

Professor Francus
English 386: *British Women Writers*
Woodburn 106
Spring 2019
Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00-11:15
Office: 227 Colson Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 1:30 – 2:30 and by appointment.
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Course Description:

The title of this course includes three categories that are challenging to assess individually, and daunting together: “British,” “women,” and “writers.” The project of English 386 is to explore these terms separately and in conjunction, in order to excavate the traditions of British women writers, the subjects that preoccupied them, and the material and social conditions that affected their writing. In the process, we will complicate the traditional canonical readings of British literature and history and develop a more elaborate and accurate vision of British history, gender politics, and literature as a cultural phenomenon.

Course Objectives:

- To identify and evaluate the major themes, topics, and issues of British women writers.
- To evaluate British women writers within their historical and cultural contexts, to assess the effect of society and culture on women’s writing.
- To learn about the status of women in British history, and especially the status of (and resistance to) British women writers.
- To apply and test critical and theoretical models, in order to develop critical thinking and analytical ability.
- To practice formal and stylistic conventions of literary criticism and analysis.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and analyze the emerging characteristics of a tradition of British women writers.
- Locate and evaluate a text in social, economic, political, and/or literary history.
- Develop a thesis about a literary text and support that thesis with textual evidence.
- Recognize and develop multiple analyses for a single literary text.
- Analyze a text in light of other literary and/or cultural texts.

English 386 fulfills the diversity requirement for the English major, and elective requirements for the English minor, and for the Women’s Studies major and minor.

Please note: English 101 and English 102 (or equivalents) are not prerequisites for English 386, but they will enable your success in this course.

January 8	Introduction
January 10	Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i>
January 15	Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i>
January 17	Kempe, selections
January 22	Elizabeth I, selections
January 24	Astell, <i>A Serious Proposal to the Ladies</i> , selections
January 29	Behn, <i>The Rover</i>
	Passage Analysis Due
January 31	Burney, <i>Evelina</i>
February 5	Burney, <i>Evelina</i>
February 7	Burney, <i>Evelina</i>
February 12	Burney, <i>Evelina</i>
February 14	Burney, <i>Evelina</i>
	Contemporary Review Analysis Due
February 19	Wollstonecraft, <i>The Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i> , selections
February 21	Austen, <i>Lady Susan</i>
February 26	Edgeworth, <i>Castle Rackrent</i>
February 28	Edgeworth, <i>Castle Rackrent</i> /Bronte, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
March 5	Bronte, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
March 7	Bronte, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
	Scholarship Analysis Due
March 11-15	Spring Break
March 19	In-Class Writing Workshop
	Research Proposal Due
March 21	Class Canceled
March 26	Bronte, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
March 28	Bronte, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
April 2	Rhys, <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>
April 4	Poetry selections from Rossetti and Barrett Browning
April 9	Gaskell, <i>North and South</i>
April 11	In-Class Writing Workshop
	Research Essay Draft Due
April 16	Gaskell, <i>North and South</i>
April 18	Gaskell, <i>North and South</i>
April 23	Churchill, <i>Top Girls</i>

April 25 Course Conclusions

April 29 **Research Essay Due via email**

The course schedule may change at the instructor's discretion.

Course Texts (on order at WVU Bookstore):

Austen, Jane. *Lady Susan/Watsons/Sanditon* (Penguin)
 Behn, Aphra. *The Rover and Other Plays* (Oxford)
 Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre* (Oxford)
 Burney, Frances. *Evelina* (Oxford)
 Churchill, Caryl. *Top Girls* (Methuen Bloomsbury)
 Edgeworth, Maria. *Castle Rackrent* (Oxford)
 Gaskell, Elizabeth. *North and South* (Penguin)
 Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton)
 Woolf, Virginia. *A Room of One's Own* (Mariner Press)

Course Requirements:

Passage Analysis (2-3 pages) – You will be given a choice of passages from Kempe, Elizabeth I and Astell. You will choose one passage and write a brief analysis in which you determine whether a feminist, Marxist, or psychoanalytic interpretation is the most illuminating, and state your reasoning. The goals of this assignment are to provide practice in close reading (including working with data in detail), which is a primary skill for literary analysis, and to practice in literary analysis through multiple critical lenses, which is a key in critical thinking.

