

**The Novel:
Narrating the Coming of Age**
ENGL 256-07
MWF 11:30 am-12:30 pm
Rosetti 225

Contact Information

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Office Location: Kiernan Hall #226
Office Hours: T 2:30-5:30 pm
W 3-5 pm
F 10-11 am

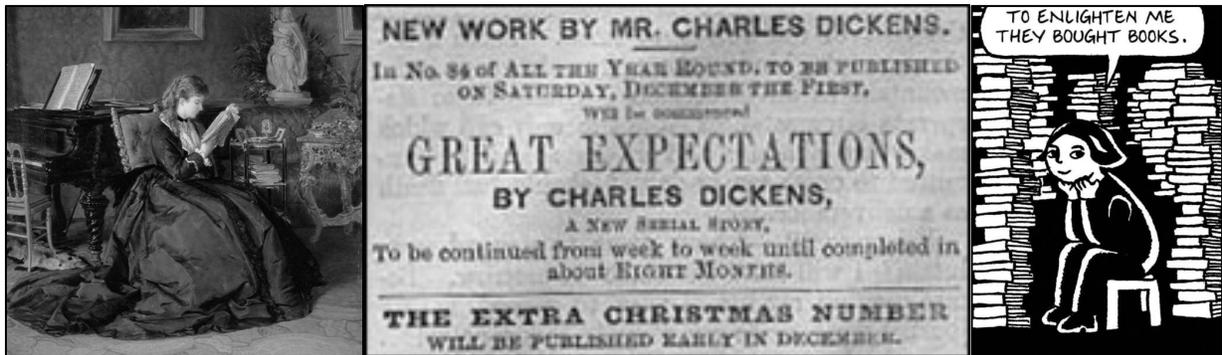


Image sources: *The New York Times*, *Dickens Journals Online*, *The Complete Persepolis*

Course Description

Welcome! In this class, we will explore the novel from a range of historical, formal, thematic, and cultural perspectives. From Daniel Defoe's adventure tale *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) to Marjane Satrapi's graphic memoir *Persepolis* (2000), our course texts engage with one of the novel's central preoccupations throughout time: the "coming-of-age" plot. In addition to exploring various engagements with this theme, we will trace scholarly debates about the origins of the novel, read some of the earliest "novels," explore the novel's formal transformations throughout time, and read novels in a variety of formats (as serialized texts, as triple-decker stacks, and as audiobooks). We will also consider the novel as a type of media – a technological invention and mode of communication. Some of our motivating questions might include: what makes a novel a novel? What stories make for good novels? Why is the "coming-of-age" plot so common? Why are some novels gripping "page-turners" and others painstaking slogs? How and why have people read novels throughout time, and how and why do we read them today?

Learning Goals & Objectives

This course has two main goals: 1) To give you guided practice in the analysis of literary works; and 2) To help you communicate your ideas effectively through writing and discussion. Successful completion of this course means you will:

- Improve your abilities as a close reader of texts.
- Gain the skills and practices necessary to demonstrate effective literary interpretation. These skills include carefully analyzing specific literary elements in relation to one another and understanding literary works in their cultural, historical, theoretical, and/or disciplinary contexts.
- Practice thinking critically about *genre* and *form*.
- Hone your voice as a scholar who enters critical conversations about literature.
- Develop as a writer who recognizes the importance of revision and engages meaningfully with feedback.
- Become an active participant in class discussions by respectfully listening to and engaging with your peers' ideas.
- Reflect on how the fundamental skills you develop in this course – close reading, clear writing, thoughtful discussion, and cultural analysis – will help you in your other courses at Siena and throughout the rest of your lives.

Required Texts

The following course texts are available at the Siena Bookstore and online. Many of these novels can also be purchased at local independent bookstores such as the Book House of Stuyvesant Plaza or Market Block Books in Troy (see me if you are interested in a more complete list). You are required to use *these editions* and bring them to class on the days we are discussing them. Please consult with me if you have difficulty accessing one of these course texts.

Anonymous, *The Woman of Colour*. (Broadview / ISBN: 9781551111766)

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*. ISBN: (Oxford / ISBN: 9780199535590)

Nella Larsen, *Quicksand and Passing*. (Rutgers / ISBN: 9780813511696)

Toni Morrison, *Sula*. (Vintage / ISBN: 9781400033430)

Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*. (Vintage / ISBN: 9781400078776)

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*. (Pantheon / ISBN: 9780375714573)

Canvas

On our Canvas site, you will find a copy of this syllabus, links to extra readings, a link to our collaborative Google Doc (see below), and prompts for the writing assignments.

