

English 233 Literary Approaches to Poverty.

MWF B hour

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Payne Hall 32A M-F 10-11:40 458-8759

Preference will be given to students with experience or interest in the Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty and Human Capacity. <http://shepherd.wlu.edu/>. The seminar counts as a Lit GE or for credit towards the English major, in the later British category.

The seminar examines literary responses to the experience of poverty, imaginative representations of human life in straitened circumstances, and arguments about the causes and consequences of poverty that appear in literature. The critical consideration of dominant paradigms (“the country and the city,” “the deserving poor,” “the two nations,” “from rags to riches,” “the fallen woman,” “the abyss”) augments reading based in its cultural contexts. Course readings will be drawn primarily from the literature of Victorian Britain, but also from the Appalachian and African-American experience, and the postcolonial world. Useful handouts for preparing for class are available at: <http://home.wlu.edu/~keens/handouts.htm>.

Course writing includes a 5 page paper (10%; approx 1500 words), a 10 page research paper (40%; approx. 3000 words), an hourly (10%), and a final (20%). Participation in discussion is required (20%).

Required Texts:

Chute, Carolyn. The Beans of Egypt, Maine

Dickens, Charles. Oliver Twist: (Norton Critical Edition), ed. Fred Kaplan

Engels, Friedrich, The Condition of the Working Class in England

Gaines, Ernest. A Lesson Before Dying

Gaskell, Elizabeth. Mary Barton

London, Jack. The People of the Abyss

Mayhew, Henry. London Labour and the London Poor.

Maidmant, ed. The Poor-House Fugitives

Morrison, Arthur. A Child of the Jago

Ngugi wa Thiongo, Weep Not Child

Wood, Mrs. Henry. Johnny Ludlow, volume 1. Elibron Classics, 2001. www.elibron.com. You will need to purchase this text on the web first thing.

Zangwill, Israel. Children of the Ghetto

Handouts: Selected poetry by Thomas Hood, William Wordsworth, and verse written during the Irish famine.

Victorian Poverty

M 1/6 poetry on first day Thomas Hood, “The Song of the Shirt”
W 1/8 *from* Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor, vol. III. Reports.
F 1/10 *from* Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor. vol. III. Reports.

M 1/13 Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist 17-131
W 1/15 Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist 131-239
F 1/17 Charles Dickens, Oliver Twist 239-360
(short class day)

M 1/20 Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton 3-97
W 1/22 Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton 97-213
F 1/24 Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton 213-310

M 1/27 Elizabeth Gaskell, Mary Barton 311-393
W 1/29 Poetry from The Poor House Fugitives
F 1/31 Poetry from The Poor House Fugitives
Paper #1, 1250-1500 words, due.

M 2/3 Arthur Morrison, A Child of the Jago 1-85
W 2/5 Arthur Morrison, A Child of the Jago 86-159
F 2/7 Jack London, People of the Abyss 1-93
See also <http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/London/Writings/PeopleOfTheAbyss/>.

M 2/10 Jack London, People of the Abyss 94-172
W 2/12 Poetry from The Poor House Fugitives
F 2/14 **hourly exam**

Washington Holiday

M 2/24 Israel Zangwill, Children of the Ghetto 61-147
W 2/26 Israel Zangwill, Children of the Ghetto 148-211
F 2/28 Israel Zangwill, Children of the Ghetto 212-319
Paper proposals due in class

M 3/3 Mrs. Henry Wood, Johnny Ludlow, “Losing Lena,” “Finding Both of Them,”
“Major Parrifer” and “Coming Home to Him”
W 3/5 Mrs. Henry Wood, Johnny Ludlow, “Dick Mitchel,” “The Beginning of the End,”
“Jerry’s Gazette”
F 3/7 Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England 21-125

M 3/10 Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England 126-238
W 3/12 Engels, The Condition of the Working Class in England 239-325
(and Karl Marx, The Communist Manifesto, if you’ve never read it)
Annotated bibliographies and thesis paragraphs due in class

Views from the Contemporary World

F 3/14 Ngugi wa Thiongo, Weep Not Child 1-136

M 3/17 Carolyn Chute, The Beans of Egypt, Maine 1-79
W 3/19 Carolyn Chute, The Beans of Egypt, Maine 83-187
F 3/21 Carolyn Chute, The Beans of Egypt, Maine 191-281