Contemporary Review Analysis (2-3 pages) - You will be given a selection of contemporary reviews of Burney. You will be asked to choose one and write a brief essay in which you analyze the review in light of what the review reveals about Burney's audience and the state of book reviews in her time. The goals of this assignment are: to introduce you to archival materials; to excavate the historical context of some of our course texts (and provide you with a strategy to do so); and to illuminate issues of cultural circulation of British women writers.

Scholarship Analysis Due (3-4 pages) – You will be given a selection of academic articles on Wollstonecraft, Austen, and Edgeworth. Choose one and write a brief analysis of the article, focusing on the author's thesis, argument, evidence, and style. The goals of this analysis are: to introduce you to the conventions of published scholarship; to provide tools to assess scholarship; and to provide practice in the analysis of academic articles. Familiarity with scholarship will enable you to locate your research within the field, and to strengthen your own scholarship.

Research Proposal (1-2 pages) - You will be asked to submit a proposal for your final research essay, which should include your thesis, the parameters of your project, your postulated argument. The goals of this assignment include providing practice in choosing a topic (and setting parameters of analysis), and practicing developing a viable plan for a literary analysis for a conference length (8-10 page) research paper.

Research Essay Draft (4-5 pages) – You will be asked to submit a draft of your final research essay, which should include your thesis, and the basics of your argument. The goal of this assignment is to ensure that you are progressing on your final research paper in productive ways, and to provide your feedback on your work in progress to enhance your final essay.

Research Essay (8-10 pages) – A research paper on the work of a British woman writer of your choosing. The goals of this assignment include providing practice in choosing a topic (and setting parameters of analysis), thinking critically and analytically about British women writers, integrating research into your writing, and practicing writing skills according to the conventions of academic writing.

Grading:

Passage Analysis 20%
 Contemporary Review Analysis 20%
 Scholarship Analysis 25%
 Research Essay 35%

The Research Proposal and Research Essay Draft are required, but not graded.

Class participation will be taken into consideration for students with borderline grades. If a student's final grade falls between a B and a B+, and the student has been an active, insightful class participant, the student will receive a B+ for the course. This policy only holds for final grade calculations, and only raises the student's borderline grade to the next immediate grade level (so a B will not be raised to an A- or an A based on class participation).

Grading Criteria:

A (90-100) – Excellent work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner. The assignment has a clear, relevant thesis and organization, chooses compelling evidence to substantiate the analysis, and engages with the subject at hand in a thoughtful and thought-provoking manner. Written work requires no substantive or stylistic revisions.

B (80-89) – Good work; the assignment has been completed in a professional and timely manner. The assignment has a viable thesis and shows substantial engagement with the subject at hand, but the analysis is partially incomplete, involving weak evidence, or manifests some difficulty with organization. Written work requires substantive revisions, but few or no stylistic ones.

C (70-79) – Average work; the assignment has been completed, but not necessarily in a professional or timely manner. The assignment shows effort by the student, but the analysis is incomplete, includes inappropriate evidence (or a lack of evidence), or shows significant difficulties with organization. Written work requires significant substantive or stylistic revisions.

D (60-69) - Less than average work; the assignment has not been completed in a professional or timely manner. The assignment shows a lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment. Written work lacks analysis, evidence, and organization; extensive substantive and stylistic revisions are needed.

F (<59) – Inadequate work; the assignment has not been completed. Work, when submitted, shows a significant lack of effort on the part of the student, and a lack of engagement with the assignment and the subject matter of the course. Such work is marked by the absence of analysis, evidence, and organization; engagement with the course materials is necessary before extensive revisions are even possible.

