

**English 731:
Jane Austen and Visual Culture**

Required Texts: Penguin *Complete Novels of Jane Austen*
Jane Austen's *Letters*, ed. Deirdre le Faye
Jane Austen: A Life, Claire Tomalin
Women, Popular Culture, and the Eighteenth Century,
ed. Tiffany Potter

Course Description: Jane Austen is arguably the most accomplished of early British novelists. Each of her six courtship novels from *Northanger Abbey* to *Persuasion* knows exactly where it is going, even if none of her heroines could be so certain of their direction in life. We'll read six novels in their order of composition largely but not exclusively for their visual interest, and we'll also turn to Austen's letters and to Claire Tomalin's recent biography for information about her inner life. If numbers permit, the course will proceed as a seminar, with groups of students giving reports on assigned topics. There will be six longer quizzes for the purpose of assigning a mid-term grade, a comprehensive final examination, and a longer paper due the final week, all weighted equally.

Rationale: Jane Austen's six major novels all lend themselves to a visual reading. Most have been filmed within the last decade, and Emma Thompson's *Sense and Sensibility* and Robert Michell's *Persuasion* are remarkably successful adaptations, intelligent and popular. Because the novels have made a transition from text to film, graduate students are already prepared to look for a primary visual dimension. Beginning with *Northanger Abbey* and the picturesque vogue of the 1790s, this course will introduce students to the visual culture of the eighteenth century, including period topics like the landscape picturesque and portraiture, as well as to contemporary concepts like spatial form in literature and the gaze. The novels vary widely in their visual appeal. *Pride and Prejudice* is informed by period portraiture and the discourse of the gaze. *Persuasion* on the other hand closes off the visual field for the sake of a patriotic focus on the faithful word. Differences like these reflect the aesthetic separation of a verbal masculine sublime and a visual female beautiful, as well as a longstanding cultural split between a traditional civic humanism, on one hand, and an innovative Lockean liberalism on the other.

Learning objectives: Students will be able to explain how eighteenth-century aesthetics informs the visual dimension of Jane Austen's prose fiction. Students will learn how to analyze, evaluate, and employ interpretative approaches to the fiction of Jane Austen and will learn how to apply their reading of criticism and philosophy, especially the criticism of taste and philosophy of judgment, to the production of essays in criticism about literature.

Week One: *Pride and Prejudice*: Introduction to the Course. Twin concerns: (1) the popular visual culture of the later eighteenth century in Austen, such as the vogue for the landscape picturesque; and (2) Austen in contemporary popular visual culture, as when

Emma Woodhouse from *Emma* is adapted as a character type for Cher Horowitz in *Clueless*.

Week Two: Jan 26 *Pride and Prejudice*: the fine eyes motif and the visit to Pemberley as linked episodes; the intersection of emplotment and visual interest as a way of talking about the sister arts called the discourse of design. Report on Hanneke Grootenboer and eye miniatures, *Treasuring the Gaze* (Gary Lindeberg), esp. “Intimate Vision.”; and also Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head* (Jenessa Kenway), esp. “Likeness and Genre.”

Week Three: Feb 2 *Northanger Abbey*: Anne Radcliffe and the experience of reading the Gothic novel; Catherine Morland as an anti-type of Emily St. Aubert. The picturesque as a middle aesthetic space between the Burkean sublime and beautiful. Report on Ann Bermingham, *Landscape and Ideology* (Brandon Schneeberger), esp. “The Picturesque Decade.” Begin assembling a mixed list of working references for your term paper. It should include primary evidence, critical and scholarly studies of Austen and of popular visual culture, and should number about 18-20 items. Due Feb. 23.

Week Four: *Northanger Abbey*: The picturesque and a bi-gendered characterization; motifs of travel (male), fashion (female), books and reading (male and female), and the natural world (not gendered). Visual caricature as cultural analogue, and empiricism as realist corrective. Another way of talking about the sister arts, the discourse of the image. Report on Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature* (Iris Hattersley), esp. chaps. 3-4.

Week Five: *Sense and Sensibility*: Neoclassicism vs. Romanticism; the landscape picturesque as point of departure; principles of contrast and fictional didacticism. Report on William Gilpin’s *Remarks on Forest Scenery* (ECCO; 1791; Danielle Henry) as a way of situating Barton Cottage; and on the conversation piece and family or group portrait in Mario Praz, *Conversation Pieces* (Kevin Sebastian). Lied Library visit.

Week Six: *Sense and Sensibility*: The importance of second attachments and the cult of sensibility (see Raymond Williams’s definition of “Sensibility” in *Keywords* (<https://tavaana.org/sites/default/files/raymond-williams-keywords.pdf>)). Reports on Michel De Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (on reserve), esp. “Spatial Stories”; and on Joseph Frank, *The Idea of Spatial Form* (on reserve). Bibliographies due tonight. Begin putting together a 20-minute PowerPoint for presentation weeks 11 through 13.

