**English 1616W-02: Major Works of English and American Literature**

**From Major Works to Major Motion Pictures**



**Instructor: Rebecca Rowe**

**Pronouns: She/her/hers**

**Classroom/Hours: STRS 117, MWF 12:20-1:10**

**Office: Austin 153**

**Office Hours: WF 8:30-9:30, and by appointment**

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**Course Description**

What makes a work “major”? How does the concept of “major” change over time? We will explore these questions and others through four “major” works: Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*, Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Doyle’s *A Study in Scarlet*, and Dickens’ *A Christmas Carol*. For each work, we will begin by considering what makes this work “major”, from literary to cultural to academic value. Then, we will study adaptations created throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries to explore how these works’ “major” status changes over time. In the process, we will discuss how literary canons form so that some texts are considered major and how adaptations either uphold or challenge those designations.

**Course Outcomes**

* Analyze texts for major themes and concepts and trace how they change over time
* Critically assess and question how and why a text is considered major
* Write analysis- and argument-driven papers
* Engage in scholarly conversations, both in person and through writing
* Continue to develop writing skills, such as drafting, revising, clear argumentation and explanation, etc.

[**Texts**](https://tinyurl.com/8207-F19-ENGL-1616W-002)

* Shakespeare, William. *Taming of the Shrew*
* Doyle, Arthur Conan. *A Study in Scarlet*
* Austen, Jane. *Pride and Prejudice*
* Dickens, Charles. *A Christmas Carol*

**Helpful websites:**

* [UConn library homepage](http://lib.uconn.edu/)
* [Purdue OWL for MLA citation](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/)

### **Integrity and Respect**

In this class, you may come into contact, and perhaps conflict, with communities whose ideals and perspectives may differ radically from your own. This will be a topic of discussion and interest, but it may also be uncomfortable, and we will seek to find meaning in those uncomfortable moments. As a class, we will maintain a sympathetic and compassionate outlook and keep an open mind throughout the course.

Additionally, in accordance with UConn policies and Title IX, this course will be a designated safe space for all students, regardless of background, ability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, socioeconomic status, race, or ethnicity. If you feel you have experienced discrimination or harassment at UConn, you can find support and resources at the Office of Institutional Equity. You may also contact Health Services, Counseling & Mental Health Services, and/or the Women’s Center. Please note that I am a mandatory reporter to the Office of Institutional Equity if I become aware of issues that may pose a danger to a student’s health or safety.

**Academic Integrity**

While studying and making use of the ideas and texts of others is central to the writing we will be doing in this course, this must be done in an ethical and appropriate way. Please review and abide by the University’s code on academic misconduct (plagiarism and misuse of sources), which will be distributed in class and can also be found on [the UConn Community Standards website](http://community.uconn.edu/the-student-code-preamble/); you will be held responsible for understanding these materials. Plagiarizing the work of others—passing off someone else’s work as your own—is a very serious offense, and anyone found plagiarizing will fail the essay or the course. Please let me know if you have questions about what constitutes appropriate use and citation of other people’s work.

**Disability and Accessibility**

The First-Year Writing program is committed to making educational opportunities available to all students. If you have a physical, psychological, medical or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities (Wilbur Cross 204, 860-486-2020). They will work with you to accommodate your needs and provide me with a letter describing those accommodations. All information and documentation is confidential. Please contact me as soon as possible in the semester so that I can also make the necessary arrangements for your comfort in our classroom.

**You can find more UConn-level policies** [**here**](https://provost.uconn.edu/faculty-and-staff-resources/syllabi-references/)**. The specific policies for this course can be found here.**

### **Course Components**

### *Writing*

Throughout this semester, you will complete one large writing project that is broken into four sections, each of which will be revised at least once throughout the semester:

1. A 3-5 page essay making the case for a text that *you* think should be considered a major work. You will first turn in a 1-2 page proposal for a text, then revise it to the 3-5 page length.
2. A 6-8 page essay comparing your chosen text to one of our course texts, focusing on the themes we established in class and you established in your first essay.
3. A creative piece of your choosing that in some way adapts your chosen text.
4. A 5-minute presentation during the last week of class wherein you make a case for your chosen text as a major work and how it compares to one of our course texts.

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### *Reading Responses*

### You will complete two kinds of reading responses throughout this course, one weekly and one per unit:

1. Every week, you will engage with the Classroom discussion board, which will appear as a new assignment each week. You are required to make two posts and one reply to classmates a week, all of which is due the Sunday after the week is over. These posts/replies can be about the reading, about something that came up in class, whatever. Your posts/replies must be substantive (i.e., more than “Agree”), adding something to the conversation. That being said, this is online communication, so part of this assignment is to distill what you’re thinking into a snapshot. Memes, emojis, gifs and other forms of internet speech that you can figure out how to use in GC are welcome (just keep it clean). This is a place for you to engage with each other and me as scholars and as people; use it as you will. You will receive a point for each substantive post/reply you make, so you should get three points a week. Each week will be graded on its own, so if you miss 1 post in a week, it can be costly. Make sure to make your posts every week.
2. On the day we finish reading the novel for each unit (which is clearly marked in the calendar), you will turn in 400-600 words responding to that novel. In this response, you will make a case for why you think this work would be considered a “major work”. We will then discuss your responses in class, so it is important that you do this work before you get to class. These response papers are a place for you to explore your ideas and will be graded as such; they will receive a check, check plus, or check minus, depending on what ideas you explore and how well you complete the prompt, but I am not necessarily grading how well you express your ideas but rather how willing you are to explore new ideas.

### *Participation*

Thoughtful discourse is an essential part of this class, and you will frequently work in groups of various sizes, which means you will need to be considerate of and attentive to others. It is your responsibility to keep up with the reading, to contribute to class conversation in the form of analytical comments or questions, and to attend class regularly and on time.

**Grades**

In order to pass this class, you must submit all assignments, no exceptions. You must also turn in rough drafts of all of your portfolio pieces in order for the final products to receive a grade. You will receive a grade on each of your rough drafts, but those grades will never go into the gradebook; if you revise, your grade should go up, and if you do not, you will fail that portion of the semester. If you fail all of the writing portions together, you automatically fail the course, as per W-course guidelines. Your grade will be determined by your performance on the major writing assignments, reading responses, and participation.

Your assignments will count for the following percentages of your final grade:

Definitional Essay 15%

Comparative essay 20%

Creative Project 15%

Presentation 10%

Discussion Board Responses 15%

Unit Reading Response 15%

Participation 10%