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—Jane Austen, in a letter to her sister, Cassandra

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First Year Seminar: Adapting Austen

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??? am - ??? am MWF ???
Professor: Dr. Jodi L. Wyett
E-mail: wyett@xavier.edu
Office: Hinkle 304
Office Hours: ??? a.m.–??? p.m., and by appointment
Office Phone: 745-3158

Location: ???

Required Texts:
Jane Austen, The Annotated Pride and Prejudice (Interactive Edition), By Jane Austen, David M. Shapard (this is the $9.99 electronic text version. It is very important that you buy the correct e-book because we will be working extensively with the supplemental materials!)
It is imperative that you have the specified editions of the novels since we will be working with the supplemental material in every one of these editions. You will need to bring a laptop or tablet to every class but there will be strict guidelines for their use! We will only open up our devices if we are working on an online assignment (lab days) or with an e-text. In all other cases, laptops and technology should be stowed so that we can give our fully present human attention to each other.

Course Description:
This course is a key part of the Ethics/Religion and Society focus of the Xavier core curriculum. We will explore some of the ways that you can make the most of your college experience to do what Adrienne Rich calls “claiming” your education. We will do this through vigorous intellectual interrogation of the historical context and enduring popularity of the works of Jane Austen, focusing on how they address the ethical question of the greater good. We will read three of Austen’s published novels, some of her juvenilia and her correspondence, and consider a few of the myriad ways in which her writing and persona have been adapted in our own time including films, mash-ups, TV series, web series, and graphic novels. We will work to understand Austen’s morals and mores in relation to the social and cultural conditions of her own time (the Napoleonic wars, the abolition of the slave trade, gender inequity in property laws and customs, the human costs of maintaining the landed gentry, etc.), but we will also consider why her writing continues to have relevance for modern audiences. Why do adaptations of her work remain so popular? If modern adaptations often ignore Austen’s thornier themes, what does that say about our current relationship to those issues? Are we dodging important moral questions or
have those questions changed? Assignments will incorporate digital humanities methodology (eg., Google Maps, Wikis, posting on Wordpress site) with the aim of producing an online final project that showcases students’ own adaptations of one of Austen’s works and emphasizes a theme that can be defined as significantly engaging with the greater good. Because this course is a seminar, it will require substantial student contribution to the class discussion. Also please note that the structure and subject matter of this course demand maturity as well as sensitivity to the opinions and beliefs of others. We will aim to emulate Austen’s fictional creation Anne Elliot rather than some of the more misanthropic tendencies Austen herself voiced in her letters to her sister (see epigraphs above).

**Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Apply the approaches of multiple disciplines (literary studies, history, and media studies in particular) to the issue of the greater good in general and to understanding the work of Austen in specific
- Identify and assess ethical issues
- Interpret the works of Jane Austen (challenging texts)
- Construct evidence-based arguments about literature and culture
- Write succinctly and present ideas visually for a wide public (online) audience
- Articulate ideas orally by engaging with peers and instructor informally in a seminar setting, and formally via presentations of projects and via recorded video
- Develop appropriate college classroom practices and relationships to peers and instructor
- Employ effective library and information literacy skills by conducting, evaluating, and using research
- Begin to articulate the evolution of their vocation and aspirations to contribute to the world

**Requirements:**

There will be four main assignments for this class: 1) Online class discussion posts where students post responses to prompts and respond to each other’s posts in a Blog or Vlog format weekly throughout the semester; 2) An annotated Google Map for *Northanger Abbey* that focuses on geographical and historical space both during Austen’s time and now; 3) An Artifact or Event Wiki for inclusion in a class Timeline to understand historical events and material culture during the Regency period; and 4) Collaborative Final Projects that consist of multi-format adaptations uploaded to the course website for “The Flame.”

**Attendance and Participation:** Class discussions and in-class activities are essential to this course. Thus if you wish to succeed in this class, you need to attend and participate every day. Participation includes not only coming to class but also arriving prepared, on time, and ready to contribute to class discussions and activities. Your contribution will be measured by the “step up/step out” method. That is, you’ll be expected to offer thoughtful comments during discussion (step up), but you should do so without monopolizing the class or blurtng out whatever crosses your mind (step out). Also note that for the duration of the class period, you will be expected to disconnect from your personal technology. No phone calls or texts should be coming in or going out during class. Laptops/tablets should be stowed unless you have a documentable need for one or we are expressly working with them during lab days. Adult comportment is expected of all students.
If you must miss class, consult as soon as possible with a trusted classmate for any notes and announcements. Attendance will also be taken into consideration when calculating participation grades. Sustained habitual absences, defined as missing a week’s worth of consecutive classes or a total of two weeks worth of class (6 classes) will result in a grade of VF (vanishing failure).

**Grading:**

**You are responsible for your own grade in this course.** You must be actively engaged in claiming an education. I cannot help you with problems in this class if you do not tell me what they are. You are encouraged to make individual appointments to see me, to come to my office hours, to call me at my office, to send me e-mail messages, and, of course, to speak up in class! Be aware that e-mail is not an appropriate venue for discussing certain issues and I do not always check my email on the weekends.

**I do not accept late assignments or e-mail attachments.** Late is defined as anything turned in after the beginning of the class period in which it is due and I must receive a hard copy of your work at that time. Except in the most dire, unavoidable and documentable circumstances, you must have prior approval from me for any late or missed assignments. I am available to look at assignment drafts and talk with you about them. You will need to make an appointment to come to my office with your draft at least two days before it is due so you have plenty of time to work on any issues. I can respond to quick or minor questions via email, such as commenting on thesis statements or topics.

