

LIT 3003.1SGY: Forms of Narrative
Race and Narrative Form
Spring 2025

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Course Meets: MWF 9:35-10:25 (Period 3), 0117 Matherly Hall
Office Location: 4336 Turlington Hall
Office Hours: MWF 10:45-12:15 (in person) and by appointment
Required Texts: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin)
Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Penguin)
Wilkie Collins, *Armadale* (Penguin)
Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Penguin)
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness & Other Tales* (Oxford)
Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (Penguin)

Course Overview

In *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015), Caroline Levine redefines the idea of “form” in literature to mean more than broad, overarching concerns with the structure or genre or wholeness or unity of a literary work. Rather, “Form, for our purposes,” she writes, “will mean all shapes and configurations, all ordering principles, all patterns of repetition and difference” (3). As she explains—and as we shall read—“form” means for her not *the* wholesale shape of a work but rather the many small forms that recur within books or that structure its action and themes, or that recur across multiple literary texts and therefore seem to take on outsized significance as representations of social or cultural principles. And each form, she argues, has one or several “affordances,” by which she means identifiable consequences arising from the presence of the form in the literary work. If this sounds confusing, think of it this way: Levine is using “form” in something like the same way we might use words like “metaphor” or “symbol.” What she wants us to consider is how the presence of a particular *form* in a literary text might *afford* it the opportunity to say something, or convey a meaning, that it can really only convey when that form is present.

This class is organized around Levine’s theory and works from a particular hypothesis: that the presence of multiracial characters in nineteenth-century novels is a form, and that one of its most critical affordances was, for novelists at least, new possibilities for narrative innovation. During an era that saw races as fundamentally, biologically different, and that treated multiracial people through the binary of whiteness/darkness—with massive and chilling effects—the mere presence of multiracial characters in novels seems to have collapsed imaginative boundaries. This seems to have led in turn to other kinds of collapses: innovations in narrative structure, for instance, or the creation of generic hybrids (fairy tale and autobiography, or Gothic and realist). This semester we will read several major nineteenth-century novels: Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Wilkie Collins’s *Armadale*, Charles Dickens’s *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, and Rudyard Kipling’s *Kim*. And what we will consider—besides the social and cultural problem of race generally—is what the particular form of multiraciality gives to the nineteenth-century novel, what conversations it enables, what artistic transformations it encourages and allows. We will also, as this list of texts suggests, just read some rollicking good fiction.

Course Objectives and Assessment Methods

Students who complete this course successfully will be able to: (1) express a complex understanding of nineteenth-century opinions on race and multiraciality through reference to key historical and sociological texts; (2) express a complex understanding of how multiraciality provides a “form” that encourages certain developments in the English novel; (3) articulate an understanding of key literary terms (e.g., form, structure, genre, focalization) relevant to the study of narrative; and (4) write a final project that demonstrates the capacity to synthesize ideas from across our semester and unite them into a thesis-driven argument.

Assessment methods include: (1) class participation, by which I mean consistent participation in cogent, intelligent classrooms conversations about our primary and secondary readings and the ideas they engage; (2) short response essays, in which you express your immediate thoughts about elements of the major novels we read; (3) short reading quizzes, to verify that you have factual command of the readings on a consistent basis; (4) a mid-term examination, which will verify your recall of the reading and require you to synthesize the early historical and literary texts into a coherent intellectual whole; and (5) a final project, in which you will culminate your semester either by writing an essay broadly unifying all of the novels we have read into a coherent view of the relation between race and narrative form *or* you will conduct a narrow, focused research-based essay involving no more than two of the novels we read this semester.

Course Policies

Handouts and PDF Readings

Handouts, class lecture slides (when there are any), and PDF/electronic readings will be made available via Canvas. Since I expect you to have handouts and readings with you during our class time, you must plan either to download and print copies to bring to class or bring an electronic device that will allow you to access them during our class time. Additional information about my policy on electronic devices appears below.

Email

For the purposes of our class, you must use your university-issued email account ending in ufl.edu. From time to time, I may need to contact the class as a whole (for instance, to send a newly updated handout or notify you if I’m ill) or I may need to contact you individually to discuss a particular concern. My only real means of contacting you outside of class time is via email, and that method *must be reliable*. Consequently, you are responsible for any messages I may send to your ufl.edu account and for observing all guidelines and information provided in those messages. Also, though I will certainly respond to any email messages I receive, there is no way to be sure that messages you send me from other accounts might not get filtered to “Junk.” So I will be accountable *only* for those messages you send from your ufl.edu account.

Grades

Grades for this course depend upon five major areas: class participation and preparedness (15%); short reading quizzes (15%); two short response essays (10% each); a mid-term examination (20%), and a final paper/exam (30%). We will discuss each formal assignment during class time, and I will give you appropriate guidance (e.g., handouts, review opportunities) regarding each.

