TEXTS

Robinson Crusoe. (1719). Daniel Defoe. 97804511530776
Tom Jones. (1749). Henry Fielding. 9780140436228
A Sentimental Journey & Other Writings. (1768). Laurence Sterne. 9780199537181
Humphry Clinker. (1771). Tobias Smollett. 9780141444129
Emma. (1815). Jane Austen. 978041439589 (as well as Handouts Various.)

These texts and only these texts are acceptable. Please do not ask about alternative texts.

COURSE DESCRIPTION & COURSE OBJECTIVES: By reading some “Representative” novels from the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Century, we might put to the test the claim that no matter the century a given novel was written, all such works attest to that quality so celebrated by no less a witness than Aristotle: Universality. Aristotle claims that

Poetry (literature) is more philosophical and a higher thing than history in that poetry tends rather to express the universal, history rather the particular fact. A universal is: The sort of thing that (in the circumstances) a certain kind of person will say or do either probably or necessarily, which in fact is the universal that poetry aims for (with the addition of names for the persons such as Oedipus or Pentheus); a particular, on the other hand is: What Alcibiades (a brilliant but unscrupulous Athenian statesman, fifth century B.C.) did or had done to him.

“We read,” as Harold Bloom says, “because we cannot know enough people” and to engage in what he calls “deep reading.” Bloom continues: “yet the strongest, most authentic motive for deep reading of the much-abused traditional cannon is the search for difficult pleasure” (my italics).

In her work, The Second Common Reader, Virginia Woolf notes that three stunningly diverse novelists, Sir Walter Scott, Jane Austen, and Thomas Love Peacock “lived through the same years, (late 18th into the early nineteenth century); they saw the same world; they are covered in the text books by the same stretch of literary history. It is in their perspective that they are different (my italics). If, then, it were granted us to grasp this firmly, for ourselves, the battle would end in victory....But here many difficulties (my italics) arise. For we have our own experience and prejudices, and it is therefore bound up with our own vanities and loves. It is impossible not to feel injured and insulted if tricks are played and our private harmony is upset....But the great writer goes on his way regardless of the rights of private property; by the sweat of his brow he brings order from the chaos; he plants his tree there, and his man here; he makes the figure of his deity remote or present as he wills. In masterpieces—books, that is, where the vision is clear and order has been achieved—he inflicts his own perspective upon us so severely that as often as not we suffer agonies—our vanity is injured because our own order is upset; we are afraid because the old supports are being wrenched from us; and we are bored—for what pleasure or amusement can be plucked from a brand new idea? Yet from anger, fear and boredom a rare and lasting delight is sometimes born.”

COURSE REQUIREMENTS. Students will be tested on all of the reading assignments. Students will write five ANALYTICAL ESSAYS, five "Query Letters," and write a FINAL EXAM. Students must attend class, turn in all written work, and strive to participate in class discussions. Students miss class at their own risk. Essays are due on the date assigned and should be in the form of a “hard copy.”

EVALUATION: TESTS count 10% of your grade; QUERIES count 10%; ESSAYS count 40%; the FINAL EXAM counts 40%. Essays will receive a letter grade. Tests will be graded numerically, the last digit to be dropped: a “10” on a test means you have made a “100” on the test. “Make-up work” does not exist. In lieu of same, your two lower test grades and your lowest essay grade will be dropped.

To receive this act of beneficence, you must, perforce, write the essay, (otherwise, there would nothing to drop!). If you need to contact me, do not do so telephonically. I will reply to emails.
AUGUST
22: INTRODUCTION.
26: RC 1-115 (con’d).

31: RC  **QUERY LETTER #1 DUE.**

SEPTEMBER
2: RC 233-311.

5: LABOR DAY. NO CLASSES.
7: RC (con’d).
9: RC  **ESSAY #1 DUE.**

14: TJ
16: TJ

21: TJ
23: TJ  **QUERY LETTER #2 DUE.**

26: TJ Books XIII-XVIII (Volumes V&VI).
28: TJ
30: TJ  **ESSAY #2 DUE.**

OCTOBER
5: ASJ
7: ASJ  **QUERY LETTER #3 DUE.**

10: FALL BREAK. NO CLASSES.
12: ASJ (Volume II).
14: ASJ
ESSAY #3 DUE.


QUERY LETTER #4 DUE.

NOVEMBER

ESSAY #4 DUE.

JANE AUSTEN: EMMA (1816): Volume I.

EMMA

EMMA: Volume II.

EMMA: QUERY LETTER #5 DUE.

EMMA: Volume III.

THANKSGIVING BREAK.

EMMA

DECEMBER

EMMA: ESSAY #5 DUE.

CODA. LAST DAY OF CLASSES.

THE FINAL EXAM WILL BE IN THIS ROOM ON WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 7TH FROM 8-10:30am.

(DESPITE WHAT THE FONT MIGHT SUGGEST, THIS SYLLABUS IS NOT HOLY WRIT.)

IT IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.