Meeting with and contacting me

Office hours (listed at the top of the syllabus) are periods of time each week when I am in my office and available to meet with anyone who stops by. You are welcome to come to office hours at any time (no appointment needed!) to ask questions, go over a paper draft, talk about the reading, or just chat. This is *your* time, so please take advantage! Studies show that students who come to office hours regularly find more success in and get more out of their courses. If you'd like to meet with me outside of office hours, please email me, and we can set up a mutually convenient time.

Our primary mode of communication outside of class and office hours will be email, so please check your email regularly for updates from me. Feel free to email me at sdraucker@siena.edu at any time. I will respond within 24 hours during the week and 48 hours on weekends.

Course Requirements

In order to make the most out of this course, you will do a good deal of reading and writing and engage in a variety of class activities. Specific course requirements include:

- **Reading:** In order to participate fully in class, you must complete the assigned reading *before* the class meeting. I will expect you to *study*, not just read, the assigned texts. *Studying* can include, but is not limited to: re-reading key passages, annotating your books, taking notes, and jotting down questions.
 - Our ongoing project throughout the semester will be reading Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* in serial form, as it was originally published in Dickens's own periodical *All the Year Round*. We will use the online resource "Reading Like a Victorian" (<https://victorianserialnovels.org>), which provides links to a digitized edition of the original text and includes an interactive timeline for other major works published at the time. This means we will be reading *Great Expectations* in short bursts, fits and starts, alongside other works, and with distractions – much as the Victorians would have read it in 1860-1. This is an entirely different – and often quite strange – way of reading – one that we will explore and discuss together. For this exercise, it is ok if you fall behind, adjust your reading schedule, get distracted, fall asleep, read two installments at once, or skim a few paragraphs. (The Victorians likely did the same!) The point of this exercise is to think meta-critically about how we read now – and how the Victorians would have read in 1860-1.
- **Discussion:** You should come to class prepared and eager to discuss the works we read, share your ideas, and/or participate in small group activities.
- **Writing:** You will complete a variety of low- and high-stakes writing assignments throughout the semester. These are designed to help you

practice analyzing texts, crafting arguments, organizing your ideas, engaging with primary and secondary sources, and revising your prose. To this end, you will complete the following:

- **Goodreads-style blurb about *The Woman of Colour* (300-500 words)**
- **“*Great Expectations* in Context” historical reflection (two paragraphs)**
- ***Great Expectations* reading journal (at least 5 entries, 1-2 paragraphs each) AND accompanying reflection essay (2-3 pages)**
- ***Jane Eyre* close reading essay (3-4 pages)**
- **Final essay (5-6 pages)**

You will receive detailed handouts for all of these assignments as the time approaches. They will also be posted on our course Canvas site (“Files” → “Assignments”).

Grading

I will outline specific criteria for each graded project on individual assignment sheets (on Canvas under “Files” → “Assignments.”) Here is the overall points breakdown for the course requirements:

Goodreads blurb: 25 points

Historical reflection (“*Great Expectations* in Context”): 25 points

Great Expectations Reading Journal and reflection: 75 points

Jane Eyre Close Reading: 100 points

Final Essay: 150 points

Attendance, Participation, and Engagement: 75 points

=450 points total

Here are the letter grade conversions based on a 450-point scale:

$\geq 423 = A$

405-422 = A-

392-404 = B+

378-391 = B

360-377 = B-

347-359 = C+

333-346 = C

315-332 = C-

302-314 = D+

288-301 = D

270-287 = D-

$\leq 269 = F$

Attendance Policy

Your regular attendance and active participation are essential to your success in the course *and* your classmates' learning experiences. Missing **more than three class sessions** will lower your final grade. For each additional day missed (day 4 and beyond), your final grade will be lowered by *one-third of a letter grade* (e.g. a B+ becomes a B, a C- becomes a D, and so on). **Missing six or more classes will result in a failing grade for the course.** These three "free" absences can be used for anything from oversleeping to illnesses, religious/cultural observances, extracurricular commitments, or emergencies. Do NOT come to class if you are sick or experiencing flu-like symptoms. If a long-term illness or family emergency arises, contact me and the VPAA Office (academicaffairs@siena.edu), and we will work something out.

Please also note that **two late arrivals** (10 minutes late to class or more) will constitute an absence. I take attendance at the beginning of class, so if you arrive late, it is your responsibility to see me when class is over so that I record your attendance.

Participation and Engagement

Discussion is the cornerstone of any literature class. I expect everyone in this class to come to each meeting prepared and eager to participate in the conversation. However, I am aware that "participation" and "engagement" can take many forms. Talking more than everyone else does not guarantee you an "A" participation grade. In my classroom, listening attentively and responding to your classmates' ideas is just as important as sharing your own. I am aware that everyone participates differently and that some are more comfortable than others talking in class. To this end, I will incorporate a variety of small-group discussions, written responses, and other in-class activities to reward multiple forms of participation. Please contact me if there are ways I can help you engage more actively in class.

