ENGLISH 6306: British Fiction
Women in the Age of Man

Dr. Allison Dushane
adushane@angelo.edu
Office: Academic 021D

Office Hours
M/W 11:00am-2pm
And By Appointment

Course Description

*Women in the Age of Man* will explore British Fiction with an eye towards the intertwined fates of nature and culture. In the year 2000, the geologist Paul Crutzen coined the term Anthropocene, or the Age of Man, in order to name an epoch defined by the impact of human inventions on the ecosystem. As one area within the growing field of Ecocriticism, discussions about the Anthropocene revolve around rethinking our relationships to nonhuman entities, human inventions, and each other in an age haunted by the possibility of extinction.

The course focuses on five major texts: Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*; Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*; George Eliot, *Mill on the Floss*; and Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*. What is the relationship of the novel to physical and cultural environments, and how has its shape changed over time? How might reading texts written by female authors complicate existing assumptions about nature and narratives about the development of the novel? We will practice reading from an interdisciplinary perspective in order to explore the connections between shifting conceptions of the natural world, the expansion of the British Empire, and literary form.

Graded Course Work

- 10% Discussion Board Questions
- 15% Preparation and Active Participation (1 week dropped)
- 25% Response Papers:
  - 4 out of 6: #1 Required
- 15% Final Exam
- 35% Research Project:
  - 5% Project Proposal
  - 10% Abstract and Annotated Bibliography
  - 5% Project Presentation
  - 15% Final Essay

Required Books and Materials

**Required Books (ISBN#s on Blackboard):**
- MacKay, *The Cambridge Introduction to the Novel*
- Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* (Oxford)
- Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Broadview)

**Other Materials:**
- Printed Handouts and Readings from Blackboard
- A guide to literary terms. Recommended: *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*.

**Blackboard:**
- This course has a Blackboard website, where you can find other course materials and turn in your assignments.
LEARNING OBJECTIVES FOR ENGLISH 6306

Upon completion of this course, graduate students will be better able to:

• demonstrate advanced knowledge of theories, terms, classifications, methods, and trends common to the discipline
• contribute insightfully to scholarly discourse on literature through individual projects and collaborative activities
• demonstrate advanced abilities in reading and writing for inquiry, learning, and critical thinking
• demonstrate advanced ability to execute both written and oral analysis of texts common to the discipline
• demonstrate historical and cultural awareness in discussing and analyzing literary texts.
• understand appropriate documentation and attribution necessary for writing in the profession
• work collaboratively to develop scholarly ideas in relation to the discipline

COURSE POLICIES

I. ATTENDANCE AND LATE WORK

A graduate seminar depends on the commitment of its members for the benefit of everyone's learning. As a graduate student, you are expected to attend every class meeting. Expectations at the graduate level are high; your attendance not only impacts your grade for a single course, but it also affects the overall perceptions that professors have of your dedication and capabilities.

• I do understand that life happens, so I will grant a single absence in the event of a documented and legitimate illness, emergency, or other exception agreed upon advance. Additional and/or unexcused absences will negatively affect your overall course grade. If you miss more than two class meetings, you risk failing the course.
• If you cannot make it to class, please let me know in advance, or as soon as possible. You should ask for notes from a classmate and check Blackboard for any relevant updates, handouts, and lecture slides.
• Late Discussion Board Questions and Response Papers will not be accepted under any circumstances.
• Other writing assignments may be given brief extensions without penalty in extraordinary and documented circumstances. Notify me as soon as possible if you think you will need an extension; extensions will only be granted in advance except in cases of true emergency.
II. OBSERVANCES OF RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS and TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY EVENTS

Students traveling to university-sponsored events and students who have spoken to me in advance about missing a class for purposes of religious observance will have the opportunity to make up whatever work can be completed. The opportunity to make-up work is the student’s responsibility to arrange: (1) notification must be made in writing and in advance of the absence and (2) all work must be completed in what I deem to be a timely manner. To be clear, no makeup work will be permitted after the fact; all arrangements must be made in advance and you and I must agree upon a timetable prior to your absence.

III. STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

“All ASU students are expected to understand and to comply with the University’s policy on Academic Honesty as stated in the ASU Bulletin and in the ASU Student Handbook. Students who violate the Policy on Academic Honesty will be subject to disciplinary action, including a failing grade in the course.”

Angelo State University expects its students to maintain complete honesty and integrity in their academic pursuits. Students are responsible for understanding the Academic Honor Code, which is contained in both the print and web versions of the Student Handbook. http://www.angelo.edu/cstudent/documents/pdf/Student_Handbook.pdf. By participating in ENGLISH 6306, you agree to abide by the Academic Honor Code.

If you do not understand the rules regarding plagiarism, cheating, or other lapses in academic integrity as outlined in the Academic Honor Code, it is incumbent upon you to seek clarification from me prior to the first assignment. Students who violate the Academic Honor Code in any way will receive a failing grade for the course and be referred to the Department Chair and the Academic Integrity Committee.

IV. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

I am sympathetic to all disabilities, and request that all persons requesting accommodation work through the student life office to make sure that they receive the attention they need.

