

English 329 Selected Figures of British Literature: Charles Dickens

Fall 2012, Professor: Jan Susina

Class Meets: Tuesday & Thursday 2:00 a.m.—3:15 p.m.

Meeting Place: STV 348

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 12:30—1:30 p.m.

Tentative Syllabus

Aug. 21 Introduction and Review of the Course

Aug. 23 Joshua Hammer's "Mad for Dickens" *Smithsonian* Feb. 2012 70-83 (handout)
Dickens "The Autobiographical Fragment" in Backgrounds section of *David Copperfield*: 766-772 or John Forster's *The Life of Charles Dickens*, Book 1, Chapter 2: 11-19 (web site), Simon Callow's Video Tour of Dickens's London (website), Dickens World Theme Park (website).

Aug. 28 Dickens as Journalist: "The Streets--Morning," "The Streets--Night," "The Pawnbroker's Shop," "A Visit to Newgate," "Night Walks," "Nurse's Stories," "Where We Stopped Growing," and "Wapping Warehouse." (handout)

Aug. 30 George Orwell's "Dickens," Edmund Wilson's "Dickens: The Two Scrooges" (handouts)
****Deadline for Film Paper****

Sept. 4 *Oliver Twist*

Sept 6 *Oliver Twist*

Sept. 11 *Oliver Twist*

Sept. 13 *Oliver Twist*
**** Film Paper Due****

Sept. 18 *David Copperfield*

Sept. 20 *David Copperfield*

Sept. 25 *David Copperfield*

Sept. 27 *David Copperfield*

Oct. 2 Tour of Dickens's Exhibition Special Collections, 6th Floor Milner Library

****Proposal for Research Paper Due****

Oct. 4 *Hard Times*

Oct. 9 *Hard Times*

Oct. 11 *Hard Times*

Oct. 16 **Midterm Exam**

Oct. 18 *Great Expectations*

Oct. 23 *Great Expectations*

Oct. 25 *Great Expectations*

Oct. 30 *Great Expectations*

Nov. 1 *Our Mutual Friend*

Nov. 6 *Our Mutual Friend*

Nov. 8 *Our Mutual Friend*

Nov. 13 *Our Mutual Friend*

Nov. 15 *Our Mutual Friend*

****Critical Paper Due****

Nov. 20 no class -- Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 22 no class -- Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 27 Dickens at the Movies: Film Adaptations of Dickens's Novels

Nov. 29 *A Christmas Carol*

Dec. 4 *A Christmas Carol*

Dec. 6 Dickens in 2012:

Jay Clayton's "Is Pip Postmodern? Or Dickens at the Turn of the Millennium"
(handout)

Dec. 10-14 **Final Exam** (TBA).

Goals of Course:

Since this year is the two hundredth anniversary of birth of Charles Dickens, it is the ideal time to study some of the major novels written by one of the most popular and influential of all English authors. This course will examine the relationships between Dickens's fiction and the social, political, and cultural issues of the Victorian Era. Dickens became one of the most successful novelists of the Victorian Age who was able to bridge the gap between popular entertainer and the serious novelist and social critic. The course will examine Dickens's social criticism and his critiques of industrialization, the rise of the Victorian city, recognition and attempts to improve the condition of the urban poor, his attitude toward Empire and imperialism, the role of the child in the nineteenth century, his fascination with crime and criminals, as well as the changing status of women in the second half of the nineteenth century. Since the popularity of Dickens's novels transcends his own period, the course will also look at some of the many film adaptations of his novels and address contemporary writers and filmmakers have re-appropriated/revised Dickens's novels. Students will read six of Dickens major novels: *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Hard Times*, *Great Expectations*, *Our Mutual Friend* and *A Christmas Carol*. In addition to the novels, the class will also read a selection of Dickens's nonfiction as well as critical texts on Dickens's work.

Required Texts:

Charles Dickens. *Oliver Twist*. ed. Fred Kaplan. Norton Critical Edition.
 Charles Dickens. *David Copperfield*. ed. Jerome Buckley. Norton Critical Edition.
 Charles Dickens. *Hard Times*. ed. Fred Kaplan. Norton Critical Edition.
 Charles Dickens. *Great Expectations*. Ed. Edgar Rosenberg. Norton Critical Edition.
 Charles Dickens. *Our Mutual Friend*. Ed. Adrian Poole. Penguin Classics
 Charles Dickens. *A Christmas Carol*. Ed. Richard Kelly. Broadview Critical Edition.

