

## English 344

### Nineteenth-Century Fiction

**Fall 2023**

Professor Jason Rudy  
MWF 1:00-1:50pm  
Tawes 0221  
Email: [jrrudy@umd.edu](mailto:jrrudy@umd.edu)

Office: 2116 Tawes (Graduate Suite)  
Office hours: by appointment  
(request a time via Canvas)

This course will focus on six brilliant English-language novels published in the second half of the nineteenth century and drawn from around the world: England, Australia, India, South Africa, and the United States. The novels range from the highly canonical, like Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, to the lesser known but extraordinary, like Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's short but powerful *Rajmohan's Wife* and Frances Harper's *Iola Leroy*. Each raises questions about the place of women in a quickly changing society, along with accompanying concerns regarding race, colonial power, and the function of the novel itself. Broader topics to be addressed include realism, romance, nationalism, race and racial identity, feminism, sexuality, emigration, and empire.

Workload will include roughly 200 pages of reading per week; assignments include three short essays, a brief in-class presentation, regular contributions to a reading journal, and a final exam.



## Schedule of Meetings

❖ = Canvas Files

A = Artwork (via Canvas)

### Week 1 (August 28, 30, September 1): Introductory

We will introduce ourselves and begin work framing the nineteenth-century novel. What methods might we bring to reading these texts? What questions might we ask? Our study begins with the Australian writer Catherine Helen Spence, who later in life would become the first woman to run for political office in Australia.

- I. Introductions
- II. Catherine Helen Spence, *Clara Morison*: Vol. I, Preface + Chapters 1-2
- III. Virtual class: on British and Australian digitized periodicals (no reading for today)

### Week 2 (September 4, 6, and 8): Australian Bildungsroman

Spence's emigration narrative is part of a larger constellation of Australian fiction about women's opportunities for better life outside Great Britain. We will consider how Clara's story unfolds, and what it suggests about gender, work, and nineteenth-century emigration.

- I. No class: Labor Day holiday
- II. RJ1. Spence, *Clara Morison*: Vol. I, Chapters 3-13  
A: Gordon Syron, *Waiting* (2011)
- III. RJ2. Spence, *Clara Morison*: Vol. I, Chs 14-22  
A: Frederick McCubbin, *The Pioneer* (1904)



Outside Alice Springs, Australia (2019); photo by Jason Rudy

Scholarship: Katherine Bode, from *A World of Fiction* ❖

### Week 3 (September 11, 13, and 15): Imagined Australian Communities

Social historians have examined how newspapers and novels work to establish ideas of community: the sense that we're all part of a greater whole (an especially pertinent effect within emigrant communities). We'll use this as a frame for discussion as we conclude *Clara Morison*.

- I. RJ3. Spence, *Clara Morison*: Vol. 2, Chapters 1-12  
A: David Davies, *From a Distant Land* (1889)
- II. RJ4. Spence, *Clara Morison*: Vol. 2, Chapters 13-24 (complete)  
A: Michael Cook, *Invasion Kangaroo* (2018)
- III. Virtual class: discussion of Essay #1 assignment (no reading for today)

Scholarship: Kate Flint, "The Victorian Novel and its Readers" ❖

#### **Week 4 (September 18, 20, and 22): Indian Sensation**

*Rajmohan's Wife* (1864) is an Indian version of a popular midcentury British genre: sensation fiction. Chattopadhyay's plot sometimes strains credulity, but along the way we gain insight into Indian culture at a period of especially acute colonial tension.

- I. RJ5. Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay, *Rajmohan's Wife*: Chapters 1-8  
A: Sir Joseph Noel Paton, *In Memoriam* (1858)
- II. Chattopadhyay, *Rajmohan's Wife*: Chapters 9-14
- III. RJ6. Chattopadhyay, *Rajmohan's Wife*: completed  
A: Felice Beato, *Interior of the Sikanderbagh after the Slaughter of 2,000 Rebels* (1858)

Scholarship: Meenakshi Mukherjee, "*Rajmohan's Wife*: The First Indian English Novel" ❖

#### **Week 5 (September 25, 27, and 29): Provincial Life**

We begin George Eliot's masterpiece, considered by many the greatest English-language novel of the nineteenth century. Set in the fictional town of Middlemarch in the 1830s (about forty years before its publication), the novel opens with a host of characters whose lives will become increasingly intertwined. We will begin our examination of what *realism* means in this context.