Persons with disabilities that may warrant academic accommodations must contact the Student Life Office, located in room 112 of the University Center, in order to request such accommodations prior to any being implemented. You are encouraged to make this request early in the semester so that appropriate arrangements can be made.
ASSIGNMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

I. Preparation and Active Participation

ENGLISH 6306 combines lecture and discussion. This means you need to both prepare for class and pay attention and speak during class. You are expected to bring the relevant texts to class, take notes on the lecture, contribute to class discussion, and write down the key points that come out of both.

- Bring a hard copy of the assigned texts for the day (this means printing out readings from Blackboard instead of reading them on a phone or other electronic device).
- When speaking, please show respect to your instructor, your classmates, and the process of learning as a whole: allow others time to talk, try not to interrupt, and refrain from rude, offensive, or belittling comments. When others are talking, pay attention and do not do anything that will distract yourself or others
- **Cell phone use is 100% prohibited at all times.** Your phone should be on silent and away from sight. If you are expecting an important call, please put your phone on vibrate and let me know before class that you may need to leave class to answer your phone.

Your Preparation and Active Participation assumes the above as a baseline minimum. That is, a student who attends every class meeting, submits discussion board questions on time every week, brings the appropriate texts and assignments to every class, pays attention to the professor and fellow students, yet does not speak will receive a C. If you want a B or A grade for this category, you should:

- Read the assigned texts before class thoroughly, including introductory material and notes. Pay attention not only to the basics of plot and characterization in the literary texts, but also how the texts might be informed by the terms and ideas in the criticism and theory.
- Take your own notes as you read, either in the text or in a notebook. Note key phrases and/or passages and mark ideas that you find interesting and/or confusing. I highly recommend both writing in your texts with pencil and investing in some post-it notes to keep track of important places in the text.
- Submit thoughtful, detailed, and original discussion questions.
- Make regular and relevant contributions to class discussion. Relevant contributions stay on topic, are specific (for example, start from specific places in the course texts instead of stating generalities), and indicate that you have both thought about the material itself and the contributions of others.

II. Writing Guidelines and Resources

**Paper Formatting and Citation Style**

All papers for this course, including response papers, must be adhere to the citation and formatting conventions outlined in the *MLA Handbook* (8th edition), with a word count added to the standard header. Check Blackboard for handouts and links to resources that cover MLA style.
**Word Count**  
Each assignment will include a minimum word count or range. The main text of your paper, not including the header, bibliography, and notes, should reach the minimum or fall within the indicated range. If your paper does not reach the minimum, it will receive a deduction. Papers that fall more than 20% short of the minimum will receive a failing grade.

**Online Submission: Blackboard and SafeAssign**  
You will turn in most of your written assignments online through Blackboard, either through the discussion board or an assignment dropbox. If you are turning in an assignment to a dropbox, you will be required to give permission to have your paper checked by SafeAssign, which is a plagiarism-checking software that checks for similarities to past submissions and online material.

**Writing Center**  
The ASU Writing Center is a wonderful resource for students of all levels. They offer face-to-face tutoring, synchronous online tutorials, and responses to e-mailed questions about writing and reading. If you seek their help with your writing, you should provide the assignment prompt and all work you’ve completed toward the assignment. The office is on the third floor of the Porter Henderson Library, Room C305. To set up an appointment, go to http://www.angelo.edu/dept/writingcenter.

**III. Written Assignments**

**Discussion Board Posts**  
For weeks 1-11, you should prepare at least one brief, but well-thought out question or problem in response to the assigned reading. These questions are due **12:00noon Thursdays**. This question or problem should not be purely mechanical or typographical (e.g., “Why does this writer use ‘which’ where she should use ‘that’?”), nor stray too far from the text (e.g. “This novel reminds me of a movie I saw.”), nor have a simple yes/no answer. It should bring out a productive tension, paradox, or complicated idea in the reading, perhaps in relation to themes explored by our other readings. I will evaluate these posts on a scale of 1-5 and drop the lowest grad; I also take them into consideration for your overall Preparation and Active Participation grade. Because I read and take these posts into consideration when preparing for class, late discussion board posts will be penalized 1 point. No posts will be accepted/graded past 5:00pm.

**Response Papers**  
These short papers will answer or further develop one of the discussion questions that you posted (or that one of your classmates posed!) for the week. The goal of these papers is twofold: to raise questions about the critical/theoretical approach for the week and to demonstrate your understanding of how to make an argument about a literary text using that approach. A strong response paper will support its claims using specific details and quoted evidence from both the literary text and the critical/theoretical texts. Your goal is not to simply repeat the words of a critic or theorist, but to use their ideas to work through your own reading of the literary text. Please avoid summary, purely subjective responses (what you "like" or "dislike"), and evaluations of an author's skill, greatness, or lack thereof. Be prepared to discuss you response papers in class!
Research Project

The research project is divided into several steps, culminating in an original argument that produces a reading of one or more of the major literary course texts in the context of a current scholarly conversation: Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*; Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*; George Eliot, *Mill on the Floss*; Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

IV. Exam

The final exam will cover relevant material from the assigned literary texts, scholarly articles, and *The Cambridge Introduction to the Novel*. You will be tested on literary terms, your understanding of critical terms and scholarly approaches, and relevant character and plot details from the literary texts.

