



Seminar in Restoration & Eighteenth-Century Literature: Jane Austen
English 4340G Winter 2025

Prof. Mary Helen McMurrin, Associate Professor English

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Office Hours: Monday 12:30-2 pm and Thursday 3:30-5 pm

Description: Jane Austen's novels are some of the most loved in all of English literature. They have inspired countless television and film adaptations making her a unique icon in contemporary culture. Why do they remain so popular and so important? This course includes four of Austen's major six novels, which are filled with psychological insight and bristling with new narrative techniques. Our aim is to investigate her characters and why we identify with them, the social and cultural contexts of her fictional world, and Austen's distinct voice with a focus on slow reading.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will:

- Be able to speak and write critically about Austen's novels focusing on
 - close textual analysis of Austen's style including character, themes, use of free indirect discourse
 - interpreting the significance of narrative form and themes
 - understanding scholarly criticism on Austen
 - writing complex thesis statements and reasoned arguments with a sophisticated use of evidence and secondary sources

Gain familiarity with historical and literary context of Austen's novels: 18th-century British fiction and its themes, as well as Georgian and Regency British culture

Grasp the biographical and reception history of Jane Austen from her own time to our present moment

Course Schedule

Jan 6

S&S Volume I

Interviews: write down

how or where you have encountered Austen so far in your life (films, social media, fan fiction, English courses, list all);

three impressions about Austen;

Slow reading: in class and scheduling reading time

Jan 13

S&S Volume 1 pp 3-102 **heavy reading**

Essay prep: Raymond Williams, "Sensibility" from *Keywords* Rev. Ed. Oxford UP 1983

Jan 20

S&S Vol II chapters I – IX pp 103 -158

Essay prep: Deidre Lynch “The Personal and the Pro Forma” (excerpt) in Norton Critical Edition of *Sense and Sensibility* ed. Claudia Johnson, 2002.

quiz/in class writing

Jan 27

S&S Vol II chapters X- XIV pp 158-191 and Vol III chapters I-II pp 158-210

Essay prep: Deidre Lynch continued

Feb 3

S&S Vol III chapters III-XIV pp 210-289

Essay prep: Using MLA; practice search. Identifying trends in scholarship, refining a short list.

Feb 10

P&P Volume I chapters I-XIV pp 3-52

Essay prep

Feb 17 and Feb 24

Reading Week

Essay Due Feb 24 11:55 pm

March 3

P&P Vol I chapters XV- XXIII pp 52-100 and Vol II chapters I-VII pp 100-129

Quiz/in-class writing

Austen biography

March 10 P&P Vol II chapters VIII-XIX pp 129-180

Caroline Levine, In Praise of Happy Endings: Precarity, Sustainability, and the Novel”
Novel: A Forum on Fiction 55:3 2022

March 17 P&P Vol III all chapters **heavy reading**

Levine continued

Austen and cognitive science

March 24 *Persuasion* Vol I

Quiz in-class writing

March 31 *Persuasion* Vol II

Final Essay due April 5

April 7 *Persuasion*

Course Materials

You are required to purchase paperback books which we will use during our discussions. The books, in the editions listed below are all REQUIRED. They are available for purchase at the Western Bookstore. Cost: \$25

Jane Austen *Sense and Sensibility*. Edited by John Mullan. Oxford World's Classics, 2019

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*. Edited by James Kinsley, Oxford World's Classics, 2020

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*. Edited by James Kinsley, Oxford World's Classics, 2008

Other materials will be made available on OWL <https://westernu.brightspace.com/>

Electronic Devices: No use of devices in class unless used for class content.

Methods of Evaluation

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Two Essays | 70% (research essays, 2000-2500 words each) |
| Quizzes and in class writing | 20% (best two of three) |
| Participation (quality and frequency) | 10% |

Attendance at all class meetings is important. You are expected to be there unless you have accommodation. See below.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

All academic consideration requests must include supporting documentation; however, recognizing that formal documentation may not be available in some extenuating circumstances, the policy allows students to make one Academic Consideration request **without supporting documentation** in this course.

Assessment Flexibility

Quizzes. This course has in-class quizzes. One will be dropped (if you missed class the day of a quiz or the one with the lowest grade). Academic consideration requests will be denied for missed quizzes.

Deadline with a No-Late-Penalty Period

Assignments. Students are expected to submit each of the assignments by the deadline listed. Should extenuating circumstances arise, students do not need to request Academic Consideration and they are permitted to submit their assignment (**up to 48 hours**) past the deadline without a late penalty. Should students submit their assessment beyond **48 hours** past the deadline, a late penalty of 5% per day will be applied. Academic Consideration requests may be granted only for extenuating circumstances that started before the deadline and lasted longer than the No-Late-Penalty Period (72 hours).

Academic Offences

All your work is to be your own and original.

Statement on the Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Any use of AI (chat gpt or other) is prohibited for the composition and editing of your work.

All sources used in your written work must be cited.

Scholastic offences are taken seriously, and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, here:

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/scholasticdisciplineundergrad.pdf>.

Statement on the use of plagiarism-checking software

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Policy on Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the [policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays](#) . Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but **not later than two weeks** prior to writing the examination/term test. In

the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm.

Academic Accommodation and Accessible Education

Academic Accommodation is “a means of adjusting the academic activities associated with a course or program of student in order to permit students with disabilities to participate in those activities at the University and to fulfill the essential requirements of a course or program.”

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/Academic%20Accommodationdisabilities.pdf>.

Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with **Accessible Education** at the earliest opportunity. “Accessible Education plays a central role in Western's efforts to ensure that its academic programs are accessible for all students” <http://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessibleeducation/index.html>

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help. Contact info for all Faculties is here:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based and sexual violence

Western University [is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence](#) (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: <https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentssupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre <https://learning.uwo.ca> are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.