- I. RJ7. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book One  
A: Oscar Gustave Rejlander, *The Two Ways of Life* (1857)
- II. RJ8. Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book Two  
A: Anonymous, *The Sleeping Ariadne* sculpture (n.d.)
- III. Virtual class: peer review for Essay #1

Scholarship: Ruth Yeazell, "The Novel as Dutch Painting" ❖

**Essay #1 due October 1 by midnight (on Spence or Chattopadhyay)**

#### **Week 6 (October 2, 4, and 6): Sympathetic Realism**

How do novels ask us to imagine the interiority of others? In what ways do they succeed or fail? The second quarter of *Middlemarch* continues building the world of Eliot's provincial town.

- I. RJ9. Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book Three
- II. RJ10. Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book Four  
A: Kennington Common photograph
- III. *Middlemarch* at the midpoint (no additional reading for today)  
A: J. J. J. Tissot, *Hide and Seek* (c. 1877)

Scholarship: Rae Greiner, "Thinking of Me Thinking of You: Sympathetic Realism" ❖

### Week 7 (October 9, 11, and 13): Hearing the Grass Grow

We will pay especial attention this week to Eliot's style, including her omniscient voice and her use of free indirect discourse.

- I. RJ11. Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book Five  
A: James McNeill Whistler, *Symphony in White, No. 1: The White Girl* (1862)
- II. RJ12. Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book Six  
A: Luke Fildes, *The Doctor* (1891)
- III. Virtual class: discussion of Essay #2 assignment (no reading for today)

Scholarship: Deirdre D'Albertis, "The Realist Novel" ❖

### Week 8 (October 16, 18, and 20): Life Lessons from *Middlemarch*

What does Eliot's novel have to teach its readers? What wisdom does it offer for living a good and meaningful life? These are questions we'll consider as we reach the conclusion of *Middlemarch* – and, with it, the first half of our semester together.

- I. RJ13. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book Seven  
A: William Powell Frith, *The Railway Station* (1862)
- II. RJ14. George Eliot, *Middlemarch*: Book Eight & Finale  
A: Annie Louisa Robinson Swynnerton, *Miss Elizabeth Williamson on a Pony* (1906)
- III. *Middlemarch* completed (no additional readings for today)

Scholarship: Rebecca Mead, "*Middlemarch* and Me: What George Eliot Teaches Us" ❖

### Week 9 (October 23, 25, and 27): Breaking Form

Olive Schreiner's *Story of an African Farm* (1883), a radical novel for its time, remains a powerful depiction of turn-of-the-century feminism. The novel's philosophical meditations mark its departure from Victorian realism. Schreiner's bold and innovative style – its breaking of traditional forms – anticipates fiction-writing of the twentieth century.

- I. RJ15. Olive Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm*: Part One, Chapters 1-8  
A: Edward Munch, *The Scream* (1893)
- II. RJ16. Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm*: through Part Two, Chapter 5  
A: Russell Honeyman, *My Inner Self (Story of an African Farm)* (2015)
- III. Virtual class: peer-reviewing Essay #2

Scholarship: Anne McClintock, "Olive Schreiner: The Limits of Colonial Feminism" ❖



Leamington Spa, England (2018);  
photo by Jason Rudy

**Essay #2 due by midnight October 29 (on *Middlemarch*)**  
**Midterm self-assessment due by October 30 by midnight**

### **Week 10 (October 30, November 1 and 3): In Extremis**

After finishing Schreiner's novel, we turn to Frances Harper, among the most significant American novelists of the nineteenth century. A Black woman born free in Baltimore, Harper was famous in her day as an abolitionist, poet, and lecturer. *Iola Leroy* tells the story of a young woman raised to believe she is white, who is then enslaved after learning of her Black heritage.

- I. RJ17. Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm*: completed  
A: Phoebe Anna Traquair, *Progress of the Soul II* (1895)
- II. RJ18. Frances E. W. Harper, *Iola Leroy*: Chapters 1-11  
A: Edward Mitchell Bannister, *The Old Homestead*
- III. On African American periodicals (no reading for today)

Scholarship: Koritha Mitchell, "Introduction" to *Iola Leroy* (in the Broadview edition and online) ❖



Cape Town, South Africa (2011); photo by Jason Rudy

### **Week 11 (November 6, 8, and 10): Rallying Cries**

We will consider Harper's novel, its poetry, and its negotiation of race and gender in the years surrounding the American Civil War.

