

## Jane Austen

ENL 6246 (section 2975)

Fall 2010

Instructor: Dr. Judith Page, Department of English, Turlington 4326, 392-6650, ext. 293  
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Office hours: Wednesdays 1-3pm in Ustler Hall 207; other times by appointment

*Also read again, and for the third time at least, Miss Austen's very finely written novel of Pride and Prejudice. That young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The Big Bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch, which renders ordinary commonplace things and characters interesting, from the truth of the description and sentiment, is denied to me.—Sir Walter Scott (journal entry, March 14, 1826)*

*You are very, very kind in your hints as to the sort of Composition which might recommend me at present, & I am fully sensible that an Historical Romance . . . might be much more to the purpose of Profit or Popularity, than such pictures of domestic Life in the Country Villages as I deal in—but I could no more write a Romance than an Epic Poem.-- I could not sit seriously down to write a serious Romance under any other motive than to save my Life; & if it were indispensable for me to keep it up & never relax into laughing at myself or other people, I am sure I should be hung before I had finished the first Chapter.—Jane Austen (letter to James Stanier Clarke, April 1, 1816)*

### **Course description**

Jane Austen lived from 1775 until 1817, but her critics and readers have not always placed her at home during these revolutionary times. Nor have they always recognized the powerful ways that she engages her world as she creates her own version of “ordinary life.” This course will focus on Austen’s writing (including juvenilia, letters, published novels, and uncompleted texts) in the context of the literature, culture, and politics of her time. We will read one novel, Maria Edgeworth’s *Belinda*, as a way of focusing our discussion of Austen’s similarities and differences from the larger context, including her development of a distinctive style. We will also discuss several recent film adaptations of Austen’s fiction, considering the ways that such films re-imagine the past that Austen’s novels represent.

**Required texts** available at Wild Iris Books (either at the store or on line): 802 W University Avenue, Gainesville, FL 32601, 352.375.7477

<http://wildirismarket.com/mall/categories/Departments/Textbooks/Fall-2010/ENL-6246-Page/>

Tomalin, *Jane Austen: A Life* (Vintage)

*Catharine and Other Writings* (Oxford)

*Sense and Sensibility* (Penguin)

*Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin)  
*Northanger Abbey, Lady Susan, The Watsons and Sanditon* (Oxford)  
*Mansfield Park* (Norton)  
*Emma* (Penguin)  
*Persuasion* (Penguin)  
*Belinda* (Oxford)

**Web resources:**

<http://www.rc.umd.edu>  
<http://www.pemberley.com/>  
<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line>  
<http://www.jasna.org/>  
<http://www.chawton.org/>  
<http://www.astoft.co.uk/austen/>  
<http://www.people.ku.edu/~delliott/Austenfilms.htm>  
<http://thehoarding.wordpress.com/>

**Reserve:**

I have placed several (mostly) recent critical books on Austen on reserve (ARES) in order to insure easy access to them. I'll mention many other titles throughout the semester. You will also have assignments to read certain portions of texts that are available electronically on our course reserves site. If you have not already registered for course reserves, please do so on the library Web site: <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/>

*The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen*, ed. Edward Copeland and Juliet McMaster (1997)  
Butler, Marilyn. *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (1975)  
Byrne, Paula. *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (2002)  
Deresiewicz, William. *Jane Austen and the Romantic Poets* (2004)  
Duckworth, Alistair. *The Improvement of the Estate* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1994)  
Heydt-Stevenson, Jill. *Austen's Unbecoming Conjunctions* (2005)  
Johnson, Claudia. *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel* (1988)  
Kaplan, Deborah. *Jane Austen among Women* (1992)  
Kirkham, Margaret. *Jane Austen: Feminism and Fiction* (1997)  
Le Faye, Deirdre. *Jane Austen's Letters* (1997) and *Jane Austen: The World of her Novels* (2002)  
Morgan, Susan. *In the Meantime: Character and Perception in Austen's Fiction* (1980)  
Pucci, Suzanne and James Thompson. *Jane Austen and Co.* (2003) [ebook]  
Spender, Dale. *Mothers of the Novel: 100 Good Women Writers before Jane Austen* (1986)  
Stewart, Maaja. *Domestic Realities and Imperial Fictions: Jane Austen's Novels in Eighteenth-Century Contexts* (1993)  
Sullaway, Alison. *Jane Austen and the Province of Womanhood* (1989)

Tave, Stuart. *Some Words of Jane Austen* (1973)  
Todd, Janet. *Jane Austen in Context* (2005)  
Troost, Linda and Sayre Greenfield. *Jane Austen in Hollywood* (2001)  
Tuite, Clara. *Romantic Austen* (2002)  
Waldron, Mary. *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time* (1999) [ebook]  
Wiltshire, John. *Jane Austen and the Body* (1992)

Not on reserve, but you should be familiar with these books:

Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979)  
Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984)  
Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction* (1987)  
Eve T. Bannet, *The Domestic Revolution* (2000)  
Anne K. Mellor, *Mothers of the Nation* (2002)

### **Requirements**

Regular class attendance and participation are required. All students are responsible for material covered in class and for any changes made to the syllabus when announced in class. All written work must be submitted (as hard copies) when due, unless you have made special arrangements with the instructor. Readings will consist of primary materials and selected critical and theoretical works. All students are expected to come prepared having read the material for the day; pace yourselves and plan accordingly. Please turn off all phones and other small electronic devices. You may use your laptop to take notes, but if you do so, do not connect to the internet.

