

ENGL140-1  
Spring 2003  
TR 12:40-2:30  
DE 210

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## READING THE NOVEL



*"...there is great danger of enervating the mind by improper reading. For a young girl to indulge much in novel-reading is a very serious evil. Few of the popular novels of the day are fit to go into the hands of a young and imaginative girl. Apart from the false philosophy which they too often inculcate, they lift an inexperienced reader entirely above the real, from whence she has too little inclination to come down; and whenever she does come down, she is unhappy, because she finds none of the ideal perfections around her, with which her imagination has become filled, but is forever coming into rude contact with something that shocks her over-refined sensibilities."*

*-T.S. Arthur, Advice to Young Ladies on their Duties and Conduct in Life (1848)*

*"The intensely, stiflingly human quality of the novel is not to be avoided; the novel is sogged with humanity."*

*-E.M. Forster, Aspects of the Novel*

The success of the novel as a popular literary genre tends to obscure the fact that it is a fairly recent innovation. What distinguishes the novel from other literary forms, and why did this genre arise when it did? What are some of the chief concerns—*aesthetic, social, psychological*—of novelists from the eighteenth through the twentieth centuries? What roles have authors claimed for their novels at various times, and what roles have they actually played? How has the novel evolved from a nineteenth-century conduct manual's biggest nightmare to one of the most commonplace objects in today's society? We will approach such questions through the study of three pairs of novels. In considering the second of each pair as a reconception of the first, we will discuss how these retellings alter our readings of the original—and of the genre itself. Come prepared to engage in lively, dynamic class discussions that challenge and broaden your perceptions of this important genre.

### COURSE GOALS

*By the end of the quarter, I hope you will possess:*

- A heightened sense of the historical and literary dimensions of the genre;
- A sharpened ability to compare, contrast, and draw connections between literary texts;
- Enhanced close reading, writing, and speaking skills.

## COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS

The following titles are available at the Kalamazoo College Bookstore. If at all possible, please purchase these editions so that we are all on the same page.

Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (Norton 2<sup>nd</sup> edition)

Coetzee, *Foe* (Penguin)

Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)

Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (Seal)

Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harcourt)

Cunningham, *The Hours* (Picador)

18 3x5" index cards

## REQUIREMENTS

1. **Attendance and Participation** (20% of final grade). Unexcused absences are not acceptable. If you must miss a class, please contact me in advance. Poor attendance will adversely affect your final grade. Attendance and participation will also include the following:

- **The thoughtfulness of your responses and your overall engagement in our discussions.** We don't often think of listening as an element of participation, but a productive learning environment consists of participants who respect others' words even if they don't agree with them. I welcome debate that is balanced with mutual respect. Because everyone has a different comfort level in class discussions, I encourage you to speak with me if you are concerned about the participation requirement.

- **Completion of assigned readings before coming to class.** Many of the writing assignments will require your familiarity and engagement with these readings. If you don't come prepared, you do a disservice to yourself and the other students.

- **Quizzes** on the assigned reading will be given on a near-daily basis. At the end of the quarter, the student with the highest quiz score will be awarded a prize. If you miss a quiz because you are absent or arrive late to class, you cannot make that quiz up. You will take your quizzes on 3x5" index cards that you should purchase as soon as possible.

- Once a week, before either Tuesday's or Thursday's class, you will need to **post a comment to the class's Discussion Board**. These can be brief (1-2 paragraph) responses to my questions or other postings. See <http://www.kzoo.edu/discus/>.

- You will give a **Group Presentation** on themes, literary criticism, or background of one of the novels. A handout with detailed information about this presentation will be available early in the quarter.

2. **Essays** (40% of final grade). You will write two analytical essays in this course. The first will be a 4-5 page close reading of a text. The second will be a 5-8 page analysis that presents your own critical argument about two of the novels. It will incorporate some of the secondary sources that you use to support your argument. More detailed information about these essays will be provided in class.

3. **Take-home Midterm** (15% of final grade).

4. **Final Exam** (25% of final grade). There will be a comprehensive in-class exam at the end of the quarter. The final will include short answers and an essay, and it will ask you to compare and analyze texts.

## CLASS POLICIES

Punctual attendance is required. Unexcused absences are unacceptable. If you must miss a class, please contact me in advance. Poor attendance will adversely affect your final grade. Please make every effort to arrive to class on time; important announcements will often be made in the first few minutes of class. Absences due to serious illness, religious holidays, and personal emergencies (with appropriate documentation) will be excused.

