The Rise and Development of the Novel

3 creds.,
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Aims and Objectives

This course aims to provide students with a diachronic approach to the novel, to enable them to thoroughly explore milestones of British narrative fiction, and to suggest new grounds for thesis research. It will offer students an overview of the relevant theories of the novel, as well as historical, political and cultural context to understand the ground-breaking changes happening in fiction at different periods.

In order to do so, students will read canonical texts such as Samuel Richardson’s Pamela, together with less known novels, many by women writers. They will be expected to develop a critical understanding of how these texts advance narrative fiction or even address the transformation of literary genres within their pages.

By the end of this course students will be able to:

• Have a comprehensive perspective of British narrative fiction from the 18th century onwards
• Discuss the works of major British writers from the 18th century to our days
• Become familiar with different forms of experimentation in narrative fiction and with authors that have been left out of traditional Western canons
• Write critical research papers and conduct successful academic presentations

Course Program

1. Introduction: a Debate on the Origins of the Novel
2. Mid-Century Revolutions
3. Women Writers and the Construction of the Modern Novel
4. The Age of the Novel: Victorian Fictions
5. Experimenting with the Novel: Virginia Woolf and The Waves
**Required Readings (some include recommended editions)**


Richardson, Samuel. *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded*. 1740.


Short selections of other texts will be provided and will be available on Studium.

**Methodology**

Class meetings will consist of lectures, group discussions, and oral presentations. Students are expected to read the texts beforehand and to provide well-structured and meaningful opinions on the issues addressed in these discussions. In order to do so, study guides will be available on Studium, as well as a list of recommended secondary sources to prepare the presentations and class discussions.

Students will be expected to:

- Read and analyze texts critically (and to read them in time for the classes)
- Produce examples of their own interpretation of the novels
- Be able to present their thoughts clearly and with sound arguments, both orally and in written form
- Be able to write an adequate research paper and to deliver an efficient academic presentation

**Assessment**

A selection of texts will be specified at the beginning of the course for class discussion on given dates. Students are required to read each assigned text before class and come prepared to discuss it. In addition, each student will have to prepare an oral presentation. The topic of the presentation will be selected from a list available on Studium prior to the start of the course.

The students will be evaluated on a combination of their participation in class, the oral presentation and a final paper or project. This paper will be expected to address one of the topics of the abovementioned list (it can be the same as the one chosen for the oral presentation). The instructions for the final paper will be discussed at the beginning of the course.

Participation and oral presentation: 50 %

Final paper/project: 50 %
Bibliography and Resources


