SEDUCTION & PERSUASION IN BRITISH LITERARY HISTORY

Course Description:

This course is designed to give students a critical methodology with which to interpret a wide range of important works of British literature of the last 1200 years. Our course theme is “Seduction and Persuasion.” Throughout the semester, we will, naturally, be discussing seduction and persuasion in the most familiar and basic senses—for instance, by looking at a series of poems written to lovers—but we will also broaden the scope of those terms to examine desire, drive, longing, and possession on a collective scale as these concepts manifest in a nation’s literature and change over a long period time. In this way, the course will supply a number of critical lenses through which to interrogate selected readings from specific historical and social contexts.

General Course Objectives:

- Students will develop the ability to recognize and identify significant achievements in British literature.
- Students will understand the relevant social, historical, and aesthetic contexts of these literary works.
Students will appreciate the implications of theoretical and critical approaches to such literature.

Students will develop enhanced cultural awareness and analytical skills. Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and of the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.

Required Text:


(You may also use the 8th edition of this text, but please note that the pagination will be different in this edition, which may make finding and referring to specific passages more difficult. Perform a mental cost-benefit analysis. Searching for passages will take extra time and be a bit of a headache. The 8th ed. may be cheaper. If you’re an English major, you’ll probably want the most recent edition.)

Assignments & Requirements:

DAILY PARTICIPATION (20%) - You are expected to not only do the assigned reading, but also to come to class prepared to discuss said readings. This does not mean that you have to have everything “figured out” ahead of time; questions and clarifications are perfectly reasonable ways to contribute to class discussions, though you need to make an effort to share your opinions and insights too if you want higher than a “C” in this component of your grade. If I get the sense that you are not reading, I will incorporate reading quizzes into this component of your grade. Otherwise, you can expect in-class activities ranging from discussions to brief writing exercises or group work to be the bulk of this component of your grade. To that end, please bring any notes you took while reading to class and come prepared to take notes during class.
READING RESPONSES (20%) – At several points in the semester, you'll be asked to compose two-page papers that model different ways of engaging with close readings of texts.

MIDTERM (15%) – This is a short writing intensive, in-class exam covering the texts and concepts from the first half of the semester. A Blue Book is required.

FINAL EXAM (25%) – Your final, much like the midterm, will be a writing intensive, in-class exam covering all class readings, discussions, and lectures. While the exam will be cumulative, it will focus more on the materials covered post-midterm than it will the materials covered through the midterm. A Blue Book is required for this one, too. You will also be asked to “pitch” two texts for inclusion on the course syllabus in the future and two you'd remove to make way for your suggested inclusions. These pitches should be creative and thoughtful, reflecting careful consideration of the themes addressed in this course; they will be worth five percent of your exam grade.

FINAL PAPER (20%) – This paper should be a 5 to 6 page thesis driven, original essay on a topic related to the texts and themes of the class and developed from one of your shorter response papers. It should relate clearly and directly to the conversations we’ve been having about the material from class and should not utilize any reading guides, either in print or online (i.e. Shmoop, eNotes, Sparknotes). You'll need to incorporate at least two secondary sources into your argument, and they must both be scholarly, not popular sources.

GRADING SCALE

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F = 50 or LOWER
Course Policies:

ATTENDANCE: You are expected to attend class daily and be on time. I take roll by asking the class a specific “attendance question”; if you show up after I am done with roll you will be considered late. You may miss five classes with no questions asked. Six or more absences will result in failure of the course. Three late arrivals count as one absence. Leaving class early without permission also counts as an absence. If you are asked to leave class for any reason, that too will count as an absence. Should you miss a class at any point in the semester, it is your responsibility to talk to your peers to figure out what you missed.

DEADLINES AND SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments are to be submitted via Course Den. All late assignments will be graded down by 1/3 of a grade per day, not class period. An A paper becomes an A- if it is one day late, a B+ if it is two days late, etc. Work completed in class on days you’ve missed cannot be made up. This includes exams. Only emergency scenarios will inspire me to make individual accommodations for students regarding this policy.

ADDITIONAL HELP: I highly encourage you to visit the writing center for help on essays (from brainstorming to final revisions) and specific writing issues. Call them to set up an appointment at 678-839-6513, visit them in TLC 1201, or email them at writing@westga.edu. You can also make appointments to meet with me during my posted office hours or during my time in the writing center! I am approachable, I promise, and I want you to succeed!

ACADEMIC HONESTY: One of my goals is to help you approach academic work with confidence in your own perspective. Be secure in your own words, don’t rely too much on others’ ideas, and don’t plagiarize! Give credit when you use other people’s ideas (even when paraphrasing) and always quote when using someone else’s ideas. Changing the order of someone else’s words isn’t paraphrasing; it’s plagiarism. If you have any doubts about whether or not something is plagiarism, ask me ahead of time. Also, make sure you are aware of the English department’s Plagiarism policy: http://www.westga.edu/english/index_267.php.