**Plagiarism, the use of another person’s words or ideas as one’s own** will not be tolerated. It is against the law. If you plagiarize, it will result in, at the very least, failure of this course and may result in further academic discipline from the University. Don’t do it.

Everything will be graded on a 100-point scale (e.g., 80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+).

Assignments will be weighted as follows:

- Blog/Vlog postings — 25%
- Map — 20%
- Event or Artifact Wiki — 20%
- Adaptation Final Project — 25%
- Participation — 10%

**Tutoring:**

A valuable resource for all students is the Writing Center, 400 Conaton Learning Commons, 745-2875. Tutors can help you on an individual basis with any aspect of your writing at any stage in the writing process. They will not write papers for you nor will they proofread.

**Students with Disabilities:**

Anyone who feels he/she may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability (e.g.: sensory, learning, psychological, medical, mobility) should contact me to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs as soon as possible. I rely on the Disability Services Office for assistance in verifying your eligibility for academic accommodations related to your disability. If you have not previously contacted Disability Services, I encourage you to do so at 513-745-3280 on the Fifth Floor of the Conaton Learning Commons, Room 514 or e-mail Cassandra Jones at jonesc20@xavier.edu, to coordinate reasonable accommodations.
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

All assignments are to be read or completed for the day on which they are listed. Any changes to the schedule will be discussed and announced in class.

WEEK I
M 1/12 Syllabus, course expectations, introductions. Come prepared with your syllabus annotation (per the instructions on Canvas) and ready to discuss the posted handout “How College is Different from High School (from “What will I learn in college?”).

WEEK II
M 1/19 No class —MLK Day

WEEK III
W 1/28 LAB DAY: Bring laptop or tablet. Discuss Google Maps assignment and writing annotations. For today, look at all of the annotations for two of the four of the “Collected Maps” in the Interactive P&P (your choice) and come prepared to talk about them.

WEEK IV
M 2/2 P&P Adaptations: watch Bride and Prejudice for today’s class, discuss scenes from 1995 BBC miniseries (see Collected Videos on p. 615 of Interactive P&P—watch the pond one and, if you like, the two proposal scenes and the scene with Elizabeth and Lady Catherine). Also watch the interview with Andrew Davies, p. 615 of the Interactive P&P. I will bring in clips from the 2005 P&P, Bridget Jones’s Diary, and images from the 1940 version film posters.
W 2/4 LAB DAY: library instruction for researching Google Map locations. Complete the XU Tutor module on evaluating websites for today.

WEEK V
W 2/11 LAB DAY: Using Google Maps, writing annotations, sign up for Wiki topics.
F 2/13 Read the Jane Austen’s World blog post on “Pride and Prejudice and Economics” to prepare for historical contexts application exercise: House Hunters, Highbury Edition game.

WEEK VI
W 2/18 Google Map Due. LAB DAY: Discuss Wiki assignment. Library instruction on sources for Wikis. Final Projects: choose groups by today.
F 2/20 Austen, Northanger Abbey, pp. 88-142 (Vol. II, ch.s 1-10).

WEEK VII
W 2/25 LAB DAY: uploading Wikis to course website. Final Projects: get ideas approved today.
F 2/27 Watch Northanger Abbey (2007 TV movie) for discussion today.

WEEK VIII SPRING BREAK

WEEK IX
M 3/9 Emma, pp. 5-50 (vol. I, ch.s i-viii).
W 3/11 FIRST DRAFT OF WIKI DUE. LAB DAY: Linking Wikis. Final Projects: What tools do we need to create them?
F 3/13 Emma, pp. 50-106 (to the end of Volume I)

WEEK X
M 3/16 FINAL VERSION OF WIKI DUE. Wiki flash (2-3 min) presentations.
W 3/18—no class (ASECS): meet with your group to write your pitch blog post and prepare your oral pitch for Monday’s class. Keep reading Emma!
F 3/20—no class: (ASECS): meet with your group to write your pitch blog post and prepare your oral pitch for Monday’s class. Keep reading Emma!

WEEK XI
W 3/25 LAB DAY: Final project proposals—5 min. oral pitch—including what tools you will use to make your adaptation.

WEEK XII
W 4/1 Emma, pp. 305-332 (to the end).
F 4/3 No class-Easter Break

WEEK XIII
M 4/6 No class-Easter Break
W 4/8 Watch Clueless for discussion today.
F 4/10 Complete drafts of projects must be uploaded to website by TODAY. LAB DAY: Editing content on course website, writing your intro. page.
WEEK XIV
**M 4/13** Project Presentations
**W 4/15** Project Presentations
**F 4/17** Project Presentations

WEEK XV
**M 4/20** Project presentation review session—what worked? What didn’t? **LAB DAY:** revising course website.
**W 4/22** What is Vocation? Which Austen characters seem to have found their vocations? Which have not? What are the barriers to finding vocation in the novels? What helps the characters find their vocations?
**F 4/24** “Austen Therapy” from Deborah Yaffe, *Among the Janeites* and “Getting Started” and Ch. 3 (Guatemala) from Amy Elizabeth Smith, *All Roads Lead to Austen*

WEEK XVI
**M 4/27** Vocation discussion, cont.
**W 4/29** Vocation discussion, cont.
**F 5/1** Course Evaluations—complete online evaluations if haven’t already done so

**Final Exam Period: Final Project reflections due.** Course reflection exercise, (including discussion of whether or not to make website public facing).