

English 337: Study of a Major Author  
T/Th: 4-5:15; 302 Brooks Hall  
Dr. John Lamb ([jlamb2@wvu.edu](mailto:jlamb2@wvu.edu))  
241 Colson Hall; (304) 293-9725  
Office Hours: Wednesday, 9-11 or by appointment

**Thomas Hardy (1840-1928)**  
**The Last of the Romantics; the First of the Moderns**

Thomas Hardy's literary career spanned nearly sixty years, from the publication of his first novel *Desperate Remedies* in 1871 to his final volume of poems *Winter Words* in 1928. Born when Queen Victoria was only in the third year of her reign, Hardy was witness to that age and its culture, to its transformation and decline, and to the beginnings of modernism and the modern world. Heir to the novels of Dickens and George Eliot, he charted the particular pressures of modernism felt on the provincial and rural world of Britain beset by rising industrialism, materialism, and agnosticism. Heir to the poetry of Tennyson and Browning he reshaped Victorian verse thematically and formally and helped to inaugurate 20th-century verse.

This course will allow the student to investigate and analyze:

- the creation of an imaginative literary landscape (Wessex) and the significance of place in literature;
- the importance of genre (novel, short-story, poetry, elegy), mode (pastoral, georgic, elegiac, melodramatic), and form (narrative and lyric);
- the development of a single author's oeuvre against the cultural and historical backdrop of the long 19<sup>th</sup> Century ( a sort of Brit. Lit. II as reflected in a single author);
- the shifting of literary, philosophical, and historical sensibilities as the Victorian age transformed into the modern.

Texts:<sup>1</sup>

*Selected Poetry*  
*Wessex Tales* (1888)  
*Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874)  
*The Return of the Native* (1878)  
*The Woodlanders* (1887)  
*Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891)

**Assignments:**

Overview:

Each student in this course will complete: **four** 2-3 page question and response papers—one for each of the novels read during the semester; three writing assignments which will track

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<sup>1</sup> All of these texts are published by Oxford University Press and are available in paperback. If you order your books from an online retailer, please order the OUP editions.

the student's ongoing engagement with and mastery of a single poem by Hardy followed by a 3-5 page analysis of that poem; and an essay revision of one of the response papers which must include some secondary research. All written work must be typed, in 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced, and with no more than 1 inch margins. When appropriate, written work should be properly documented using MLA style. **Late work will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made and approved by the instructor.** Only hardcopy versions of assignments and papers will be read and graded.

#### Response Papers:

During the semester you will complete **four**, 2-3 page (500-750 words) response papers, one on each of the novels on the syllabus. Each paper must begin with a question of your own devising: one that you feel will enhance, extend, and enrich your understanding of the novel as a whole. These response papers are meant to be exploratory in nature: you are writing **toward** an answer, and it is not necessary that you arrive at a definitive answer to your question. These papers will be graded on the quality and clarity of the question, the way you go about answering the question as well as the answer itself, and the extent to which your response gives evidence of a careful and engaged reading of the novel.

#### Revised Response Essay (with secondary research)

You must revise one of your response papers—turning it into a traditional thesis-driven essay. In your essay you are required to supplement/support your observations by taking into account how other scholars/critics have attempted to answer the same or a similar question as the one you posed in the original response paper (or a revised question based on the original). Your essay must include a works cited page. Your secondary research should come from peer-reviewed journals and/or books published by reputable presses.

#### Poetry Assignments and Paper:

During the semester you will complete **three** writing assignments focused on a single poem by Thomas Hardy. You can choose any poem from *Selected Poetry*, but it is best if you choose a poem we have not discussed in class on or before September 6<sup>th</sup>. In the first assignment you will be required to write a 250-375 word essay summary of the poem and the ideas, themes, and /or conflicts, etc. you feel the poem explores. This constitutes your initial thoughts about and impression of the poem. In the second assignment you will complete a number of tasks intended to encourage you to look more closely at the language and structure of the poem and then write a 250-375 word essay reassessment of the summary you provided for #1. In the final writing assignment you will perform a close reading of 4-8 lines of the poem itself. After you have completed these assignments you will write a 3-5 page essay analysis of the poem as whole. All of the writing assignments must be included with the essay when you turn it in on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

#### Participation:

Class participation—sharing and exploring your observations, thoughts, and ideas and responding to those of your fellow students—is one of the principle ways to enhance your skills of communication. The first element in creating an environment that fosters participation, collaboration, and the exchange of ideas is civility; the second is being open and responsive to the ideas and observations of your peers. Remember, while class participation is a communal

activity, its aim is not consensus. Class participation allows each of us the opportunity to refine and expand our interpretation of a novel, poem, or short story by taking into account the interpretations of our fellow readers.