- I. RJ19. Harper, *Iola Leroy*: Chapters 12-22  
A: Sarah Mapps Douglass, *A Flower* (1833)
- II. "Harper Studies in 2020" (via Canvas)
- III. "Harper in the Transatlantic Context" (via Canvas)

Scholarship: Hazel Carby, "'Of Lasting Service For the Race': The Work of Frances Ellen Watkins Harper" ❖

### **Week 12 (November 13, 15, and 17): Transatlantic Thinking**

After completing our discussion of Harper in the context of the nineteenth-century transatlantic, we will turn to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Those of you familiar with the novel will hopefully read it with fresh eyes after this semester's explorations of nineteenth-century fiction.

- I. RJ20. Discussion of "Harper Studies in 2020" and "Harper in the Transatlantic Context"
- II. RJ21. Harper, *Iola Leroy*: completed  
A: Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave* (1847)
- III. RJ22. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*: Chapters 1-7  
A: Richard Redgrave, *The Governess* (1844)

### **Week 13 (November 20): Thanksgiving Week**

Enjoy some time away from class; consider drafting your final essay to make the end-of-term easier!

- I. RJ23. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*: Chapters 8-15  
A: J. M. W. Turner, *The Slave Ship* (1840)

**Enjoy the Thanksgiving holiday (no class Wednesday and Friday)!**

### **Week 14 (November 27 and 29, December 1): Gothic Romance**

We'll consider the genres of *Jane Eyre*, from gothic to romance to realism, and situate Brontë's style in relation to the other novels we've read this semester.

- I. Virtual class: discussion of Essay #3 assignment (no reading for today)
- II. RJ24. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*: Chapters 16-22  
A: John Everett Millais, *Ophelia* (1851-52)
- III. *Jane Eyre* close reading: no extra reading for today

Scholarship: Gayatri Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism" ❖

### **Week 15 (December 4, 6, and 8): Happier Endings?**

As the semester reaches its close, we'll think about narrative endings – of both Brontë's novel and, more broadly, the narratives available to nineteenth-century protagonists.

- I. RJ25. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*: Chapters 23-29  
A: Shanon Shapiro, *Jane's Reflection* (2013)
- II. RJ26. Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, concluded  
A: Paula Rigo, *Come to Me* (2001-2002)
- III. Virtual class: peer-reviewing Essay #3

Scholarship: Julia Soon-Joo Lee, "The (Slave) Narrative of 'Jane Eyre'" ❖

**Essay #3 due December 10 by midnight (on Schreiner, Harper, or Brontë)**

### **Week 16 (December 11): Review**

On our final day we will review the semester and discuss the final exam. Sample questions will be shared, and we will strategize together for how to study and do well.

**Final Exam December 14, 1:30pm-3:30pm**

## Course Details

### Required Books

The following six novels are the core materials for this course. Spence's novel is available as a PDF via Canvas Files. The Chattopadhyay novel may be purchased, but there's also digital edition available in Files. The remaining four novels must be brought to class as physical objects. Copies are available to borrow at McKeldin library if you wish to avoid purchasing your own. Alternate editions are acceptable so long as you have the full text. Please come speak with me if you are having trouble locating a physical copy of these books. Kindle and other eReaders are acceptable, as are tablets, so long as they are used without accessing the internet (no web browsing at any time during class). Phones are not acceptable for use as an eReader.

Catherine Helen Spence, *Clara Morison* (Digital edition via Files)  
Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, *Rajmohan's Wife* (Penguin: 9780143067436)  
George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Oxford: 9780198815518)  
Olive Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm* (Oxford: 9780199538010)  
Frances Harper, *Iola Leroy* (Broadview: 9781554813858)  
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin: 9780141441146)

Secondary materials – scholarly essays – are available in Canvas under “Files.” *These essays are optional reading, provided for those who wish to learn more about scholarly contexts.* You do not need to print these works (you are not expected to have them in class). These materials will generally be introduced in class discussion.