V. Paper Conferences, Office Hours, and E-Mail

All students will be required to attend a one-on-one meeting with me to discuss the Proposal and Annotated Bibliography for the research project. We will discuss your experiences with the research project and work on developing the argument for your final research paper. This meeting will substitute for our regular seminar meeting, so **attendance is mandatory**; penalties for missing the conference are the same as for regular class meetings.

My office hours are listed on the first page of the syllabus and posted on my office door. I encourage you to visit office hours to discuss any aspect of the course. I am always happy to discuss the readings, help you with getting started on assignments, or aid in any other part of the research or writing process. **If you cannot meet during my posted hours, please e-mail me for an appointment.** My office hours are set with undergraduate schedules in mind; I am happy to meet with graduate students outside office hours!

I try to answer emails quickly within business hours (M-F 9am-5pm); however, I also teach other courses and often have meetings on and off campus, so it may take me a few hours to respond. After 5pm and on weekends, I check my email less regularly and it may be several hours or even the next day/Monday before you hear back from me. E-mail is best suited for quick questions that have concrete responses; if you need to discuss a more complex and/or personal issue, please see me after class or during office hours. **I do not read/respond to drafts submitted by e-mail**—for help with writing assignments that goes beyond a clarification question, please come to office hours or make an appointment!
Be sure to check Blackboard regularly for any changes to the schedule. This schedule provides an overview of the semester so that you can plan around major assignment due dates, but I will post more detailed reading assignments, handouts, lecture slides and other important information on a weekly basis.

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<th>Week 1</th>
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| Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* Vol I, Introduction and Chapters 1-3 (pp. 3-47)  
* CIN: Chapters 1-4 (skip the "Interchapters")  
* BB: Glotfelty, "Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis" (stop when you get to "Essays in This Collection")  
* BB: The Natural and the Sublime (read Burke and Wollstonecraft selections)  
* Optional Reading/BB: *Heise, "The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism" |

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<th>Week 2</th>
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| Response Paper #1 Due (Required)  
Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* Vol I (pp. 48-166)  
* CIN: Chapters 5-7  
* BB: Garrard: Pastoral and Wilderness (pp. 33-66) |

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<th>Week 3</th>
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| Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* Vol. II (pp. 167-314)  
* BB: Foucault Selections (Posthumanism and Bio-Power)  
* BB: Malthus and Godwin Selections |

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<th>Week 4</th>
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| Response Paper #2 Due  
Mary Shelley, *The Last Man* Vol. III (pp. 315-470)  
* CIN: Chapter 11  
* BB: Garrard: Apocalypse (pp. 85-107)  
* BB: Latour, "Agency at the Time of the Anthropocene" |

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<th>Week 5</th>
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| Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, Chapters 1-17  
  o Appendix E: On Geographical Remoteness and Cultural Difference  
* CIN: Chapters 8 and 10  
* BB: Botting, from *Gothic*, "Introduction: Negative Aesthetics" |

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<th>Week 6</th>
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| Response Paper #3 Due  
Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (finish)  
* BB: Goff, "Between Natural Theology and Natural Selection: Breeding the Human Animal in *Wuthering Heights.*"  
* BB: Eagleton, "Myths of Power" |
| Week 7  2.28 | Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapters 1-27  
**BB:** Armstrong, from *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Introduction |
| Week 8  3.7 | **Response Paper #4 Due**  
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* - end  
**BB:** Armstrong, from *Desire and Domestic Fiction*, Chapters 4-5  
**BB:** Pizzo, "Atmospheric Exceptionalism in Jane Eyre" |
| **Spring Break** |
**BB:** Eliot, "Silly Novels by Lady Novelists"  
**BB:** Beer, from *Darwin’s Plots* |
| Week 10  3.28 | **Response Paper #5 Due**  
Eliot, *Mill on the Floss*, Books 6-end  
**BB:** Colebrook, "We Have Always Been Post-Anthropocene: The Anthropocene Counterfactual" |
| Week 11  4.4 | **Response Paper #6 Due**  
Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*  
*CIN:* Chapter 9  
**BB:** Huggan and Tiffin, “Introduction” to *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* |
| Week 12  4.11 | **Project Proposal Due:** Bring Two Hard Copies  
**BB:** Semenza, "The Seminar Paper"  
**In Class:** Final Exam Glossary and Abstract Writing Workshop |
| Week 13  4.18 | **Individual Meetings/No Seminar**  
Submit Abstract and Annotated Bibliography to BB Before Appointment |
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<th>&quot;Complete&quot; Rough Draft w/Revised Abstract Due: Bring Two Hard Copies</th>
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<th>Final Essay Due: Submit to BB Dropbox Before Class (No Hard Copy)</th>
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<td>Project Presentations: Submit slides or handout to BB Dropbox Before Class</td>
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**FINAL EXAM**
Thursday, May 9th @6:00pm