

## English 313: Major Author (Jane Austen)

Dr. D'Amico

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Office: 231 Odd Fellows

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Office Hours: MWF. 8:30-9:30, Tues/Thursday 10:50-11:50, and Wednesday 1:30-2:30, and by appointment. If you cannot meet during my scheduled hours, contact me and we will set up another time convenient for both of us.

**Course Description:** The major portion of this course will be devoted to reading, discussing, and studying with care Austen's six major novels. (We shall read them in order of publication date.) Attention will be given to placing Austen within the context of her time period. We shall also be considering Austen's place in literary history, and thus you will be reading a few scholarly articles. As we engage in this study of the novels, we shall, when time allows, explore reasons for Austen's continued popularity outside the academic world.

### Goals:

To read the six major novels of Jane Austen with care and attention to detail.

To learn a little bit about the history of life in Britain, especially for the gentry, from approximately 1775-1817.

To learn a bit about the history of Austen scholarship, and in so doing get some practice reading scholarly articles.

To apply 3-4 of the numerous critical methodologies to her novels and to assess the usefulness of such methodologies

To continue to practice your writing and speaking skills.

### Texts:

I will be assigning some of the supplementary readings included in these editions; therefore it is best to purchase the editions I list below. If you purchase a different edition, it will then be your responsibility to get copies of the additional readings.

*Sense and Sensibility* (Broadview edition)

*Pride and prejudice* (Norton Critical Edition)

*Mansfield Park* (Norton Critical)

*Emma* (Norton Critical)

*Persuasion* (Norton Critical)

*Northanger Abbey* (Norton Critical)

*Lady Susan and Sanditon* (Penguin edition)

Kipling, "Janeites" (handout)

**Readings and Due Dates:** Below you will find a general guideline for the reading of the novels. I have also placed various topics to indicate a possible direction for discussion and/or to provide ideas for paper topics.

Jan. 18: Introduction to the course:  
Debates about Austen and how to assess her value  
You and Jane Austen (brief writing assignment)

- Jan: 20: *Sense and Sensibility*: Women and Wills pp. 41-108
- Jan. 23: *Sense and Sensibility*: So what is sensibility? pp. 108-198
- Jan. 25: *Sense and Sensibility*: The Importance of Sisters, pp. 198-260  
Lanser, "No Connections Subsequent: Jane Austen's World of Sisterhood" (handout)
- Jan. 27: *Sense and Sensibility*: Getting fevers—illness in Austen, pp. 261-315
- Jan 30: *Sense and Sensibility*: Significance of the characters who never appear: pp. 316-381
- Feb. 1: *Sense and Sensibility*: So what are the Characteristics of an Austen novel?
- Feb. 3: *Pride and Prejudice*: More about wills, money, and marriage  
Austen's letters to her niece Fanny
- Feb. 6: *Pride and Prejudice*: Austen and Conduct Literature
- Feb. 8: *Pride and Prejudice*: Why is dancing so important?
- Feb. 10: *Pride and Prejudice*: The Great Estate
- Feb. 13: *Pride and Prejudice*: Gentlemen and Men in Trade
- Feb. 15: *Pride and Prejudice*: Austen's use of Comedy: Who do we laugh at and what does it mean?
- Feb. 17: *Mansfield Park*: Liking and not liking Fanny Price  
**Paper #1 Due**
- Feb. 20: *Mansfield Park*: Austen and the Theater
- Feb. 22: *Mansfield Park*: The Great Estate and Slavery  
Mnthali "The Stranglehold of English Lit" (handout)
- Feb. 24: *Mansfield Park*: Austen and Religion
- Feb. 27: *Mansfield Park*: Fanny and her health: why does she need exercise?
- Feb. 29: *Mansfield Park*: So what is to be done with the woman who behaves badly?
- March 2: **EXAM**
- March 5: *Emma*: Emma and her "little friend" –female friendship in Austen
- March 7: *Emma*: Doing good works—Emma and the poor
- March 9: *Emma*: Should we pay any attention to the gypsies?