### Grading (out of 500 possible points)

Essays: 200 points (40%)  
Artwork Presentation: 25 points (5%)  
Professionalism: 75 points (15%)  
Reading Journal: 100 points (20%)  
Final Exam: 100 points (20%)

A	469-500 points	B-	397-416 points	D+	334-348 points
A-	449-468 points	C+	384-396 points	D	319-333 points
B+	434-448 points	C	369-383 points	D-	299-318 points
B	417-433 points	C-	349-368 points	F	0-298 points

### Writing Assignments

You will write three short essays, each between 1000 and 1100 words in length. Essay 1 will count for 60 points, and Essays 2 and 3 will count for 70 points each. Specific assignments to be announced on Canvas and discussed in class. We will peer-review each essay as a class.

Professor Rudy will happily meet with you to discuss drafts of your essays. This can happen before you've started writing (if you'd like to brainstorm topics) or after you have a draft (if you'd like specific feedback on your work in advance of submitting it). These meetings must be arranged in advance, and should not come at the very last minute.

## Submitting Your Work

Essays are to be submitted via Canvas as a Google Doc link (access via the Assignments page). Late papers will be downgraded by 25% for each 24-hour period following the deadline. All papers are due by 11:59pm on the due date.

For students unable to turn in essays because of illness or dire emergency, a written note is required, and essays must be turned in as soon as possible.

## Artwork Presentation

Each student will sign up for a three-minute presentation on a work of art. The aim of the presentation will be to introduce the work of art to the class: who created it, how we might understand the composition, and how we might begin to understand its meanings. You may use notes for your presentation, but you should not read from a script. Practice your presentation to make sure you stay within the three-minute window. See rubric for assessment details.

- Wikipedia cannot be the primary source for your knowledge and thoughts. I expect you to explore other sources (a minimum of 3 in all), even if the painting and/or artist is not well known. One source must be a peer-reviewed essay located via the MLA International Bibliography (found through McKeldin Library's website). If you need help with this research, please come ask for it!
- Important: on the day of your presentation, *you will submit on Canvas* (on the assignment page for the Artwork Presentation) *a bibliography of works consulted*. This bibliography must include at least one scholarly source from a peer-reviewed journal. Please remember to upload your bibliography by the end of the day on which you give your presentation.
- See Canvas assignment page for a detailed rubric and construct your presentation accordingly.
- This is an assignment that invites creativity: please speak to the ways the artwork inspires you, gest you thinking, helps you think in new ways about the novel we're reading, etc. Take the presentation in the direction you feel most inspired to pursue.

## Reading Journal

Before most classes you will post to our online Reading Journal. These short entries, just one paragraph in length (about 80-100 words), will usually entail pointing to a specific moment from the reading that you found compelling, and offering an interpretation of that moment. Some entries will ask you to share contextual material relevant to the novel we're reading: for example, a newspaper article from the time. The Reading Journal will be a collaborative space, where you'll see your classmates' posts and have the option of responding to them. Consider the Reading Journal an opportunity to engage with classmates in more complex ways than are generally available in the classroom. The links to all Reading Journal assignments will be available on the homepage of our course Canvas site.

## Excused Absences

Students will on *rare* occasion miss class for good reasons. It is your responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended excused absences, including religious observations, in advance of those absences. To do so, use the "excused absence" form available on the course's main Canvas page. Any student missing more than 3 classes in the semester should speak directly with Professor Rudy.



## Learning Outcomes

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- understand the key features of the nineteenth-century novel in English;
- think critically about the intersection of English-language novels with historical and cultural phenomena of the later nineteenth century;
- interpret literary texts using the skills of close reading; and
- communicate these ideas both orally and in writing.

## Final Exam

The final exam will be in-person on campus and will ask you to put in conversation the novels from the syllabus, drawing on the major themes and ideas of the semester. *For those of you who have read the novels and attended class discussions, the exam will not be difficult.* On the final day of class we will discuss the exam and strategies for doing well on it.

## Course Related Policies

I will adhere to University of Maryland policies regarding excused absences, registered disabilities, incidents of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, and student conduct. Please refer to this website for more detailed information: <https://www.ugst.umd.edu/courserelatedpolicies.html>

*Really, please do click over and review the university's guidelines.* Our course policies will rigorously follow those outlined on the linked page.

ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence resources should not be used for this class, and *doing so will be considered an act of academic dishonesty.*

## Communication

My office hours will take place in person or via Zoom. Please use the Calendly link to make an appointment, or write to me directly if none of the available times work with your schedule. Though I will receive email at [jrrudy@umd.edu](mailto:jrrudy@umd.edu), your messages are more likely to be answered in a timely fashion if you instead use the Canvas messaging platform.

Each student will meet one-on-one with Professor Rudy following submission of the first essay, to discuss the class and to strategize for future writing assignments.

## Professionalism

Expectations are high that you will conduct yourselves professionally in all aspects of this course, taking care of responsibilities independently and contributing meaningfully to the overall project of the class. This includes but is not limited to: turning in work on time; arriving to class punctually; participating in class discussion in a way that demonstrates engagement with the materials and respect for everyone in the classroom; bringing the required books to class discussion; taking notes; practicing active listening while

others are speaking (paying attention and generally looking interested); limiting disruptions to class by using the restroom in advance, or at a minimum when necessary; keeping electronic communications with Professor Rudy professional in their composition and tone, not informal like a text to a friend; and keeping mobile phones silenced and all digital interfaces (phones, computers, smart watches) out of sight for the duration of class – with the exception of permitted eReaders. *Note that use of cellphones is not permitted in class* (you may not use them to reference the course materials). For more details, please see the rubric on the Canvas assignment page under Professionalism.

Attending class is foundational to your professional engagement as a student. You will receive an ungraded midterm Professionalism assessment, to give you a sense of how you're doing in class – and to give you the opportunity to improve if necessary in the second half of the semester. This midterm assessment will not count toward your actual grade.

If you cannot make a class discussion, or if you're having trouble of any sort with an assignment deadline, please notify Professor Rudy *in advance* so that alternate plans may be made. Please also contact Professor Rudy if any of the above items are a cause for concern: for example, if you have a registered disability that requires the use of technology in the classroom.

### **Diversity and Inclusion**

UMD English considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be critical to its educational mission and expects every member of the community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture in the classroom, work environment, and at campus events. It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and learning needs be well served by this course and that the diversity students bring to class be viewed as a resource and strength. Dimensions of diversity include intersections of sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, intellectual and physical ability, primary language, faith and non-faith perspectives, income, political affiliation, marital or family status, education, and any other legally protected class. I endeavor to present materials and activities that foster a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Please let me know of ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or other students or student groups.

If you experience issues related to diversity and inclusion in your English courses or as part of the English department community—or if you have suggestions for improving diversity, inclusion, equity, and access in the department—please contact our Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee at: [englishidea@umd.edu](mailto:englishidea@umd.edu).

### **Health**

I am committed to making our classroom a safe learning environment. In our post-Covid moment, I ask that you remain diligent with your health. If you're running a fever or otherwise feeling unwell, please stay home from class. If you have a minor health issue, please consider wearing a KN95 mask or similar to help protect the rest of us from infection.

## Special Needs

If you have a registered disability that will require accommodation, please speak with Professor Rudy as soon as possible. If you have a disability and have not yet registered it with Disability Support Services in the Shoemaker Building (4-7682 or 5-7683 TTY/TDD), you should do so immediately.

## Plagiarism

I will adhere strictly to University policy with respect to plagiarism. Students who plagiarize will be referred directly to the University's Honor Council. Follow MLA guidelines for citation when quoting passages and when paraphrasing ideas. Do not hesitate to speak with me if you have any questions regarding this matter. Please also keep in mind:

- Any source consulted must be included in a "works consulted" list at the end of your written work, including your Reading Journal contributions. If you consult Wikipedia or any other online site, you must make note of it, even if you have not quoted the site directly.
- Paraphrased ideas must be cited, even if you have not quoted directly from the source.
- Most of what can be found easily online will not qualify as a reputable source for an academic essay. If you have questions about the validity of a source, please ask me directly.

The University Code of Academic Integrity may be found here:

<http://www.president.umd.edu/policies/docs/III-100A.pdf>

## Caveat Participes

This course contains materials on sensitive subjects, including issues having to do with race, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, and gender. Some course materials detail acts of violence that may be disturbing. Please come speak with me if you have particular concerns, or if you would like more details in advance of the semester.