For now, just know that I encourage you to complete them all to the best of your abilities. Your class participation score will depend upon your coming to class prepared with the reading and prepared also to help us make sense of it in discussion. Quizzes will help me to know whether you are, in fact, prepared with the reading on a consistent basis. The short essays will allow me to see and comment on your writing throughout the semester, allow you to work on and improve any trouble spots as you study the major novels, and generally prepare you to be very successful with the final essay at the end of the semester (should you choose that instead of the final exam).

Other policies related to grading are:

1. You must *complete* two short essays, the mid-term examination, the final essay (or exam), and at least 50% of the short reading quizzes to be eligible to pass the course.
2. Late papers will be penalized one grade per day (i.e., a paper that would otherwise be a B+ will first become a B, then a B-, etc.). You really should not require an extension on an essay since the due dates for the short essays depend *entirely* upon when you want to write them, and since I cannot give extensions on our final essay/exam, given that it's scheduled for the very last day (May 2) and grades will be due almost immediately.
3. Papers turned in more than one week late—though you still *must turn them in to be eligible to pass the course*—will receive an F unless we have discussed, and I have approved, the late submission in advance, or there are extraordinary circumstances covered by the University's policy on attendance.
4. Papers that run short of the stated minimum word count can *only* earn—even if they are *perfect*—a grade equal to the percentage of the work you've given me. In other words, if you submit a 675 word essay when the minimum word count is 750, then even if it is perfect you can only earn an A- (90%).
5. Grades will be determined according to a standard scale (A=4.00, A-=3.67, etc.) and weighted and averaged according to the percentages given above.

Attendance

You should do what you can to attend every class. In English, we come together to discuss what we read because we begin from a basic assumption that these works of art do not tell us freely and openly exactly what they want us to know. Gathering in class to discuss—to struggle and sift for meaning—is at the heart of our work. So every minute of our class time is valuable. You will always “miss something” when you miss class, and with the exception of some mini-lectures or a few slides here and there, what you will miss cannot be recreated because we can't always know where the discussion will go. You're all going to think and say brilliant things. That said, COVID is still with us, to say nothing of RSV, influenza, monkeypox, polio, and god knows what else, and we don't need to share *those* things.

So here is what I'll say. I hope and expect to see you all, healthy and well, every class day. But if you feel sick, please stay at home. We want to see you, but we'd rather miss you temporarily than resent you for spreading some thousand-year plague. You can always catch me in office hours to discuss the reading or anything else if you feel left behind.

It's also important to keep this in mind: while there will be no automatic penalty for particular numbers of absences, you really do need to be present as often as possible. You must take at least 50% of the reading quizzes, which will not be announced ahead of time. You'll want to be

present for advice about assignments and effective writing. You'll want to participate in discussions and occasional group activities in class for the sake of your participation grade.

Academic Integrity

You should adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty, as described in UF's [Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code](#). We will discuss those standards, and we will review guidelines for identifying and citing sources as appropriate. *Ignorance* of academic integrity standards is not *innocence* of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism or other dishonesty—**intentional or not**—will result in an F for my course, a report to the Dean of Students, and possibly disciplinary action by the university. Your purpose in my class is to learn. You can't do that if you are stealing others' ideas. And, just so that you are aware, I expect the work that you turn in for this class to be HI-generated, not AI-generated. Use your own human intelligence. Abuses of ChatGPT and other engines, if detected, will be prosecuted to the utmost extent. Your writing for this course should reflect *your* thoughts and understanding, not an algorithm's.

Classroom Civility and Access

My goal is to make this class accessible to all students without regard to gender, race, ethnicity, creed, sexual orientation, physical limitation, or any other factor not directly related to classroom performance. I also hope to cultivate a comfortable and lively classroom, where we can exchange ideas freely but with respect for all members of our classroom community. So let's try to observe these guidelines for good conduct:

1. Please voice your opinion on topics in class, but do so in a way that is sensitive to others. Do not interrupt someone else who is speaking. Don't direct derogatory or demeaning language at a person or group. When you disagree with me or a classmate, express your dissent in a way that fosters more dialogue. Besides learning about Dickens, we're also honing our skills at having civilized discussions and disagreements. Neither hate speech nor personal incivilities will be tolerated.
2. Please turn off cellular phones before class begins. No texting, TikTok-ing, tweeting, tundering, twitching, twaddling, twigging, teeter-tottering, or other technological transgressing. You may use a laptop computer or tablet during class in lieu of printing and bringing hard copies of handouts and reading assignments ... BUT I reserve the right to bar you from using electronic devices in class if you cannot confine yourself to using them for legitimate purposes associated with our class.
3. Food and drink are welcome, but please use common sense. Noisy, crunchy foods and rustling wrappers really annoy everyone. Also, avoid disgusting foods such as monkey jowls, beets, or freshly ground kittens.
4. Please listen respectfully to whoever is speaking. Your classmates have awfully insightful things to say. I do, too, once in a while.