- March 12: *Emma*: Miss Bates: what is to become of her?
- March 14: *Emma*: Fathers and Father figures—should we respect Mr. Woodhouse?
- March 16: *Emma*: Austen's Masculine ideal
- March 19-23: **Spring Break**
- March 26: *Persuasion*: Absent and dead mothers

Plan time to watch the two film adaptation of *Persuasion* that will be on reserve. We will discuss them on April 9.

- March 28: *Persuasion*: Austen and Old Maids
- March 30: *Persuasion*: Austen and class, once again  
**Paper #2 Due**
- April 2: *Persuasion*: Austen and Bath
- April 4: *Persuasion*: Austen and the Navy
- April 6: *Persuasion*: Austen and the Happy Ending
- April 9: *Persuasion*: Discussion of film adaptations
- April 11: *Northanger Abbey*: Responding to the Gothic
- April 13: *Northanger Abbey*: The uses and abuses of reading novels
- April 16: *Northanger Abbey*: Austen's villains—who are they?
- April 18: *Northanger Abbey*: Do men and women read Austen differently?
- April 20: *Northanger Abbey*: Labeling Austen—Romantic or Neo-Classical, or something else?  
If you have not done an oral presentation, then your **cultural report essay is due today.**
- April 23: Kipling: "Janeites" (This short story is available on-line; however, I will provide a copy.)  
Kipling, "Jane's Marriage" (This is a poem associated with the short story.)
- April 25: *Lady Susan*: Austen's development as a writer
- April 27: *Sanditon*: the unfinished Austen novel—how might it have ended?
- April 30: Conclusions: So why is Austen so popular today? Are you a Janeite?

**May 7: 9:00 a.m.** Final Exam Take home essays will be given out the last week of class and will be due at this time. There will also be an in-class closed book portion of the exam at this time.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. I accept only illness and family emergency as excuses for absence from class. However you have **three** unexcused absences, so to speak, before your semester grade is lowered. (You might consider saving these absences for days when you already know you will be absent.) Four unexcused absences will lower your semester grade a partial letter; in other words a C+ becomes a C. Five absences will lower your grade 2/3 of a grade; a B- becomes a C. Six will lower it even more. If you miss what amounts to more than two weeks of class, we need to talk.

**Daily participation** in class discussions: To earn higher than a D for this portion of your work, you must actually speak in class in a way that contributes meaningfully; simply looking interested and being respectful of others will earn you only a D. I may give small oral assignments for daily participation. For example, I may ask each of you to identify a passage for us to discuss or to prepare brief comments on a scene or character, or to do a bit of research in order to offer the class some bit of useful information. If you are regularly prepared when called upon, then you can expect a C for participation. If you expect higher than a C, then you need to go beyond these small assignments and voluntarily, so to speak, contribute to the daily discussions. (I do consider asking a perceptive question about the material a meaningful contribution.)

**Honor Code:** Read and reread the section in the honor code regarding plagiarism. Be certain that you understand that paraphrases must be cited properly in the text of your paper (not just in the list of works cited) and make certain that you understand that paraphrasing requires that you use your own words and sentence structures. Simply changing a word or two or varying the sentence structure will not do: that is still plagiarism. I assume that these issues were covered in FS 102.

**Paper deadlines:** Papers are due at the beginning of the class hour on the day specified. Papers must be submitted in printed form. Electronic submissions are not acceptable. If you turn your paper in later in the class hour or later that day, your grade will be lowered a partial letter; in other words a B- will become a C+. If the paper is a full day late, the grade will be lowered a full letter grade. If the paper is two days late, then the grade will be lowered two letter grades. I do sometimes accept requests for extensions on papers, but to be fair to other students, I expect that you will act responsibly. That means I expect that you will see me before the paper is due to discuss the problem.

### **Graded Assignments**

Paper # 1 20%

Paper # 2 20%

One 50-minute Exam 10% (This will be in the form of short answers.)

Oral report **or** short paper on significance of an object or fact relating to Austen's time period 10%

Final exam (includes the take-home essays and in-class closed book portion) 30%

Class Participation 10%