Submission of Assignments:

1. Your papers should be typed (11- or 12-point font), with one-inch margins for comments. Papers should be double-spaced, stapled, paginated, and include your name.
2. Please keep a photocopy or a back-up disk of every assignment that you hand in.
3. Hand in assignments on time. Late submissions will receive a lower grade unless the student has a viable reason (such as illness, familial emergency) for his/her lateness and notifies me in advance. Your grade will be lowered a fraction for every day your work is late (ex. B to B- for one day late).
4. Do not summarize the plot of a work or rephrase your class notes in your assignments. The assignments do not require external research. They require knowledge of the course texts; clear, careful thinking; and writing.
5. If your software includes spellcheck and grammar check functions, please use them. And please use the Editing Guidelines and Stylesheet attached to this syllabus. They will help you hone your critical thinking and writing skills and strengthen your essays. Please keep in mind that in addition to yours truly, there are resources at the University to help with your writing, including the Writing Studio in Colson Hall.

Professional Responsibility:

1. Students who attend classes regularly tend to earn higher grades and have higher passing rates. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class. You are granted a maximum of three absences during the course of the semester before absenteeism affects your grade. If you accumulate more than seven absences (excused and unexcused), you will automatically fail the course.
2. It is your responsibility to contact me regarding your absences. If you disappear—if you miss class for three or four sessions in a row, or more—it is not my responsibility to find you. It is also your responsibility to make up missed work; see WVU's attendance policy:
<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/enrollmentandregistration/#enrollmenttext>.
3. If you send me an e-mail, I will respond within 24 or 48 hours. If I have not responded in that time, I have not received your posting. Please e-mail me again.
4. Please come to class on time. Do not leave in the middle of class; it is distracting and disrespectful. Do not schedule appointments (medical, advising, etc.) during class time.
5. Please turn off cell phones and other electronic devices during class, unless I request that you use them.
6. You will be expected to complete the reading before coming to class, and to bring the relevant text to class, since we will often be analyzing text in detail in class.
7. Should you need assistance during a time of difficulty or crisis, please contact the Office of Student Life in E. Moore Hall, 304-293-5811.

Academic Dishonesty:

West Virginia University's definition of academic dishonesty is available in the Undergraduate Catalog (<http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification/#definitionsandtypesofacademicpenalties>):

“The term “academic dishonesty” means plagiarism; cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects; and forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters. In addition to the definitions and examples provided below, [supplementary information about types and examples of academic dishonesty is available.](#)”

1. **“Plagiarism”** means the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, including, but not limited to, the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another individual.
2. **“Cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects”** include, but are not limited to, (i) giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or any other assignment for a grade; (ii) depending upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor or supervisor in quizzes, tests, examinations, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (iii) the acquisition or use, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff; and (iv) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.
3. **“Forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters”** includes, but is not limited to, (i) wrongfully altering, or causing to be altered, any records; (ii) use of University documents or instruments of identification with the intent to defraud; (iii) presenting false data or information or intentionally misrepresenting records; (iv) furnishing the results of research projects or experiments for the inclusion in another's work without proper citation; or (v) furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding; and (vi) providing false or misleading information to gain an academic advantage.

A student at West Virginia University who engages in academic dishonesty will be subject to one or more of the following academic penalties (see the previous section for full descriptions of those penalties that can also be imposed for failure to meet academic requirements or standards):

1. Course-level academic penalties. When academic dishonesty occurs within the context of a course (including individually supervised courses), the course instructor/coordinator has the option of imposing the following academic penalties, including but not limited to:
 1. Change in assignment or test grade.
 2. A lower final grade, including failure of a course.
 3. A final grade of unforgivable failure (UF). The UF penalty can be recommended by the course instructor/coordinator but must be reported to the appropriate office by the dean of the college or school offering the course after the time limit for a student appeal has expired or the appeal process has been completed, upholding the UF penalty. The student may repeat the course, but the undergraduate D/F repeat process will not be applied to the UF.
 4. Required repetition or revision of the assignment or test.
 5. Exclusion from further participation in class, including laboratories or clinical experiences.
 6. Other course resolutions within the discretion of the course instructor/coordinator.
2. Other academic penalties. If academic dishonesty occurs either in a course or within the context of program requirements, the academic penalties below may be imposed.