M 3/24 Ernest Gaines, “The Sky is Gray.”
W 3/26 **No class:** polish your research paper
F 3/28 **No class:** polish your research paper
Final papers due (2500-3000 words) by **3 pm** in Mrs. O’Connell’s office

M 3/31 Ernest Gaines, A Lesson Before Dying 3-95
W 4/2 Ernest Gaines, A Lesson Before Dying 96-177
F 4/4 Ernest Gaines, A Lesson Before Dying 178-256

Final Examination

Research Options

Agricultural poor (Thomas Hardy)

Charity (Elizabeth Fry)

Compared to earlier religious charity (Carlyle's Past and Present)

Country and the City (George Gissing, Elizabeth Gaskell, Raymond Williams)

"Dirt" (Catherine Gallagher)

Fallen Women, "Unfortunates" (Elizabeth Gaskell, George Moore)

Genteel poverty (Gaskell's Cranford, Thackeray's Vanity Fair)

The Hungry (18)40s

Incest (Tawni Odell, Back Roads; Patrick McGinley, Foggage)

Industrial poor (Elizabeth Gaskell, Frances Trollope, Rebecca Harding Davis)

The Irish (Morash, Christopher, ed. The Hungry Voice)

Irish famine (Anthony Trollope)

Landlords and other villains (Elaine Hadley, Melodramatic Tactics)

Mapping poverty (Charles Booth's poverty map at <http://booth.lse.ac.uk/>)

New Poor Law and workhouses (Dickens, Hardy)

Overpopulation (Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population [1798])

Race and Ethnicity

Religious Tract Society novels (Hesba Stretton)

Sensational topics of the Victorian Era (Jack the Ripper)

Sex, drugs, drinking, and violence (Maureen Gibbon, Swimming Sweet Water)

Slums in fiction (see me for bibliography)

Temperance (Scottish Temperance Society Novels)

Women and Children (Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna, George Moore)

Working-class radicalism (Eliot, Dickens, Gaskell, Charles Kingsley)

Secondary Sources (recommended; not on reserve)

Carr, Duane. A Question of Class: the Redneck Stereotype in Southern Fiction (BGSU Popular P, 1996).

Rawson, Claude. God, Gulliver, and Genocide: Barbarism and the European Imagination, 1492-1945. Oxford UP, 2001.

Sherman, Sandra. Imagining Poverty: Quantifications and the Decline of Paternalism (Ohio State UP, 2001).

Smith, Sheila Mary. The Other Nation; the Poor in English Novels of the 1840s and 1850s. (Oxford UP, 1980).

Thomas, Kelly L. Black Sheep: Representations of Poor Whites in American Literature and Culture, 1998 (dissertation).

Tobin, Beth Fowkes. Superintending the Poor: Charitable Ladies and Paternal Landlords in British Fiction, 1770-1860 (Yale UP, 1993).

Tracy, Susan Jean. In the Master's Eye: Representations of Women, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Antebellum Southern Literature (U of Massachusetts P, 1995).

Policies: please take paper deadlines seriously. I mark down (a third of a grade per day) for late work. Keep a hard copy of every piece of work you hand in. Please do not send me email attachments. Don't trust your disc, hard drive, or neighbor's hard drive as a back up. If I should misplace a paper, I will expect you to provide another copy of your essay upon request, without delay.

Exams: There will be an objective final examination at the end of the course, consisting of identification and specific questions. **Reading quizzes** will be instituted if I feel that discussions are suffering from unacceptable levels of non-participation.

Format: Use MLA style. Cite all sources, including internet sources (with title, author, URL, and date of access). If you are unsure, add a "Works Consulted" page to the usual "Works Cited." Please use Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th ed. , though Diana Hacker, *A Writer's Reference*, provides the basics. Use normal (one inch) margins and true double-spacing. No essay is complete without page numbers. Use your word-processor's word count feature, or check one page and estimate the length of your paper. Overly long essays will fare no better than overly short essays.

Participation: Simply appearing in class does not guarantee a passing grade in participation. You must join in the discussion of the works. A person who never misses a class, but never speaks, will fail the participation component of the seminar.

Attendance: Faithful attendance is required to pass the course. Court dates, interviews, sporting events, etc. constitute unexcused absences. Documented illness or family tragedy excuses an absence. The hourly exam will not be given at any other time than the class period for which it is scheduled.

Incompletes: Forget about it. I don't grant them.