

Jane Austen in context

Dr Emma Plaskitt

This course will examine the enduringly popular novels of Jane Austen, looking at her novelistic technique and development, and her place among women writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In addition to studying the major novels, we will look at Austen's juvenilia and place each text in its literary and historical context. This will involve, for example, an examination of the eighteenth-century cult of sensibility when we discuss *Sense and sensibility* and the contemporary vogue for gothic novels when we study Austen's burlesque of the gothic genre, *Northanger Abbey*. Other themes that will be discussed include Austen's treatment of class, economics, education, female friendship, courtship, and politics.

Seminar specific student learning outcomes

Students who have taken this seminar will:

- have considered the effect of gender on the acts of writing and reading in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and today
- have considered the effects of class and gender on women's lives in the periods studied

Required reading (listed in the order in which the novels will be considered in discussion classes)

The Norton or Broadview Critical Editions are preferred but Oxford World's Classics or Penguin Classics editions are acceptable.

- F. Burney, *Evelina* (1778; ed. S. Cooke, 1998)
- J. Austen, *Sense and sensibility* (1811; ed. C. Johnson, 2001)
- A. Radcliffe, *The romance of the forest* (1791; ed. Chloe Chard, 1998)
- J. Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1818; ed. S. Fraiman, 2004)
- , *Pride and prejudice* (1813; ed. D. Gray, 2000)
- , *Emma* (1814; ed. G. Justice, 2011)

Recommended reading

- J. Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814; ed. C. Johnson, 1998)
- , *Persuasion* (1818; ed. P. Spacks, 1995)
- H. Barker and E. Chalus, eds. *Women's History: Britain, 1700-1850* (2005)
- D. Cottom, *The civilized imagination: a study of Ann Radcliffe, Jane Austen, and Walter Scott* (1985)
- J. B. Horowitz, *Jane Austen and the question of women's education* (1991)
- C. Johnson, *Equivocal beings: plots, gender and sentimentality in the 1790s: Wollstonecraft, Radcliffe, Burney, Austen* (1995)
- V. Jones, *Women and literature in Britain 1700-1800* (2000)
- , *Women in the eighteenth century: construction of femininity* (1990)
- J. McMaster and E. Copeland, eds., *The Cambridge companion to Jane Austen* (1997)
- P. Sabor, ed., *The Cambridge companion to Frances Burney* (2007)
- J. Todd, *Jane Austen in context* (2006)
- , *Sensibility: an introduction* (1986)
- C. Tomalin, *Jane Austen: a life* (1987; 2000)
- R. Yeazell, *Fictions of modesty: women and courtship in the English novel* (1991)