A word about technology: I permit laptops in class (and, in some cases, will request that you bring one to class if you have one), but I do expect you to use them *only* for course-related activities. *Students who use technology for other purposes during class may be marked absent for the day.* Note that there will be times when I specifically ask you to close your laptops for discussion, so please always be prepared with a pen/pencil and paper for note-taking purposes. *Phones must be kept on silent and out of sight.* Please discuss any specific accessibility needs regarding technology with me at the beginning of the semester (see "Accessibility Statement" below).

Academic Citizenship

Siena College's Mission Statement reads, "Siena fosters the rigorous intellectual development of its students through a healthy exchange of ideas both inside and outside the classroom...It develops in each individual an appreciation for the richness of exploring knowledge from a variety of perspectives and disciplines." To this end, my

expectation is that we will work together to make this classroom a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for the dynamic and respectful exchange of ideas. I ask that we all approach the diverse perspectives offered by our authors and each other with respect, sensitivity, interest, and engagement. The ability to engage in healthy intellectual debate and disagreement is one of the greatest affordances of a liberal arts education, but such debates should never consist of disrespectful comments, hurtful remarks, hostile actions, or personal attacks.

Many of our course texts deal with difficult topics such as death, illness, racism, gender discrimination, sexual violence, and xenophobia. Much of this material can be emotionally and intellectually challenging. I will do my best to offer a “heads up” about particularly graphic or intense content so that we can all engage safely, carefully, and thoughtfully with the material. If you have any concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Late and Missed Assignments

Unless you have extenuating circumstances and make specific arrangements with me in advance, graded assignments (signaled with an asterisk[*] on the syllabus) will be penalized by *one-third of a letter grade* for each day they are late (e.g. B+ → B, C- → D, etc.). If you are habitually late with your assignments, you will be unable to engage fully in the class, and this will also affect your participation and attendance grade.

Plagiarism & Academic Integrity

According to Siena’s Statement on Academic Integrity, “The concept of academic integrity lies at the heart of any college. This is particularly true of Siena with its strong Franciscan tradition and its dedication to fostering sound moral growth. In such an environment, academic dishonesty cannot be tolerated. Students who commit such acts subject themselves to sanctions as severe as dishonorable dismissal from the College. Academic dishonesty can take different forms, including, but not limited to: cheating [dishonesty in a test situation], plagiarism [dishonesty in the presentation of materials in a paper or report], and failure to report known instances of academic dishonesty.”

Please note that academic dishonesty and plagiarism are serious offenses and can result in failure of the assignment and/or course as well as disciplinary action at the college level. Cases of plagiarism will be handled in accordance with the disciplinary procedures described in Siena College’s Academic Integrity Policy, the full version of which can be found online:

<https://www.siena.edu/offices/academics/academic-policies-and-procedures/academic-integrity-policy/>

In this class, we will discuss conventions for using and citing sources in academic papers. If you have any questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, I invite you to speak with me.

The Writing Center

The Writing Center, located in Library 09, provides free one-on-one writing support to all members of the Siena College community. Trained peer consultants assist students at all levels with writing assignments in a variety of subjects. Professional tutoring services and English language support are also available, as well as a long-term Mentor Program for weekly meetings. The Writing Center consultants work with writers from all levels of experience, ability, and expertise. I encourage you to make use of this invaluable resource at least once for each major paper this semester. To learn more and make an appointment, please visit:

<https://www.siena.edu/offices/writing-center/>

Chosen Name and Gender Pronouns

I aim to create an inclusive learning community that supports all students, including students of all gender expressions and identities. You are invited to tell me early in the semester which set of pronouns (she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/their/theirs, etc.) you feel best fits your identity. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Accessibility Statement

In compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Siena College is committed to fostering an accessible learning environment to all students. Students with particular needs should contact the Office of Accessibility (Foy Hall 109), which is responsible for providing accommodations to students with disabilities. All information disclosed is private and will not be released without your written permission. More information can be found here:

<https://www.siena.edu/offices/accessibility/>

We all learn in different ways, and I am committed to supporting your learning needs. If you have specific accommodations, please let me know at the beginning of the semester so that I can help you get the most out of this class. Any information about your accessibility needs will be treated with the utmost discretion.

Many difficulties (medical, emotional, financial, cultural, and familial) can affect our abilities to perform academically. Siena provides several support services that are available to all students, including the Office of the Dean of Students, Student Academic Success and Engagement (SASE), Health Services, the Counseling Center, the Title IX Office, and the Department of Public Safety. I am happy to provide more information or connect you with these services throughout the semester.

