

Individual Study Proposal
Fall 2013
Student: Alison E. Stevens. Advisor: Eric Lorentzen

IDIS 491: Education in Jane Austen's Works

As a culmination of my undergraduate work in literary analysis, I am pursuing an individual study which is a close examination of theories of education as they appear in Jane Austen's work. The literary analysis courses I have taken for my major have provided me with tools to discuss literary works through various lenses, including education.

The goal of this course is to stretch my research skills and gain experience in the kind of close critical examination of literature that will allow me to form, support, and execute a comprehensive and detailed thesis paper. I will explore a variety of secondary sources including behavioral guides, treatises on education, and novels that deal with education and can be argued to have influenced Austen's work.

The University of Mary Washington does not offer a course that would allow me to critically examine Austen's novels in the detailed, nuanced, and well-researched way that is typically not possible in an undergraduate class. I will be working with Dr. Eric Lorentzen on the independent study because of his expertise in the analysis of education in Jane Austen's novels. His current and ongoing professional work on the subject will be particularly helpful as he guides me through the specifics of creating a paper that might in the future be reworked for potential publication. The study will build upon itself, beginning with secondary sources meant to create a sense of context for Austen's writings, before moving on to her novels. These will all culminate in an argument on Austen's approach to educational theory in the final paper.

For my midterm I will write an extensive annotated bibliography of my work thus far, in preparation for my final project, along with an attached three to five page essay. For my final project I will write a fifteen to twenty-five page research paper critically analyzing education in Jane Austen's work and her literary and historical influences.

The independent study is appropriate for me because my English major GPA qualifies me for the work at a 3.52, and my British literature background has not only allowed me to develop my critical analysis and research skills, but also to gain an understanding of the strong literary tradition within which Austen was operating. I have taken ENGL 381: British Literature to 1800, ENGL 310: Courtly Tradition Medieval Literature, ENGL 320: Shakespeare: Later Plays, ENGL 375A5: Novels Dickens: Bicentennial, and ENGL 326B: Late 18th Century British Literature. I have also taken ENGL 327: Jane Austen, which has provided me with a more general familiarity with Austen's work. Education was a topic of significant discussion in several of these classes.

This individual study will be unique because of its depth and focus, with each work that I study building to the final paper. The study is relevant to my major because it is a thorough and critical analysis of literature and secondary sources. I will narrowly examine the ways in which Austen discusses and presents education in her work as well as her likely influences on the subject. This will allow me to study literature with a closer and more focused eye than my other classes have enabled me to do, and to discover and form a more complex and advanced understanding of my subject.

Professor Eric Lorentzen and I will meet on a weekly to bi-weekly basis, according to the schedule and reading requirements. I will turn in a two page response paper to him on the Monday preceding each meeting that will detail the insight that my readings have provided into the intersection of Austen and education. During these meetings we will discuss the readings and

the contents of the corresponding response paper. My papers will be graded based on the quality of their arguments, textual support, and writing. My aim is for the final paper to be as professional as possible, approaching the quality of a publishable article, and allowing me to convert it for conference talks and entrance into other professional endeavors.

Reading Material and Schedule:

Week 1 (8/26/13): *Emile, or On Education*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Book I – Book II

Week 2 (9/2/13): *Emile, or On Education*, by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Book III – Book V; *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, by Mary Wollstonecraft, through Chapter 6

Week 3 (9/9/13): *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, by Mary Wollstonecraft, Chapter 7 – Chapter 13; *Fordyce's Sermons to Young Women*, by James Fordyce

Week 4 (9/16/13): *Lady Susan; Sense and Sensibility*, Vol. I – Vol. II

Week 5 (9/23/13): *Sense and Sensibility*, Vol. III; *Pride and Prejudice*, Vol. I

Week 6 (9/30/13): *Pride and Prejudice*, Vol. II – Vol. III; *Mansfield Park*, Vol. I

Week 7 (10/7/13): *Mansfield Park*, Vol. II – Vol. III

Week 8 (10/14/13): *Emma*, Vol. I – Vol. II

Week 9 (10/21/13): *Emma*, Vol. III; *Northanger Abbey*, Vol. I

Week 10 (10/28/13): *Northanger Abbey*, Vol. II; *Persuasion*, through Chapter 8

Week 11 (11/4/13): *Persuasion*, through Chapter 24

Week 12 (11/11/13): Work on Final Paper

Week 13 (11/18/13): Work on Final Paper

Week 14 (11/25/13): Work on Final Paper

Week 15 (12/2/13): Work on Final Paper

Week 16 – Finals Week (12/9/13): Final Paper Due

Supplementary Reading Material:

Sanditon, by Jane Austen

Juvenilia, by Jane Austen

Some Thoughts Concerning Education, by John Locke

Liberal Education, by Vicesimus Knox

Practical Education, by Maria Edgeworth

A Father's Legacy to His Daughters, by Dr. Gregory

An Unfortunate Mother's Advice to Her Absent Daughters, by Lady Sarah Pennington

Adelaide and Theodore: Or, Letters on Education: Containing All the Principles Relative to Three Different Plans of Education, by Stephanie Felicite de Genlis