ACCESSIBILITY: If you require any kind of accommodations in order to succeed in this course, please register at the Accessibility Services Office and let me know within the first two weeks of class. They are at 123 Row Hall, 678-839-6428, http://www.westga.edu/accessibility.
OTHER POLICIES:
http://www.westga.edu/assetsDept/vpaa/Common_Language_for_Course_Syllabi.pdf

Program Goals:

- Oral and written communication will be characterized by clarity, critical analysis, logic, coherence, persuasion, precision, and rhetorical awareness (Core Curriculum learning outcomes I)
- Cultural and Social Perspectives: Cultural and social perspective will be characterized by cultural awareness and an understanding of the complexity and dynamic nature of social/political/economic systems; human and institutional behavior, values, and belief systems; historical and spatial relationship; and, flexibility, open-mindedness, and tolerance (Core Curriculum learning outcomes III)
- Aesthetic Perspective: Aesthetic perspective will be characterized by critical appreciation of and ability to make informed aesthetic judgments about the arts of various cultures as media for human expression (Core Curriculum learning outcomes V)
- This course fulfills the Area C.2 requirement in the core for all students.
- Area C (Humanities/Arts) Learning Outcomes: 1. To develop the ability to recognize and identify achievements in literary, fine and performing arts; 2. To have an appreciation of the nature and achievements of the arts and humanities; and 3. To develop the ability to apply, understand, and appreciate the application of aesthetics criteria to "real world circumstances.
- This course fulfills an Area F requirement for English majors (all tracks) in the core.
- This course fulfills one of the core-level language arts requirements for Middle Grades Education majors.
- This course contributes to the program goal of equipping students with a foundation in literary history and the issues surrounding literary study in contemporary culture.
- This course broadens students’ desire and ability to take pleasure in their encounter with literature.
Tentative Course Schedule:

Please note that all readings need to be completed by the date they are listed on the syllabus and will be central to class activities and conversations occurring on that day. All readings are found in your anthology unless otherwise specified. Highlighted readings do not appear in the 8th edition.

This reading schedule is subject to change as is necessary for the success of the class. I will never add additional required reading or graded assignments. You will be notified of any changes in class and via Course Den.

Week 1: Introductions, Practice Reading the Theme
1/10 – Syllabus Overview and Historical Coverage
Read (in class): Carol Ann Duffy – “Warming Her Pearls”
1/12 – Read: Ian McEwan, “From Enduring Love” (pp. 2935-2947)

Week 2: Poems of Seduction, Sincere & Strange
1/17 – Read: Marlowe, “The Passionate Shepherd to his Love” (499); Shakespeare, Sonnet 130 (550); Donne, “The Flea” (669), “The Canonization” (673), “A Valediction Forbidding Mourning” (679); Marvell, “To His Coy Mistress” (751); Byron, “She Walks in Beauty” (1726); Keats, “Bright Star…” (1895)

Week 3: Chivalry and Decency in the Middle English Period
1/24 – Read: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (pp. 135-160, to FITT iii)
1/26 – Read: Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (pp. 160-188)
Week 4: Double Standards (15th & 16th Century Texts)
1/31 – Read: Geoffrey Chaucer, “The Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale” (pp. 230-257)
2/2 – Read: Headnote on Edmund Spenser and the Faerie Queene (pp. 399-404); The Faerie Queene, Book 2: Canto 12 (pp. 463-474)
Review: Prompts for Response Paper 1

Week 5: Manipulating the Elegy and the Epic (17th Century & Restoration Texts)
2/7 – Read: John Milton, “Lycidas” (pp. 780-786)
2/9 – Read: Alexander Pope, “The Rape of the Lock” (pp. 1226-1245)

Week 6: Modest Proposals in Prose
2/14 – Read: Jonathan Swift, “A Modest Proposal” (pp. 1199-1205)
2/16 – Read: Mary Wollstonecraft, “A Vindication of the Rights of Women” (pp. 1504-1529)

Week 7: Romantic Notions
2/21 – Read: William Wordsworth, “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey” and Preface to Lyrical Ballads (pp. 1536-1552)
Review: Prompts for Response Paper 2
2/23 – Read: Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Kubla Khan” (1680-81) and all selections from Biographia Literaria (pp. 1708-1720)

Week 8:
2/28 – Review for Midterm Exam
Due: Response Papers 1 & 2
3/2 – Midterm Exam

*3/2 – Last day to Withdraw with a grade of W from Full Term (non-eCore)-16 week courses.

Week 9: Temptation and Angst, Or, What the Victorians Were All About
3/7 – Read: Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market” (pp. 2211-2222)
3/9 – Read: Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “From In Memoriam A.H.H.” (pp. 2044-2088)

Week 10: Colonial Desire
3/14 – Read: Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (pp. 2404-2429)
3/16 – Read: Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness (pp. 2429-2465)
Week 11: Spring Break
3/21 – No Classes
3/23 – No Classes

Week 12: The Seductive Past vs. the Persuasive Present
   Review: Prompts for Response Paper 3
3/30 – Read: Virginia Woolf, “The Mark on the Wall” and “Modern Fiction” (pp. 2505-2515)

Week 13: Modern Love?
4/4 – Honors Day, No Classes
4/6 – Read: James Joyce, “The Dead” (pp. 2635-2664)

Week 14: Postmodernism’s Wanting to Believe/Want of Belief
4/11 – Read: T.S. Eliot, “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” (pp. 2709-2713)
   Due: Response Paper 3
4/13 – Read: Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot, Act 1 (pp. 2763-2793)

Week 15: Postcolonial Writers: Longing on a Large Scale
4/18 – Read: Samuel Beckett, Waiting for Godot, Act 2 (pp. 2793-2819)
4/20 – Read: J.M. Coetzee, “From Waiting for the Barbarians” (pp. 2909-2922)

4/19 – English Awards Day (Campus Center Ballroom)

Week 16: A Contemporary Example
4/25 – Read: Zadie Smith, “From NW”
4/27 – Review for Final Exam
   Due: Final Paper

5/9 – Final Exam (5:00 – 7:30 PM)