Office of the Dean of Students: <https://www.siena.edu/offices/dean-of-students/>

Student Academic Success and Engagement (SASE):

<https://www.siena.edu/offices/student-academic-success-and-engagement/>

Health Services: <https://www.siena.edu/offices/health-services/>
Counseling Center: <https://www.siena.edu/offices/counseling-center/>
Title IX/EEO Office: <https://www.siena.edu/offices/title-ix-eeo/>
Department of Public Safety: <https://www.siena.edu/offices/public-safety/>

Please do not hesitate to contact me with ideas or suggestions for making this class more inclusive and accessible. I am committed to supporting your learning in any way I can.

Pandemic & Emergency Preparedness

You are instructed to bring all texts and a copy of the syllabus/course schedule home with you in the event of a College Closure. If your situation permits, you should continue with readings and assignments to the best of your ability, per the course schedule. I will give you instructions via email regarding how to deal with assignments and deadlines. If possible, I will set up online office hours so that you can “check-in” with any questions you may have. If you do not have internet, we will find another method of communication. Stay connected with information regarding the College’s status and reopening schedule by monitoring the Siena website.

Course Schedule

Please note: readings are listed on the day they are due. Readings labeled “**C**” are on our Canvas site. Items listed in **bold** are graded assignments or things to hand in.

This schedule is subject to change as needed. Updates will be provided in class and via email.

Unit 1: Emerging Forms: The Early “Novel” and Its Subjects

- W 9/4: Introductions & syllabus
- F 9/6: Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, December 1860 (chs. 1-8), on Reading Like the Victorians
- M 9/9: James Noggle, “Print Culture and the Rise of the Novel” & Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (C)
- W 9/11: *GE*, January 1861 (chs. 9-15) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 1**
- F 9/13: *The Woman of Colour*, 53-93
- M 9/16: *The Woman of Colour*, 94-146
- W 9/18: *The Woman of Colour*, 147-end
In class: Victoria Barnett-Woods, “Models of Morality: The Bildungsroman and Social Reform in *The Female American* and *The Woman of Colour*” (*Women’s Studies*)
- F 9/20: **Draft of Goodreads blurb for *The Woman of Colour* due (before class, via email);** *GE*, February 1861 (chs. 16-21) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 2**

Unit 2: Solidifying Forms and Selves: The Nineteenth-Century *Bildungsroman*

- M 9/23: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Preface to Second Edition—vol. I, ch. 5
- T 9/24: post final Goodreads blurb by 11:59 pm EST**
- W 9/25: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. I, ch. 6-9; **respond to two other reviews on Goodreads (before class)**
- F 9/27: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. I, ch. 10-15

- M 9/30: *GE*, March 1861 (chs. 22-29) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 3**
- W 10/2: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. II, ch. 1-5
- F 10/4: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. II, ch. 6-11
- M 10/7: *GE*, April 1861 (chs. 30-37) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 4**
- W 10/9: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. III, ch. 1-5
- F 10/11: **NO CLASS – Holiday**
- M 10/14: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. III, ch. 6-9
Gayatri Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism”
(*Critical Inquiry*) (C)
- W 10/16: *Jane Eyre*, Vol. III, ch. 10-end
- F 10/18: **Bring *Jane Eyre* passages to class**
- M 10/21: *GE*, May 1861 (chs. 38-42) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 5**
- W 10/23: ***Jane Eyre* Close Reading due (before class, via email)**
- F 10/25: *GE*, June 1861 (chs. 43-52) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 6**

Unit 3: Experimental Forms: Modernist Narratives

- M 10/28: Nella Larsen, *Quicksand*, chs. 1-11
- W 10/30: *Quicksand*, chs.12-end
- F 11/1: *GE*, July 1861 (chs. 53-57) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 7**
- M 11/4: Toni Morrison, *Sula* 3-48
- W 11/6: *Sula*, 49-85
- F 11/8: *Sula*, 86-137
- M 11/11: *Sula*, 138-end
- W 11/13: *GE*, August 1861 (chs. 58-9) & reading journal; **GE in Context Group 8**
- F 11/15: **NO CLASS (Dr. D at conference)**
GE Journal and Reflection Essay due (before class time, via email)

Unit 4: Contemporary Forms: Fiction in Words, Images, and Sounds

- M 11/18: Kazuo Ishiguro, *Never Let Me Go*, beginning to 61
- W 11/20: *NLMG*, 62-114
- F 11/22: *NLMG*, 115-183; in-class audiobook listening exercise
- M 11/25: Finish *NLMG*; **Topic proposal for final paper due (by class, via email)**
- W 11/27: *NO CLASS – Thanksgiving recess*
- F 11/29: *NO CLASS – Thanksgiving recess*
- M 12/2: Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, beginning-71
- W 12/4: Satrapi, *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*, 72-end
In class: Hilary Chute, “The Texture of Retracing in Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis*” (*Women’s Studies Quarterly*) (C)
- F 12/6: **Bring drafts of final papers to class for peer review**
- M 12/9: *Last day of classes*
- F 12/13: **Final Essay Due by 11:59 pm EST**