Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Shawna Ross
Course: 378
Title: The British Novel from 1870

Description: This course will survey the second half of the history of the British novel, using non-traditional assignments to plumb the ways in which digital technologies can help us analyze fiction. A beginning short unit on mapping will follow a longer unit on quantitative stylistic analysis. A longer unit on digital archives and resources will precede a short final unit on adaptation will finish the course.

Beginning with an Edwardian political parody, we will examine the legacies of the Victorian era in modern geopolitics and use mapping software to reveal the peripatetic footprint of Chesterton’s novel. Next, we will move on to the avant-garde stylings of high modernism, represented by a classic of unreliable narration and another another that uses stream-of-consciousness. For these two novels, we will use software-based analysis to understand modernist style. Next, we will return to political themes by investigating two satiric novels, one science-fictional, the other about World War II, using digital archives to understand how digital resources influence our understanding of literature. The two projects due in this second long unit will be group projects (unless you elect to perform these individually). Finally, we will end with an early postmodern novel, for which you will also provide a “rewriting” in the form of your choice (which may be completed solo or as a group project).

Proposed Readings:
G.K. Chesterton, The Man Who Was Thursday
Ford Madox Ford, The Good Soldier
Virginia Woolf, To the Lighthouse
Aldous Huxley, Brave New World
Muriel Spark, The Girls of Slender Means
Jean Rhys, Wide Sargasso Sea