1. Required repetition or revision of a program requirement, or termination of the student's participation in specific program-related activities. When academic dishonesty occurs within the context of program requirements and expectations not associated with a specific course (including, but not limited to, completing qualifying exams, conducting research, performing duties associated with a graduate assistantship, performing required service or professional activities, etc.), the student's program director, supervisor, or chair of an appropriate committee may impose these or similar academic penalties.
2. Failure of a program requirement or failure to meet academic standards.
3. Academic probation or suspension at the program, college, or school level for failure to meet program requirements and academic standards.
4. Dismissal from a program, college, school, or the university."

WVU Academic Integrity Statement:

West Virginia University's Academic Integrity Statement is available at

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#10>:

"The integrity of the classes offered by any academic institution solidifies the foundation of its mission and cannot be sacrificed to expediency, ignorance, or blatant fraud. Therefore, instructors will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of their courses. For the detailed policy of West Virginia University regarding the definitions of acts considered to fall under academic dishonesty and possible ensuing sanctions, please see the West Virginia University [Academic Standards Policy](http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification). (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecreditstermsclassification). Should you have any questions about possibly improper research citations or references, or any other activity that may be interpreted as an attempt at academic dishonesty, please see your instructor before the assignment is due to discuss the matter."

Please note **WVU's Sale of Course Material Syllabus Statement** (<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#10>): "All course materials, including lectures, class notes, quizzes, exams, handouts, presentations, and other course materials provided to students for their courses are protected intellectual property. As such, the unauthorized purchase or sale of these materials may result in disciplinary sanctions under the [Student Conduct Code](https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/policies-and-procedures). (<https://studentconduct.wvu.edu/policies-and-procedures>)"

Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement:

West Virginia University's Student Evaluation of Instruction Statement is available at

<https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#10>:

"Effective teaching is a primary mission of West Virginia University. Student evaluation of instruction provides the university and the instructor with feedback about your experiences in the course for review and course improvement. Your participation in the evaluation of course instruction is both strongly encouraged and highly valued. Results are strictly confidential, anonymous, and not available to the instructor until after final grades are released by Admissions and Records. Information about how you can complete this evaluation will be provided by your instructor."

Inclusivity Statement:

West Virginia University's Inclusive Statement is available at <https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#10>:

“The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in your classes, please advise your instructors and make appropriate arrangements with [the Office of Accessibility Services](https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/). (<https://accessibilityservices.wvu.edu/>) More information is available at the [Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](https://diversity.wvu.edu/) (<https://diversity.wvu.edu/>) as well.”

Sexual Misconduct Statement:

West Virginia University's Sexual Misconduct Statement is available at <https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#10>:

“West Virginia University does not tolerate sexual misconduct, including harassment, stalking, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or relationship violence [[BOG Policy 44](#)]. It is important for you to know that there are resources available if you or someone you know needs assistance. You may speak to a member of university administration, faculty, or staff; keep in mind that they have an obligation to report the incident to the [Title IX Coordinator](https://titleix.wvu.edu/staff). (<https://titleix.wvu.edu/staff>)

If you want to speak to someone who is permitted to keep your disclosure confidential, please seek assistance from the [Carruth Center](#), 304-293-9355 or 304-293-4431 (24-hour hotline), and locally within the community at the [Rape and Domestic Violence Information Center](#) (RDVIC), 304-292-5100 or 304-292-4431 (24-hour hotline).”

Adverse Weather Statement:

West Virginia University's Adverse Weather Commitment is available at <https://tlcommons.wvu.edu/syllabus-policies-and-statements#10>:

“In the event of inclement or threatening weather, everyone should use his or her best judgment regarding travel to and from campus. Safety should be the main concern. If you cannot get to class because of adverse weather conditions, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible. Similarly, if your instructor(s) are unable to reach the class location, they will notify you of any cancellation or change as soon as possible, using agreed upon methods to prevent students from embarking on any unnecessary travel. If you cannot get to class because of weather conditions, instructors will make allowances relative to required attendance policies, as well as any scheduled tests, quizzes, or other assessments.”

