

English 221-01: Novel of Manners

CRN 11090

Professor J. Brady
Palmer 305 (office)
843-3906 (office phone)

Fall, 2010
8:00-9:15 a.m. TR in
Palmer Hall 203

Reading List:

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (Penguin)
Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin)
Henry James, *Washington Square* (Penguin)
Henry James, *The Bostonians* (Penguin)
Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class* (Penguin)
Edith Wharton, *The Custom of the Country* (Penguin)

Office Hours:

Tuesday and Thursday: 9:30-10:30, or by appointment in the p.m.

Course Description:

'Isn't marriage your vocation? Isn't it all what you're brought up for?'

-- Lawrence Selden to Lily Bart, in *The House of Mirth*

This course is a study of the development of the novel of manners over a century, as reflected in the work of those writers closely identified with the genre: Jane Austen, Henry James, and Edith Wharton. We move from the heroine-centered courtship plots of Austen's fiction, set in Regency England, through Edith Wharton and Henry James's adaptations of the genre in the late nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth century. We will read Veblen's classic economic study of the leisure class as the lens through which we will interpret Wharton's fiction set in America's Gilded Age, the era of conspicuous consumption. The course explores the influence the English realist novel of the nineteenth century had on two American writers who spent most of their careers in Europe. The novels in this course, largely traditional in plot and structure, focus on the implications of the assumption Lawrence Selden makes in Wharton's *The House of Mirth*: that marriage is the heroine's vocation.

The course has three principal goals: to introduce students to the conventions of the novel of manners; to consider the ways in which novelists revise their own work over the course of their careers and respond to the influence of their precursors and contemporaries; to study important works by three major novelists, one English, two American.

English 221 carries both F4 (Literary Texts) and F2 (Writing Intensive) credit. We will workshop samples of the first two essays, focusing on issues of revision, clarity of argument, and uses of textual evidence in formal essay writing, in addition to more technical aspects, including punctuation and grammar.

Attendance Policy:

Late arrivals to class will be counted as an absence and any student who misses or comes late to class more than **four** times in the semester will receive a zero in class participation and attendance and may be asked to withdraw from the course.

Schedule:

August 26	Introductory remarks
Aug. 31, Sept. 2, 7, 9	<i>Sense and Sensibility</i> (1811)
September 14, 16, 21, 23	<i>Pride and Prejudice</i> (1813)
September 24	Austen essay due, 5 pages
September 28, 30	Workshops of first essay
Oct. 5, 7, 12, 14	<i>Washington Square</i> (1880)
October 19	Fall Recess
October 21, 26, 28, Nov. 2	<i>The Bostonians</i> (1886)
November 3	James essay due, 5 pages
November 4, 9	<i>The Theory of the Leisure Class</i> (1899)
November 11, 16	Workshops of second essay

November 18, 23, 30, Dec. 2	<i>The Custom of the Country</i> (1913)
Dec. 7	Final class/ student conferences
Wednesday, December 8	Wharton-Veblen essay due, 6 pages

Method of Evaluation:

Austen essay (5 pages)	20%
James essay (5 pages)	20%
In-class question*	10%
In-class grade	20%
Wharton-Veblen essay (6 pages)	30%

* You will pose one formal question to the class during the semester, speaking from notes only. Your question should be focused, given a context, and its potential significance made clear to your classmates. The question should explore a fresh aspect of the text that you think important to our understanding of the work. Having posed your question, you will then guide class discussion.

** All late essays will be penalized by at least a letter grade.