Asking and answering questions, making observations about the text, pointing out, commenting on, and/or wrestling with specific passages in a text, acknowledging and responding to the diverse opinions and observations of the other members of the class are all excellent forms of participation.

**Grading System:** Your grade will be determined based on a 1000 pt. scale: response papers = 400 pts. (100 pts. each); final response essay with research = 200 pts.; poetry essay with writing assignment = 200 pts.; and class participation = 200 pts.

**Attendance Policy:** You are expected to keep up with the reading and to come to class prepared to discuss that reading. However, there is no “official” attendance policy for this class. Students who are absent will not receive any credit for participation on those days.

**Academic Integrity:** 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, I will enforce rigorous standards of academic integrity in all aspects and assignments of this course. 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 Student Conduct Code

[http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office\\_of\\_student\\_conduct/student\\_conduct\\_code](http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct/student_conduct_code).

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 me *before* the assignment is due to discuss the matter

**Inclusivity Statement:** 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.

I concur with that commitment and expect to maintain a positive learning environment. Any suggestions as to how to further such a positive and open environment in this class will be appreciated and given serious consideration.

If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please see <http://diversity.wvu.edu>

Tentative Schedule:

Aug. 16	Introduction
Aug. 21	Poems from <i>Wessex Poems in Selected Poems</i>
Aug. 23	<i>Far From the Madding Crowd</i> , Chapters I-VII

- Aug. 28 *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Chapters VIII-XXIX  
 Aug. 30 *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Chapters XXX-XLIII
- Sep. 4 *Far From the Madding Crowd*, Chapters XLIV-LVII  
**Response Paper #1**
- Sep. 6 Poems from *Poems of the Past and Present* in *SP*
- Sep. 11 *Poems of the Past and Present*, continued  
**Poetry Writing Assignment #1**
- Sep. 13 *The Return of the Native*, Book I
- Sep. 18 *The Return of the Native*, Books II and III  
 Sep. 20 *The Return of the Native*, Books IV and V
- Sep. 25 *The Return of the Native*, Book VI  
**Response Paper #2**
- Sep. 27 Poems from *Time's Laughingstocks* in *SP*
- Oct. 2 *Time's Laughingstocks*, continued  
**Poetry Writing Assignment #2**
- Oct. 4 *Wessex Tales*: "The Three Stangers," "A Tradition of Eighteen Hundred and Four," and "The Melancholy Hussar"
- Oct. 9 *Wessex Tales*: "The Withered Arm" and "Fellow-Townsman"  
 Oct. 11 *Wessex Tales*: "Interlopers at the Knap" and "The Distracted Preacher"
- Oct. 16 Poems from *Satires of Circumstance* in *SP* (exclusive of "Poems 1912-13")  
**Poetry Writing Assignment #3**
- Oct. 18 *The Woodlanders*, Chapters I-XII
- Oct. 23 *The Woodlanders*, Chapters XIII-XXV  
 Oct. 25 *The Woodlanders*, Chapters XXVI-XXXVII
- Oct. 30 *The Woodlanders*, Chapters XXXVIII-XLVIII  
**Response Paper #3**
- Nov. 1 *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Phase the First (I-XI)
- Nov. 6 No class; Election Day  
 Nov. 8 Reading Day
- Nov. 13 *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Phase the Second and Phase the Third (XII-XXIV)  
 Nov. 15 *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, Phase the Fourth and Phase the Fifth (XXV-XLIV)  
**Essay Analysis of Poem due**
- Nov. 20 Thanksgiving Recess  
 Nov. 22 Thanksgiving Recess

- Nov. 27      *Tess of the D'Ubervilles*, Phase the Sixth and Phase the Seventh (XLV-LIX)  
**Response paper #4**
- Nov. 29      "Poems 1912-13" from *Satires of Circumstance*
- Dec. 4        "Poems 1912-13," continued
- Dec. 6        "Poems 1912-13," continued
- Dec. 11      Revised Response Essay due