Editing Checklist

1. Evaluate your thesis.
 - is your thesis clearly stated at the beginning of your essay?
 - is your thesis appropriate for the writing assignment?
 - does your thesis “make sense”?

2. Evaluate your argumentative strategy.
 - are you using logical and rhetorical strategies that build the most convincing case for your thesis? (and remember, you may use more than one in an essay; if you choose multiple strategies, make sure that they work together)
 - do you have the appropriate data to support your argument? (and if not, can you justify its absence?)
 - is the data cited properly? (check the content and the form of your notes)

3. Evaluate your essay structure.
 - does your essay structure lead the reader through your argument clearly?
 - does your essay structure work with/reinforce your argumentative strategy?
 - does your introduction suggest the structure of your argument? If so, does the body of your essay follow through on the structure suggested by the introduction?
 - are the transitions between the parts of your argument clear?
 - does the conclusion pull your argument together? (try to avoid repetitive, summary conclusions)

4. Evaluate your paragraph structure.
 - does each paragraph function as a unit of your argument? (i.e. is each paragraph unified in its purpose?)
 - is the topic sentence clear?
 - does the body of the paragraph follow through on the subject of the topic sentence?
 - are the transitions from paragraph to paragraph clear?

5. Evaluate your sentence structure.
 - is each sentence an independent unit of thought? (i.e. avoid repeating yourself in successive sentences)
 - does one sentence lead to the next? Are the transitions between sentences clear?
 - check the grammar of our sentences
 - make sure that every sentence has a subject and a verb (avoid fragments!)
 - check for subject-verb agreement
 - check for tense consistency
 - check that you are varying the grammar of your sentences (so that not every sentence begins with a prepositional phrase, for instance)

6. Check your spelling and punctuation.
 - and remember the distinctions between their/their/they're; it's/its; are/our; etc.

Some General Comments on Writing Style and Grammar

- a. Please note that “it’s” is a contraction for “it is” or “it has.” “Its” is a possessive, which makes life confusing, but it is important to learn this distinction.
- b. Please learn the distinctions between possessive, plural, and plural possessive. “Knight’s” is singular possessive; “knights” is plural; “Knights” is plural possessive.
- c. Try to avoid wordiness. Phrases like “The point the speaker is making is” or “What this means is that” are generally unnecessary. Such phrases are like long wind-ups before the pitch, and they often clog your prose.
- d. Try to avoid “talking” writing. What “sounds” right to a readerly ear does not necessarily read properly or grammatically to the eye. People do not speak grammatically (and sometimes without even punctuation). Therefore, writers should avoid writing as they speak (unless they are writing dialogue in fiction). Talking writing also frequently leads to tone drops and diction that generally is not appropriate for academic prose. (Ex. “she doesn’t stick up for herself”).
- e. Please avoid freestanding quotations. Every quotation should be integrated into a text, preferably with a lead-in phrase, rather than placed alone in the middle of a paragraph without any connection to anything around it.
- f. Try to avoid “we” and “you” in your essays. Both terms tend to include the reader in the argument without convincing the reader. (In other words, these terms usually signal strategies of collusion on the part of the writer).
- g. When referring to words as words, please use quotation marks. (I.e. if you are discussing the use of the word “man” in a particular passage, then “man” should be placed in quotation marks).
- h. “It” and “This” are weak sentence starters. Any noun in the previous sentence can serve as a referent for “it” – and if the previous sentence has a number of nouns in it, havoc results. “This” has a similar effect as the first word in a sentence, but if a noun is added after “This,” the problem of reference is usually solved.
- i. “Thing” is a very vague word. Try to find a specific noun whenever possible.
- j. “He himself” is an unnecessary and ungrammatical doubling. “He” will generally do.
- k. Try to avoid using “is” (or “was”) as a main verb. Choose a stronger, more precise word.