### **--Seminar paper**

You will be required to write a **20-page paper** on any aspect of Austen that you find fascinating. All students will also present their preliminary research to the seminar as part of a **mock conference panel**. In addition, you will submit a **prospectus (or proposal)** for the paper one month before the final paper is due. In this prospectus, you should address the issues that you will consider in your paper. Some questions your prospectus should address include: What is the scope of this study? What are the main questions or issues that have drawn you to the topic? What is your working argument? How does your proposed work fit into the ongoing scholarly debate about the subject or related subjects? How do you envision organizing your paper? What problems or challenges do you anticipate?

### **--Austen Show and Tell**

Don't worry if this assignment sounds a bit silly: each seminar participant will make a 5-10 minute presentation to the seminar on any odd or interesting topic related to Austen. You may focus on some clips from a film version or a particularly ridiculous example of Austen-mania such as *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* or a passage from one of Austen's contemporaries that seems particularly Austen-like. You may bring in an object or artifact—or write a poem. You may use electronic media or just talk to us. Anything goes and everything will be interesting to the rest of us! There will be a sign up sheet for these presentations.

## Grading

Participation (including Show and Tell)	30%
Seminar paper	70%

## Academic Integrity

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines. The UF Honor Code reads:

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” For more information please refer to <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide>.

## Accommodations

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. For more information see <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc>.

## Schedule of Readings and Assignments

- August 23** Introduction: Read Tomalin’s *Jane Austen: A Life*; In class we will also view clips from *Miss Austen Regrets* and *Becoming Jane*—you might want to view one or both of these films on your own.
- August 30** Discussion of juvenilia: *Love and Friendship*, *The History of England*, and *Catharine, or The Bower*; also read Margaret Anne Doody, “The Short Fiction,” 84-99 in *The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen* and Jill Heydt-Stevenson, Introduction to *Austen’s Unbecoming Conjunctions*, “Did Jane Austen Really Mean *That?*” on Ares.
- Sept 6** **Labor Day: No class**
- Sept 13** Discussion of *Northanger Abbey*. Read Chapter 1 of Waldron’s *Jane Austen and the Fiction of her Time*, “The juvenilia, the early unfinished novels and ‘Northanger Abbey,’” 16-36 available as an ebook on Ares.
- Sept 20** Discussion of *Sense and Sensibility*.
- Sept 27** *Sense and Sensibility*: on your own (or as a group) view Ang Lee’s film *Sense and Sensibility* (there is one copy of the DVD on reserve). Be prepared to discuss the way that Ang Lee imagines the English landscape and the past in this film. discussion of film and of the screenplay; also read from *Jane Austen and Co.*, ed. Pucci and Thompson and on reserve an ebook, the following essays: Thompson, “How to Do Things with

Austen,” 13-32; Pucci, “The Return Home,” 133-55, and Dobie, “Gender and the Heritage Genre,” 247-59. On Ares, read “Piracy is Our Only Option: Postfeminist Intervention in *Sense and Sensibility*,” 148-58 of *Jane Austen in Hollywood* (Troost & Greenfield)

**Oct 4** Discussion of *Pride and Prejudice*; begin reading *Belinda*. Read Claudia Johnson’s *Pride and Prejudice and the Pursuit of Happiness*,” chapter 4 of *Jane Austen: Women, Politics, and the Novel*, 73-94, 176-78 for notes. Available electronically on Ares.

**Oct 11** Discussion of *Lady Susan* and *The Watsons*; keep reading *Belinda*. Read Laurie Kaplan’s “Lost in Austen and Generation Y-Janeites,” in *Persuasions-on-line*:  
<http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol30no2/kaplan.html>

**Discussion of the seminar paper assignment.**

**Oct 18** Discussion of Edgeworth’s *Belinda*. Also read Susan C. Greenfield’s ‘Abroad and at Home’: Sexual Ambiguity, Miscegenation, and Colonial Boundaries in Edgeworth’s *Belinda*,” *PMLA* 112:2 (March 1997) 214-28. Available electronically from the library’s database.

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**Oct 25** Read Inchbald’s *Lover’s Vows* (in the Norton) and consider the significance of the play in vol. I of *Mansfield Park*. Essays by Trilling, Duckworth, and Livak (in Norton Critical Ed.)

**Nov 1** Complete *Mansfield Park*, including supplementary material and critical essays by Auerbach, Said, and Lew (in Norton Critical Ed.)  
**Prospectus due in class.**

**Nov 8** Discussion of *Emma*. Read essays by Poovey, Johnson, and Wiltshire (in Norton Critical Ed.)

**Nov 15** Discussion of *Persuasion*.

**Nov 22** Discussion of *Sanditon*. Read Melissa Sodeman’s “Domestic Mobility in *Persuasion* and *Sanditon*,” *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 45:4 (Autumn 2005):787-812. Available electronically from the library’s database.

**Nov 29** **Conference paper presentations (8-page version of final paper)**

**Dec 6** **Conference paper presentations (8-page version of final paper)**

**Dec 15** **Complete 20-page papers due in my office by 10 am.**