Late work is not acceptable. Any assignment handed in after the class period in which it is due will be penalized for lateness (**reduced 1/3 of a letter grade each day it is late, including the day it is due**). If a personal emergency arises and you need an extension, speak to me as soon as possible about your situation. Please plan ahead for computer mishaps: always keep a back-up file of your work, and give yourself plenty of time to print.

I do not discuss grades over e-mail. Neither will I meet with a student to discuss the grade of a particular paper until 24 hours after that paper has been returned.

Plagiarism, a form of theft, is illegal. Plagiarism is defined as the submission of work that contains ideas not fully your own-ideas taken from publications, from other students, your professors, the Internet, etc. Remember that you are required to cite a source if you include a direct quotation and if you borrow an idea and put it in your own words. If you have questions about the fine line between being influenced by a text or person and plagiarizing its/his/her ideas, cite the source. For a more detailed description of plagiarism, as well as the correct form for citation of sources, see your handbook or ask me. All plagiarism cases will be referred to the Kalamazoo College Judicial System. The consequences of a proven case of plagiarism range from a failing grade to suspension or expulsion from Kalamazoo College.

I am committed to making this course accessible to all registered students. Any student with a disability who needs an accommodation or other assistance in this course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible.

## RESOURCES

●The Writing Center is located in the Academic Resource Center (321 Olds/Upton). It is open Sunday-Thursday from 8pm-11pm. Stop by or e-mail the Center for an individual appointment ([arcwrite@kzoo.edu](mailto:arcwrite@kzoo.edu)). It's best to come to an appointment with a specific list of questions or concerns about your paper; don't think of the writing tutors simply as proofreaders.

●*The Brief Holt Handbook* or a similar writing guide is essential for presenting a polished, stylistically sound paper. You can purchase these guides in the Kalamazoo College Bookstore.

## SCHEDULE

*Each piece should be read by the date on which it is listed. This schedule is subject to change.*

### Week One

T April 1 Introduction  
R April 3 *Robinson Crusoe* (1-52/start of Journal)

### Week Two

T April 8 *Robinson Crusoe* (53-111); Watt essay (Norton 288-306)  
R April 10 *Robinson Crusoe* (112-end); Woolf essay (Norton 283-287)  
Presentation #1

### Week Three

T April 15 *Foe* (Part I); Thesis Workshop  
R April 17 *Foe* (Part II)  
Presentation #2  
F April 18 Paper 1 due to my office by 5 p.m.

### Week Four

T April 22 *Foe* (to end)  
*Robinson Crusoe & Foe*  
R April 24 *Jane Eyre* (chap. 1-10)  
Presentation #3

### Week Five

T April 29 *Jane Eyre* (chap. 11-26) and Gilbert & Gubar essay (on reserve)  
R May 1 *Jane Eyre* (to end) and Spivak essay (on reserve)  
F May 2 Midterm due to my office by 5 p.m.

### Week Six

- T May 6 *Nervous Conditions* (Chapters 1-3)  
R May 8 *Nervous Conditions* (Chapters 4-6) and Buchan & Gregory article  
(on reserve)  
Presentation #4

### Week Seven

- T May 13 *Nervous Conditions* (to end) and Gorle essay (on reserve)  
R May 15 *Jane Eyre* and *Nervous Conditions*

### Week Eight

- T May 20 *Mrs. Dalloway* (3-64); Thesis Workshop  
R May 22 *Mrs. Dalloway* (64-112)  
Presentation #5  
F May 23 Paper 2 due to my office by 5 p.m.

### Week Nine

- T May 27 *Mrs. Dalloway* (to end)  
R May 29 *The Hours* (3-87)  
Presentation #6

### Week Ten

- T June 3 *The Hours* (to end)  
R June 5 *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Hours*  
Last Words  
M June 9 Final Exam (1-4 p.m.)

## STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Year at K \_\_\_\_\_  
Major (if declared) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

The one word that best describes you \_\_\_\_\_

Please list the primary hopes and/or expectations that you have for this course.

Please list any concerns you have about this course.

What can you contribute to this class?

Is there anything else that you think I should you know about you as a student?

Any other questions or comments? (Use reverse if necessary)

Thanks for your input! Please take the completed form with you to our scheduled meeting.