ENG 470—The Novel

**Catalog Description**

A course studying the historical development, formal structures, and characteristic writers of the novel. Course content may focus on a particular author, period, or national literature, placing these in the context of the genre as a whole.

**Course Goals**

At the end of this semester, successful students will exhibit

familiarity with major examples of the novel and how these illustrate important literary concepts and historical contexts,

the ability to discuss knowledgeably novelistic form and theories about the novel,

understanding of the diversity of novels by writers of various ethnic, religious, and social background,

well-developed skills in close reading and critical thinking, and the oral and written expression of those ideas, and

the ability to write with precision, correct grammar (and MLA style), and academic integrity while making complex arguments.

**Required Materials:**

*Robinson Crusoe* by Daniel Defoe

*Joseph Andrews* by Henry Fielding

*Middlemarch* by George Eliot

*Hard Times* by Charles Dickens

*Lord Jim* by Joseph Conrad

*Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf

*The End of the Affair* by Graham Greene

*Midnight’s Children* by Salman Rushdie

*The Remains of the Day* by Kazuo Ishiguro

Course Reader (with brief selections of literary theory about the novel)

**Introduction to the Course**

*The Novel: Domesticity and Heroism*

The historical development of the novel can be thought of as a growth from two roots, *Robinson Crusoe* and *Clarissa*. One strand (the *Robinson Crusoe* strand) tells stories of adventure, heroism, and the individual will mastering the environment. The other (the *Clarissa* strand) focuses on domesticity, individual emotion, bourgeois identity, and the marriage plot. This course will use these two strands as the central heuristic structure for conceptualizing the history of the novel. From each historical period, we will read two characteristic novels—one from each strand, or examples that mix together the two traditions. Along the way, we will examine different narrative styles (such as realism, stream-of-consciousness, and metafiction) and the basic categories of the novel form (such as plot structure, narrative voice, characterization, and symbolism). Because the novel has been one of the most influential cultural vehicles for building identity over the past three centuries, we will also discuss theories of the novel as they relate to gender, class, race, and other identities.

**Classroom Procedure**

This course will be held seminar-style with a minimum of lecture. Students are expected to come prepared, having done the reading and any assigned background research of key concepts or events. Understanding of texts and underlying ideas will be arrived at through class discussion.

**Coursework**

Terms and Concepts: Students will look up and bring to class definitions or summaries of any key terms/ideas that I have asked them to look up for each day’s reading.

Presentations: Important historical events and artistic movements will be covered by student presentations. Each student will select one subject to present and make a 10-15 minute presentation on the day when we discuss that subject in class. A Works Cited page will be required.

Exams: There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. These exams will ask you to close read passages and make arguments linking multiple texts.

Research Paper: Students will write a 10-12 page research paper. This paper should make an argument about how one text treats a significant issue.

**Grades**

Research Paper 25%

Presentation 20%

Midterm Exam 15%

Final Exam 15%

Homework (Terms and Concepts) 15%

Participation 10%

**Course Outline**

*Eighteenth Century*

Week 1: Introduction to the course; Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

Week 2: Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe*

Week 3: Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*

Week 4: Fielding, *Joseph Andrews*

*Nineteenth Century*

Week 5: Eliot, *Middlemarch*

Week 6: Eliot, *Middlemarch*

Week 7: Eliot, *Middlemarch*

Week 8: Dickens, *Hard Times*

*Twentieth Century: Modernism*

Week 9: Conrad, *Lord Jim*

Week 10: Conrad, *Lord Jim*

Week 11: Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*

Week 12: Greene, *The End of the Affair*

*Twentieth Century: Postmodern and Post-colonial*

Week 13: Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

Week 14: Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

Week 15: Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

*Bibliography*

In addition to the many books and articles available through our library about the specific writers covered in this course, the following significant works of novel theory are recommended (available through our library and the EbscoHost e-book database):

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism*. Revised Ed. New York: Verso, 1991.

Auerbach, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2013.

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson. Austin: U of Texas P, 1982.

Bhabha, Homi. *The Location of Culture*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Eagleton, Terry. *The English Novel: An Introduction*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell, 2004.

Genette, Gerard. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Cornell UP, 1983.

Hoffman, Michael J., and Patrick D. Murphy, eds. *Essentials of the Theory of Fiction*. Duke UP: 2005.

Lukacs, Georg. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1971.

McKeon, Michael, ed. *Theory of the Novel: A Historical Approach*. Johns Hopkins UP, 2000.

Watt, Ian. *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding*. Berkeley: U of Califonia P, 1957.