E349S-2/WGS345 The Brontës: Self and Society (#34605/#46205)

This course will critically examine the literary outpourings of the Brontë sisters, comparing and contrasting their works from a variety of different viewpoints. We will begin by studying the two most popular novels, Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* (you will have the opportunity to see film versions of these two classics as well). Then we will move on to Anne's *Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, which should illustrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of the story-telling impulse. Finally, we will read *Villette*, adjudged by many modern critics as Charlotte's masterpiece, and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*. At each point, we will try on different readings of the novels, primarily psychological (sometimes auto/biographical and hence likely to be family systems oriented), Marxist, and feminist.

The course will include a series of oral reports based on independent reading: each student will select for study a complete work or collection by or about the Brontës and relate it to the overall concerns of the course. Representative "works" include: primary readings--poetry by Emily, Charlotte, and/or Anne; reprinted juvenilia (many of the originals are here at UT's Humanities Research Center); Anne's *Agnes Grey*; Charlotte's *Professor* or the unfinished *Emma* (both published posthumously) or her "historical" novel, *Shirley*; the poetry and/or sermons of their father, the Reverend Patrick Brontë; possible sources in the Romantic poets and journals such as *Blackwood's* and *Fraser's*; secondary readings--the controversy surrounding Elizabeth Gaskell's "life" of Charlotte; various other biographical accountings of the sisters and their unpublished (in his lifetime) brother, Branwell; recent critical/theoretical studies, such as Helene Moglen's *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived*, Terry Eagleton's *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*, Robert Keefe's *Charlotte Brontë's World of Death*, Cynthia A. Linder's *Romantic Imagery in the Novels of Charlotte Brontë*, and Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic*.

N.B. The Brontës and their creations have acquired an almost mythical status in the Anglo-American literary tradition. As a result, they can also be studied through a fascinating array of works for which they apparently served as "models." Our extended reading list may well include such titles as May Sinclair's *The Three Sisters*, Rachel Ferguson's *The Brontës Went to Woolworths*, Daphne DuMaurier's *Rebecca*, and Robert Barnard's *The Case of the Missing Brontë*.

Requirements: two short papers (4-5 pages each)--20% each of course grade
prospectus (1-2 pp.) plus seminar-length paper (10-12 pages)--35%
two oral reports (about 10 minutes each)--15%
active participation in class discussion/regular attendance--10%

Prerequisite: Nine hours of coursework in English or Rhetoric and Writing.

N.B.: This class will meet the Writing Flag and Global Cultures requirements.
Meeting/reading/writing schedule:

1. January 20 - Introduction
2. 25 - WUTHERING HEIGHTS
27 - WH
3. February 1 - WH
3 - WH and Emily's poetry
4. 8 - WH concluded (films/criticism); begin JANE EYRE
10 - JE
5. 15 - JE
17 - JE
6. 22 - JE concluded (films/criticism); begin TENANT
24 - TENANT; assign #1
7. March 29 - TENANT
8. March 2 - HRC Mss. Seminar (2nd Floor)
[9] - #1 due March 11 (F) by 5 p.m.

[Spring Break: March 14 - 18]

9. 21 - VILLETTE; begin individual conferences
23 - Reading period/conferences
10. 28 - VILLETTE
30 - VILLETTE; assign #2
11. April 4 - VILLETTE
6 - VILLETTE
12. 11 - VILLETTE
13 - VILLETTE criticism (c/c PROFESSOR & EMMA)
[15] - Paper #2 due (F by 5 p.m.)
13. 18 - WIDE SARGASSO SEA; begin conferences
20 - WSS concluded
[22] - Prospectus re final paper due (F by 5 p.m.)
14. 25 - WSS criticism; other "adaptations"
27 - In-progress reports begin
15. May 2 - Reports continue
4 - Reports conclude; course review
13 - Final paper in lieu of exam (F by 5 p.m.)
Oral Reports
Over the course of the semester you will each deliver two oral reports—one chosen from a list of topics made available in the first two weeks, the second an in-progress report of your final paper delivered during our last three class meetings. Detailed instructions will be forthcoming.

Writing
Although there will be some ungraded in-class writing, the primary writing will be three analytic papers; their due dates and length requirements appear on pp. 1-2 of this syllabus. All paper assignments will be made with detailed instructions a full two weeks before they are due. Although I accept late papers up to a week after the deadline, they will be returned to you without the extensive commentary you will need to revise and improve your writing (the exception is the final paper, which must be turned in on time during finals week).

The Undergraduate Writing Center
The UWC is a resource available to you free of charge. Highly trained graduate and undergraduate consultants are available to assist you at any stage of the writing process from brainstorming to final editing. They also have numerous books and handouts available on grammar, format, and citation form. The location is PCL 2.330 and the hours are M-Th 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Walk-ins are accepted but appointments can reduce waiting time (call 512-471-6222 reserve a time).

Grading Policy
The grading breakdown appears on page 1 of this syllabus. It stipulates regular class attendance, by which I mean not more than three absences over the course of the semester (preferably with advance warning or explanation after the fact) unless illness or emergency circumstances arise. Individual paper grades and your final course grade will be subject to the new +/- grading system. I expect that all cell phones will be turned off and that laptop computers will be reserved for the taking of notes.

Plagiarism
If you use words or ideas that are not your own, you must cite your sources; otherwise, you will be guilty of plagiarism. We will be discussing in class what constitutes plagiarism, and please be sure to get any questions about it answered at that time. We will also be discussing how to handle citations and conduct research, and you will be provided with the relevant handouts for future consultation.

Religious Holy Days
By UT Austin policy, you must notify me of a pending absence at least two weeks prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class in order to observe a religious holy day, I will give you an opportunity to make up any missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Documented Disability Statement
The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-232-2937 (video phone), or visit http://www.ddce.utexas.edu/diversity/ssd.

Office Hours
My office is in Parlin 221, and my office hours are MW 2:30-3:30 p.m. and by appointment (I can usually meet you after our regular class meeting time as well). You can reach me by phone at 512-471-4991 (messages), 512-471-8970 (during office hours), and 512-476-8079 (home). My e-mail address is <mackay@austin.utexas.edu>.