A final note: you might have a learning disability or physical limitation that, if unacknowledged, would prevent you from performing as well as you should in my class. I will do my utmost under UF guidelines to accommodate your particular learning needs, but you *must* first register with campus officials through the [Disability Resource Center](#). By university policy, I cannot accommodate undocumented learning issues. If you've already registered with the DRC, please come by and talk to me at your convenience about how I can assist and promote your learning.

Please let me know if you have concerns about these policies or needs of which I should be aware. Come by my office hours, or contact me for an appointment, which we could conduct in person or via Zoom. I am happy to speak with you about your concerns regarding this class, literature generally, or anything else on your mind.

Online Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>. Now that you have finished reading this syllabus, for extra credit, send me an email

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

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| Jan | 13 | Introduction to the course |
| | 15 | Literature, structure, form, genre |
| | 17 | Caroline Levine, <i>Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network</i> , Ch. 1 (PDF in Canvas) |
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| | 20 | No class—Martin Luther King, Jr. Day |
| | 22 | Robert Wedderburn, <i>The Horrors of Slavery</i> (1824) (https://archive.org/details/horrors_of_slavery); Harriet Martineau, “Morals of Slavery,” (1837); (https://racism.org/articles/citizenship-rights/slavery-to-neoslavery/slavery-2/119-articles-related-to-slavery/2018-morals-of-slavery-1837); and Harriet Martineau, “Ch. 15, New Orleans,” from <i>Retrospect of Western Travel</i> (1838) (PDF in Canvas) |
| | 24 | Discussion of Response Papers, Final Paper/Exam |
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| | 27 | Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , Vol. 1, Letter 1 – Ch. 8 |
| | 29 | Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , Vol. 2, Chs. 1-9 |
| | 31 | Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> , Vol. 3, Chs. 1-7 |
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| Feb | 3 | Emily Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Vol. 1, Chs. 1-3 |
| | 5 | Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Vol. 1, Chs. 4-9 |
| | 7 | Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Vol. 1, Chs. 10-12 |
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| | 10 | Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Vol. 2, Chs. 1-8 |
| | 12 | Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Vol. 2, Chs. 9-15 |
| | 14 | Brontë, <i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Vol. 2, Chs. 16-20 |
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| | 17 | Robert Knox, “Lecture I,” from <i>Lectures on the Races of Men</i> (1850) (PDF in Canvas); Alfred Russell Wallace, “The Origin of Human Races and the Antiquity of Man Deduced from the Theory of ‘Natural Selectin’,” (1864) |

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| | | (PDF in Canvas) |
| | 19 | Wilkie Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the First, Chs. 1-3 |
| | 21 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Second, Chs. 1-2 |
| | 24 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Second, Chs. 3-5 and Book the Third, Chs. 1-4 |
| | 26 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Third, Chs. 5-8 |
| | 28 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Third, Chs. 9-13 |
| Mar | 3 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Fourth, Chs. 1-8 |
| | 5 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Fourth, Chs. 9-10 |
| | 7 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Fourth, Chs. 11-14 |
| | 10 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Fourth, Chs. 15 and Book the Fifth, Chs. 1-3 |
| | 12 | Collins, <i>Armadale</i> , Book the Last, Chs. 1-3 and Epilogue, Chs. 1-Appendix |
| | 14 | Mid-term Examination |
| | 17-21 | No class—Spring Break |
| | 24 | Charles Dickens, <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> , Chs. 1-4 |
| | 26 | Dickens, <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> , Chs. 5-9 |
| | 28 | Dickens, <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> , Chs. 10-12 |
| | 31 | Dickens, <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> , Chs. 13-20 |
| Apr | 2 | Dickens, <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i> , Chs. 21-23 |
| | 4 | Francis Galton, "Selection and Race" and "Influence of Man upon Race," from <i>Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development</i> * (1883) (PDFs in Canvas); William Booth, "Ch. 1, Why Darkest England?" and "Ch. 2, The Submerged Tenth," from <i>In Darkest England and the Way Out</i> (1890) (PDFs in Canvas) |
| | 7 | Joseph Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Ch. 1 |
| | 9 | Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> , Chs. 2-3 |
| | 11 | Rudyard Kipling, <i>Kim</i> , Chs. 1-2 |
| | 14 | Kipling, <i>Kim</i> , Chs. 3-6 |
| | 16 | Kipling, <i>Kim</i> , Chs. 7-8 |
| | 18 | Kipling, <i>Kim</i> , Chs. 9-11 |
| | 21 | Kipling, <i>Kim</i> , Chs. 12-15 |
| | 23 | Course wrap-up |

Final Essay/Exam due Friday, May 2 by 12:00 p.m.