

Course: Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*

Instructor: Dr. Kathleen Hudson

Required Text:

Sense and Sensibility by Jane Austen

The instructor will be using the 2019 Oxford World's Classics edition and will divide the sessions into separate discussions of each of the three volumes. A copy of the text is required reading for participation in the course, though it is not required that it be the same edition as the one used by the instructor, and an edition which divides the text according to volume number as well as chapters is recommended.

Book: *Sense and Sensibility*

Author: Jane Austen

Editor: John Mullen

Publisher: Oxford University Press; 3rd edition (2019)

ISBN-13: 978-0198793359

Course Description:

"I wish, as well as everybody else, to be perfectly happy; but, like everybody else, it must be in my own way." (*Sense and Sensibility*, Vol. I, Chapter XVII)

One of the most well-loved of Jane Austen's classic novels, *Sense and Sensibility* follows the trials and travails of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood as they navigate loss and love. Capturing the tensions that exist between the dictates of propriety and the complexities of the heart, Austen's brilliant novel traces the Dashwood family's journey as they seek a sense of place and identity and come to terms with the nature of emotional truth and self-expression.

This course will examine literary, social, and cultural contexts surrounding Austen's work as well as the ongoing evolution of the characters, plot, and nuances within the text. Classes will primarily involve close readings and discussions of *Sense and Sensibility*, while supplemental material will also be provided which illuminates key elements of the text. We will discuss this novel's role as a product of, and insightful response to, a storied literary history and understanding of both 'sense' and 'sensitivity', and how negotiations of issues such as gender, class, gossip, privacy, and domesticity are used within the novel to shape the development of the heroines and expose the complexities of social and personal relationships in Austen's time. The course will conclude with a look towards critical discussions, contemporary adaptations, and the enduring impact of one of Austen's most beloved novels.

Course Schedule:

There will be a total of four sessions, each addressing key themes, topics, issues, and critical contexts for the three volumes of the text as well as recent adaptations and cultural impacts.

January 31st: *Sense and Sensibility*, Volume One

(This session will include an introduction to key concepts and themes of the work as well as relevant historical contexts)

February 21st: *Sense and Sensibility*, Volume Two

March 14th: *Sense and Sensibility*, Volume Three

April 4th: *Sense and Sensibility*, adaptations and critical readings

(This session will wrap up our discussion of the text by examining key film and TV adaptations of Austen and scholarly criticism of the novel)

Instructor Biography:

Dr. Kathleen Hudson is the author of *Servants and the Gothic: 1764-1831, A half-told tale* and editor of the edited collection *Women's Authorship and the Early Gothic: Legacies and Innovations*, and has published widely on Gothic literature, class narratives, and women's writing, including contributing to the University of Sheffield MOOC: "Literature of the Country House". She currently works as an adjunct professor at the United States Naval Academy and Anne Arundel Community College.

Suggested Secondary Source Reading:

Johnson, Claudia. *Jane Austen: women, politics, and the novel*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1990.

Kaufmann, David. "Law and Propriety, Sense and Sensibility: Austen on the Cusp of Modernity." *ELH*, vol. 59, no. 2, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992, pp. 385–408, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2873348>.

Morris, Pam. "Sense and Sensibility: Wishing Is Believing." *Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf and Worldly Realism*, Edinburgh University Press, 2017, pp. 29–54, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g09tv4.5>.

Morgan, Susan. "Polite Lies: The Veiled Heroine of Sense and Sensibility." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, vol. 31, no. 2, University of California Press, 1976, pp. 188–205, <https://doi.org/10.2307/2933501>.

Smith, Phoebe A. "'Sense and Sensibility' and 'The Lady's Law': The Failure of Benevolent Paternalism." *CEA Critic*, vol. 55, no. 3, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993, pp. 3–25, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44377674>.

Haggerty, George E. "The Sacrifice of Privacy in Sense and Sensibility." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 7, no. 2, University of Tulsa, 1988, pp. 221–37, <https://doi.org/10.2307/463680>.