Recommended Text:

Joseph Gibaldi. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, Seventh Edition (MLA)

Writing Assignments:

Each undergraduate student will write two critical papers: an analysis of a film based on a Dickens's novel (3-5 pages, typed, double spaced paper) and a longer critical analysis (10-12 pages, typed doubled spaced) on Dickens's fiction. Graduate students will write on critical paper on a Dickens's film (3-5 pages) and a longer critical paper (12-15 pages) on Dickens's fiction Use the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* for appropriate citation in the critical papers. The critical paper on the adolescent novel need a minimum of eight secondary sources. Only half of the secondary sources can be electronic. The paper needs to be original work and written specifically for this course.

Plagiarism/Cheating:

Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses and may be punished by failure on a paper, exam, or project and in some cases may result in failure in the course and/or expulsion from the Illinois State University. Please read the Illinois State University policy in the *Undergraduate Catalog* or the *Graduate Catalog* under "Academic Integrity." Also review chapter 2 "Plagiarism and Academic Integrity" in the *MLA Handbook*. All work submitted for grading in this class needs to be your own original work created for this course.

Class Discussion:

Class attendance is important and is intended to be a valuable experience. All students are asked to read the material prior to class and come prepared to discuss the assignments in class. Students are expected to participate in class discussion and a portion of the final grade will be based on class participation. Class participation will be factored into the final grade. Graduate students will be asked to lead a portion of the class discussion on one of the assigned texts.

Class Assignments:

All students will be asked to complete a series of class assignments linked to the readings. A student missing a class in which an in-class quiz or in-class assignment is given or a class when a homework assignment is due will be unable to make up the missed quiz or turn in late the assignment.

Class Attendance:

Class attendance is an important and valuable aspect of the course. If you aren't in class, you ought to have a good reason for your absence. Since you can't be two places at the same time, avoid scheduling other activities during class time. It is your responsibility to get the information you missed during your absence from other members of the class. Since class participation will be evaluated as part of your responsibilities in this course, missing more than three class sessions will lower your final grade one half a letter grade for each additional class session missed. Turn off cell phones and pagers during class. Three or more interruptions during the course will lower a student's final grade.

Exams:

There will be a midterm exam and a final exam given in this course. These will include a series of short identifications and analysis as well as essay questions. The final exam will be offered according to the time established in the final exam schedule for Fall 2012 when it is announced. Please purchase and bring to class at least one blue book for each exam.

Grading:

Grades on assignments will be assigned according to the following standard. Grades for papers: A+=100, A=95, A-=92; B+=87, B=85, B-=82; C+=78, C=75, C-=72; D+=67, D=65, D-=62; F=50. The final grade in the course will be assigned according to the following scale: A= 90 and above, B= 80 and above, C=70 and above, D=60 and above, F=50 or lower. Illinois State University does not assign plus or minus in terms of final grades.

The course grades will be based on the following assignments, which will be weighted as follows:

Film paper: 10%

Critical paper: 20%

Midterm exam: 20%

Final exam: 20%

Class assignments: 20%

Class participation: 10%

List of Films for Film Paper:

Review the film on the IMDb (Internet Movie Database) website before selecting it for your analysis.

George Cukkor's *David Copperfield* (1935)

Jack Conway's *A Tale of Two Cities* (1935)

David Lean's *Great Expectations* (1946)

David Lean's *Oliver Twist* (1948)

Brian Desmond-Hurst's *A Christmas Carol* (1951) in UK titled *Scrooge*

Carol Reed's *Oliver!* (1968)

Richard Williams's *A Christmas Carol* (1971)

Bury Mattinson's Mickey's *Christmas Carol* (1983)

Clive Donner's *A Christmas Carol* (1984)

Richard Donne's *Scooged* (1988)

George Scribner's *Oliver & Company* (1981)

Jim Henson's *The Muppet Christmas Carol* (1992)

Alfonso Cuaron's *Great Expectations* (1998)

Simon Curtis's *David Copperfield* (1999)

Roman Polanski's *Oliver Twist* (2005)

Robert Zemecki's *A Christmas Carol* (2009)