Week Seven: *Mansfield Park*: The orphan and the amateur theatrical. Report on August von Kotzebue and Elizabeth Inchbald. We’ll stage some scenes from *Lovers’ Vows* to see why it may have been considered inappropriate.

Week Eight: *Mansfield Park*: Colonialism and its discontents; Sir Thomas Bertram’s holdings in Antigua. Report on Edward Said *Culture and Imperialism* (Larry Zunderweg), esp. “Jane Austen and Empire.”

Week Nine: *Emma*: The heroine as failed artist figure. Report on Greenfield and

Troost, *Jane Austen in Hollywood* (David Mowatt), esp. Devoney Looser, “Feminist Implications of the Silver Screen Austen”; and on Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (Paul Tatum), esp. chaps 1-2.

Week Ten: *Emma*: Playing cupid for the independent filmmaker in *Clueless*, and also for Hollywood. Report on Diane Sadoff, “Marketing Jane Austen at the Megaplex” (download via LION from *Novel 43* [2010], 1: 83-92; David Jurvelin).

Week Eleven: *Persuasion*: Contexts for constancy. Report on Justus Lipsius’ neo-Stoic concept of constancy, from his *De Constantia* (English trans. *On Constancy*, 1674) available on EBBO. The sublime once more; the fickle image and the faithful word in Roger Michell’s adaptation.

Week Twelve: *Persuasion*: Sound effects: the rhetoric of iconoclasm. Graduate student paper presentations.

Week Thirteen: Graduate student paper presentations.

Week Fourteen: Final Examination.

Academic Misconduct – Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the campus community; all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy and are encouraged when faced with choices to always take the ethical path. Students enrolling in UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s function as an educational institution.

An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another, from the Internet or any source, without proper citation of the sources. See the *Student Academic Misconduct Policy* (approved December 9, 2005) located at: <http://studentconduct.unlv.edu/misconduct/policy.html>.

Copyright – The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves **with** and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. **You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The university will neither protect nor defend you nor assume any responsibility for employee or student violations of fair use laws.** Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional information can be found at: <http://www.unlv.edu/provost/copyright>.

Disability Resource Center (DRC) – The UNLV Disability Resource Center (SSC-A 143, <http://drc.unlv.edu/>, 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. If you feel that you have a disability, please make an appointment with a Disabilities Specialist at the DRC to discuss what options may be available to you.

If you are registered with the UNLV Disability Resource Center, bring your Academic Accommodation Plan from the DRC to the instructor during office hours so that you may work together to develop strategies for implementing the accommodations to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. Any information you provide is private and will be treated as such. To maintain the confidentiality of your request, please do not approach the instructor in front of others to discuss your accommodation needs.

Religious Holidays Policy – Any student missing class quizzes, examinations, or any other class or lab work because of observance of religious holidays shall be given an opportunity during that semester to make up missed work. The make-up will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It shall be the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor no later than the end of the first instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for fall and spring courses (excepting modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for summer and modular courses, of his or her intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit:

<http://catalog.unlv.edu/content.php?catoid=6&navoid=531>.

Incomplete Grades - The grade of I – Incomplete – can be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session but for reason(s) beyond the student’s control, and acceptable to the instructor, cannot complete the last part of the course, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. The incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester for undergraduate courses. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the time indicated, a grade of F will be recorded and the GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete do not register for the course but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the I grade.

Tutoring and Coaching –The Academic Success Center (ASC) provides tutoring, academic success coaching and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, visit <http://www.unlv.edu/asc> or call 702-895- 3177. The ASC building is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of the SSC (ASC Coaching Spot). Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library and College of Engineering TEB second floor.

UNLV Writing Center – One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in CDC-3-301. Although walk-in consultations are sometimes available, students with appointments will receive priority assistance. Appointments may be made in person or by calling 702-895-3908. The

student's Rebel ID Card, a copy of the assignment (if possible), and two copies of any writing to be reviewed are requested for the consultation. More information can be found at: <http://writingcenter.unlv.edu/>

Rebelmail – By policy, faculty and staff should e-mail students' Rebelmail accounts only. Rebelmail is UNLV's official e-mail system for students. It is one of the primary ways students receive official university communication such as information about deadlines, major campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the university. Students' e-mail prefixes are listed on class rosters. The suffix is always [@unlv.nevada.edu](mailto:unlv.nevada.edu). **Emailing within WebCampus is acceptable.**

Final Examinations – The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur at the time and on the day specified in the final exam schedule. See the schedule at: <http://www.unlv.edu/registrar/calendars>.