**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND COMPARATIVE LITERARY STUDIES**

**THE ENGLISH NINETEENTH CENTURY NOVEL**

**FIRST ASSESSED ESSAY**

Write an essay of 5,000 words (e.g +/- 10%, following departmental guidelines) on one of the following topics. One electronic copy should be submitted on TABULA by 12:00 noon on 9th December 2016. You must refer in detail to at least TWO texts studied in Term 1. Please make sure that you are aware of the department guidelines for the presentation of essays and of the regulations on plagiarism. Please use MLA formatting (there’s a brief outline below for those unfamiliar with the style).

It is particularly important that your essay define the terms of its argument. If, for example, you choose question eleven, you must define what the “mode of female freedom” that you are addressing is. This would be equally the case for any other assigned question: the best essays addressing question fourteen, for example, would define both “schooling” and “masculinity” in terms relating to its argument. Note that these would not simply be dictionary definitions. Rather, work at this level should advance how its terms are defined *within the work itself.*

If you are unsure of what a good essay at this level looks like, you may consult our website, where we have uploaded, with their authors’ permission, some examples of essays that received a first in the past couple of years. Also, please make reference to the e-lecture concerning writing papers.

1. How does the position of a third-person narrator affect the nature and impact of the tale? This essay must make reference to any of the following accounts of narratology: Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (1983), Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (1978).
2. The Rise of the Novel is frequently taken for granted within novel studies; the fragility of the novel—its difficulties achieving effect on the real world—less so. Describe the social difficulties experienced by those characters who read novels `within any two novels in the course. What does this say about novel-reading?
3. Making reference to Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network Theory, as described in *Reassembling the Social* (2005)*,* contrast how any two novels in the course describe the same nonhuman actor.
4. Describe how class status makes it easier or more difficult for novels to represent certain kinds of characters. This essay must make reference to any of the following accounts of narratology: Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse* (1983), Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (1978).
5. Describe how two novels address the ethics of finance, money, and credit, doing so via Mary Poovey, *Genres of the Credit Economy* (2008) or Anna Kornbluh, *Realizing Capital* (2013).
6. “The less punctuation marks, taken in isolation, convey meaning or expression and the more they constitute the opposite pole in language…the more each of them acquires a definite…expression of its own, which cannot be separated from its syntactic function but is no means exhausted by it.” (Adorno, “Punctuation Marks” 300.) Locate, and explore the role of, consistent patterns of punctuation marks in any two novels.
7. W.J.T. Mitchell has defined landscape as “a body of symbolic forms capable of being invoked and reshaped to express meanings and values.” Analyse the symbolic meanings and values of landscape in two texts studied.
8. David Marshall notes within nineteenth-century novels a "a recurrent dialectic between theater as problem and theater as solution" (*Figure of Theater* 2). Appraise the part played by theatre and performance in two novels studied.
9. Examine a particular mode of female **freedom** in any two novels.
10. Examine the depiction of the Irish and/or Anglo-Irish relations in texts studied this term.
11. It has often been suggested that one of the tasks of the literary critic is to “make the silences speak.” Analyse the significance of silence and/or secrets in two texts studied.
12. “Trustworthy behavior may be part of a code of honor which that person applies in many circumstances. He or she may avoid cheating out of a knowledge of the feeling of shame that would result. Shame is in this circumstance a badge of the deep goal relevance of trustworthiness for that person.” (Reddy, *Navigation of Feeling* 24). Explore the social function of shame in any two novels.

If you would like to suggest a different research question, or a modified version of one of the research questions given above, you are welcome to do so, but your title *must* be approved by your tutor before the end of week 5, Term 1.

**Annotation for Essays: the Modern Language Association (MLA) method**

This is the citation method you should use for all your work in this class. It combines brief in-text citations with a works cited pages at the end of the essay. For a full description see the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Projects* or

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

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**In-text citation:**

Various scholars have argued that “the weather is bad in Coventry” (Hall 27).

*(bracket shows name of author and page number*)

Or: Hall has argued, “the weather is bad in Coventry” (27).

*(The name of author is included in text, so that only page number is need in bracket)*

In the text of your essay use the author’s first and last name the first time you mention him or her, then last name only after that.

When a quotation is 3 lines or longer, you must indent it:

The weather is bad in Coventry. It is worse in other places. Really, bad weather is a relative concept. Actually it is sunny for months at a time in Coventry and if it were sunnier we might begin to complain about the warmth or see it as evidence of global warming. (Hall 27)

In this case, the brackets come after the full-stop.

**Works Cited Page:**

Entries should be alphabetized by author’s last name. The first line should be flush to the left margin, with subsequent lines indented five spaces.

Book by one author:

Jones, Peter. *Weather Patterns.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

Book by two or more authors:

Jones, Peter,,and Paul Smith. *Climate Change.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1987.

Article:

Jones, Peter. “Weather in Transition.” *Weather Journal* 14 (1998): 71-89.

Chapter from a Collection of Essays:

Jones, Paul. “Weathering the Weather.” *Climate Considered*. Ed. Mary Smith.

New York: Routledge, 2004. 124 -165.