email exchanges, and attendance is mandatory. You should not be late, and you should not miss classes, especially because we only meet once a week. Missing any more than two classes may result in a 10% reduction in your final grade.

* If you have a legitimate conflict, please discuss it with me ahead of time. Any work missed as a result of tardiness or absence is your responsibility to make up. In addition, you should be familiar with the MSUB Student Policies & Procedures Handbook for information on appropriate behavior and academic integrity.

* Please note: Students with disabilities who may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact Disability Support Services (DSS) in the College of Education, Room 135: (406) 657-2283, (406) 545-2518 (video phone), Director: (406) 657-2161. Sign Language Interpreters: (406) 657-2159.
Daily Syllabus

* Note: Assignments are subject to changes based on the progress of the class. It is your responsibility to stay current. If you miss a day, always check with me or with someone who was in class for changes. Any reading assignments not included in the required texts will be available on the D2L course website.

1/20 – Introductions & Robinson Crusoe
Read for Class:
* Evan Davis, “Introduction,” to Robinson Crusoe, pp. 1-18
* Daniel Defoe, Robinson Crusoe (1719), pp. 44-105
* Ian Watt, Ch. 1 from The Rise of the Novel (1957) [D2L]

1/27 – Robinson Crusoe
* Crusoe, pp. 105-304
* Davis, “Introduction,” pp. 18-31
* Watt, Ch. 2 from The Rise of the Novel [D2L]

2/3 – Robinson Crusoe
* Watt, Ch. 3 from The Rise of the Novel [D2L]
* From the Broadview edition of Robinson Crusoe.
  Appendix D4 – Defoe, “On Solitude”
  Appendix D7 – Rousseau, from Emilius and Sophia
  Appendix E1 – Locke, “Of Property”
  Appendix E3 – Marx, from Capital: Volume I

2/10 – Frankenstein
* Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (1818), pp. 47-221

2/17 – Frankenstein
* Mikhail Bakhtin, “Discourse in the Novel” [D2L]
* Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, from “Monster Culture (Seven Theses)” (1997) [D2L]
* Anne Stevens, “The Example of Frankenstein” from Literary Theory and Criticism (2015) [D2L]
* Gayatri Spivak, from “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” (1986) [D2L]
* Nancy Armstrong, selection from Desire and Domestic Fiction (1987) [D2L]

2/24 – Beloved
* Toni Morrison, “Foreword” to Beloved (1987), pp. xiii-xix
* Morrison, Beloved, pp. 1-195

3/2 – Beloved
* Beloved, pp. 196-324
* Rivkin and Ryan, “Situating Race” in Literary Theory [D2L]
* Avery Gordon, from Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination (1997) [D2L]
* Audre Lorde, “Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference” (1980) [D2L]
  * Luce Irigaray, selections from “The Power of Discourse and the Subordination of the Feminine” and “Women on the Market” in This Sex Which Is Not One (1977) [D2L]

3/9 – No Class

3/16 – No Class

3/23 – The Octopus [Reading Journal Checkpoint]
  * Donald Pizer, “The Problem of Definition” and Louis Budd, “The American Background” from The Cambridge Companion to American Realism and Naturalism (1995) [D2L]
  * Frank Norris, The Octopus (1901), pp. 1-500

3/30 – The Octopus
  * The Octopus, pp. 500-652
  * Karl Marx, “Estranged Labor” (1844) [D2L]
  * Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936) [D2L]
  * Kevin Starr, “Introduction” to The Octopus (pp. vii-xxi)
  * Clare Eby, “The Octopus: Big Business as Art” (1994) [D2L]
  * Leigh Ann Berte, “Mapping The Octopus” (2005) [D2L]

4/6 – As I Lay Dying [Seminar Paper Proposals & Bibliographies Due]
  * William Faulkner, As I Lay Dying (1930), pp. 39-149
  * Michael Gorra, “Introduction” to As I Lay Dying (pp. vii-xii)

4/13 – As I Lay Dying
  * “Cultural Contexts” (pp. 203-205 & 217-31)
  * Eric Sundquist, “Death, Grief, Analogous Form: As I Lay Dying” (pp. 287-304)

4/20 – Animal’s People
  * Rivkin and Ryan, “English Without Shadows: Literature on a World Scale” [D2L]
  * Indra Sinha, Animal’s People (2009), pp. 1-204

4/27 – Animal’s People [Reading Journal Due]
  * Animal’s People, pp. 204-366
  * Selection from Rob Nixon, Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor (2011) [D2L]

5/4 – Seminar Paper Presentations [Seminar Paper Due on D2L by 5 PM]