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Fall 2011
Barret 214
TTh 2:00-3:15

English 485-02: Henry James and Edith Wharton

In this course we will focus exclusively on the works of Henry James and Edith Wharton. Through intensive study of representative novels, we will consider questions of sexuality, gender, ethnicity, nationality, aesthetics, and economics. We will also situate the fiction historically, not only by learning about the authors' lives, but more importantly, by considering the texts as cultural artifacts of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth and by thinking of them as exemplars of various literary genres and modes such as realism, naturalism, satire and novels of manners. Finally, we will also consider questions of literary influence and intertextuality, given the close personal and professional relationship between the two authors.

This course is the capstone experience of the English major, and its primary goal is to guide you towards finding your own voice as a literary critic by helping you hone your skills of independent research, synthesis and interpretation. To this end, the course begins with a series of common readings and gradually moves towards a focus on independent work: research, reading, and writing. By the end, you will have produced a 20-25 page essay of original scholarship, and you will be required to present your work formally to your peers during the last week of the semester.

Required Texts

James, Henry. *The Ambassadors*. Penguin.
James, Henry. *The Portrait of a Lady*. W. & W. Norton
Wharton, Edith. *The Age of Innocence*. Penguin.
Wharton, Edith. *The House of Mirth*. W. & W. Norton.

You will also read ONE of the following novels, depending on which reading group you choose:

James, Henry. *The Bostonians*. Penguin.
Wharton, Edith. *The Custom of the Country*. Penguin.

Several articles and other readings will be assigned throughout the semester and will be considered required reading. These texts will be available in my public folder.

Recommended Texts

Gibaldi, ed. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th ed).
Leitch, ed. *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* (2nd ed.). W. & W. Norton.

Assignments

You will write two 5-6 page papers, one on a James novel and one on a Wharton novel. The culminating research paper of 20-25 pages will be a comparison of two novels from the course, one of which you may have written on in a shorter paper. You may compare a James novel to a Wharton novel, or you may read an earlier and later text by the same author together. We will discuss further parameters for this paper in class. As part of the final research project, you will also write a 2-3 page formal proposal, produce an annotated bibliography, and give two presentations – one on your preliminary analysis/research and one on your final essay. You will also be required to submit your first five pages to peer review. We will discuss the particulars of these assignments in class. Grades for all of the above will be weighted as follows:

Short Essay #1	15%
Short Essay #2	15%
Seminar Essay	50%
Proposal	5%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Presentation	10%

Assignment Submission Policy

Essays are due on the day and time specified in the syllabus. I expect hard copies, unless you are submitting a late paper over the weekend. You will lose 2/3 of a letter grade per day (including weekends) whenever an assignment is late. (For example, if the essay receives an A- but is one day late, the final grade is a B, and so on.) After an essay is a week late, you will receive an “F” on the assignment. If you fail to turn in any of the major assignments, you will fail the course. Presentations are mandatory and cannot be made up. Please clear your calendar now of any conflicts on presentation days.

Also, please note that essays must be typed, double-spaced with an inch margin, stapled, and adhere to MLA standards in both layout and documentation. See me if you have questions about MLA or need further information.

Attendance Policy

Because this is a senior seminar, you are expected to perform like graduating majors and be serious about your work. I will have little patience, therefore, with lax attendance or inattention during class. We will rely heavily on class discussion, so your attendance and preparedness are essential. You are to be here on-time, well-prepared, and well-rested. If you miss more than 3 classes, your final grade will be penalized 1/3 letter grade per absence. If you miss more than 6 classes, you may fail the course. Furthermore, a failure to participate can adversely affect your attendance. Coming to class without the assigned reading text for the day may be counted as an absence.

Academic Honesty

If you plagiarize an essay or other assignment, in part or whole, you will fail the course in addition to any punishment meted out by the Honor Council. Please see the attached list of English department policies and read carefully the section on academic honesty. This policy governs our class. Please note particularly that work written for another class – even if revised – cannot be handed in as original work in this class. Doing so is considered intellectual dishonesty.

Course Schedule

August

Thur, 25 Introductions

Tues, 30 FOLDER: Henry James, "The Art of Fiction"
The Portrait of a Lady: Preface to NY Edition, Chpts. I-VIII (3-67)

September

Thur, 1 *The Portrait of a Lady*: Chpts. IX-XVIII (67-163)

Tues, 6 *The Portrait of a Lady*: Chpts. XIX-XXXIII (163-287)

Thur, 8 *The Portrait of a Lady*: Chpts. XXXIV-XLIV (287-385)

Tues, 13 *The Portrait of a Lady*: Chpts. XLV-end (385-490)

Thur, 15 FOLDER: Wharton, *The Writing of Fiction*, Chpts. I, III, IV

Tues, 20 *The House of Mirth*: Book I, Chpts. I-IX (5-87)

Thur, 22 *The House of Mirth*: Book I, Chpt. X – Book II, Chpt. V (87-189)

Tues, 27 *The House of Mirth*: Book II, Chpt. VI – end (189-256)

October

Mon, 1 Short Essay #1 due outside my office door by noon

Thur, 2 Critical Methodology: Readings TBA

Tues, 4 *The Ambassadors*: Preface, Books First – Fourth (1-155)

Thur, 6 *The Ambassadors*: Books Fifth-Sixth (159-228)

Tues, 11 *The Ambassadors*: Books Seventh – Tenth (231-379)

Thur, 13 *The Ambassadors*: Book Eleventh – end (383-470)

Tues, 18 FALL BREAK

Thur, 20 *The Age of Innocence*: Chpts. 1-15 (3-114)

Tues, 25 *The Age of Innocence*: Chpts. 16-24 (115-201)

Thur, 27 *The Age of Innocence*: Chpts. 25-end (201-98)

Mon, 31 Short Essay #2 due outside my office door by noon

November

- Tues, 1 Critical Methodology: Readings TBA
- Thur, 3 Independent Reading Groups: *The Bostonians* or *Custom of the Country*
- Tues, 8 Independent Reading Groups: *The Bostonians* or *Custom of the Country*
- Thur, 10 Critical Methodology: Readings TBA
Proposal Due
- Tues, 15 Presentations of Critical Passages / Research
Annotated Bibliography Due
- Thur, 17 Presentations of Critical Passages / Research
- Tues, 22 **Opening 5 pages due for peer review – bring to class**
- Thur, 24 THANKSGIVING BREAK
- Tues, 29 Research Day – Optional conferences

December

- Thur, 1 Presentations
- Tues, 6 Presentations

Seminar paper due Tuesday, December 12 at noon outside my office.