

English 456: 19th-Century British Novel
Section 1: Class # 6651
Spring 2015, CSU—Chico
TR, 12.30 – 1.45 p.m., O’Connell 254

Geoff Baker
gabaker@csuchico.edu
Office: T 5-6pm, W 1-3pm, Th 9-10am
Sign-up and Office: Siskiyou Hall 141

Novel Evidence: 19th-Century British Fiction and the Law

What is the relationship between fiction and the law, in the British 19th century? As the 18th century turned, major developments occurred in a few key areas in which both literature and the law were intimately invested, including ideas of what counts as “evidence”; notions of how agents of the law are to perform their task; who was permitted to offer evidence (to serve as a witness); more basic theories of what we can know at all, in order to come to a judgment about other people and their alleged actions; and understandings of the relationship between an individual’s rights and society.

While our primary focus will be on ideas of evidence as they relate to fictionalizations of legal practices and to fiction in general, this course explores all the issues mentioned above through reading, discussion, writing, and projects about key 19th-century essays, major novels and short stories of the period (including the first and most famous of British detectives), and a few recent critical and theoretical evaluations of the relationship between literature and the law. In addition, later adaptations of a number of these texts, including shows like *Sherlock* and the various film renditions of *Frankenstein*, will permit us to ask how a shift in the medium (i.e., from prose fiction to cinema or television series) affects the portrayal of evidence, human rights, the law in general, etc.

This class will not be run through BlackBoard Learn, but rather through <http://unhistoricacts.net/engl-456/> All of the information about assignments and the class are there, as are the pages to which the vast majority of your assignments will be posted.

Grade Breakdown

Assignments:

Austen OED assignment :: 100 points	10%
Austen Legal :: 100 points	10%
<i>Moonstone</i> Whodunit? blogs :: 150 points	15%
<i>Phineas Redux</i> Issues blogs :: 100 points	10%
Law Reports Report :: 150 points	15%

Research Project:

Annotated bibliography :: 150 points	15%
Research paper :: 250 points	25%

A	=	93-100%
A-	=	90-93%
B+	=	87-90%
etc.		

Austen OED (Oxford English Dictionary) Assignment (100 points)

One of the most amazing things about the *OED* is that it can tell you not just what a word means and how we use it now, but what a word meant and how one used it at just about every point in that word's long history. For this assignment, we're going to look at a few words that Austen uses in *Sense and Sensibility*, and we're going to get a sense and sensibility of what their various connotations were in her day. Then, as we read her novel, we'll keep track of where the word we've chosen occurs and how its use might express the relationship between literature, society, and the law.

Instructions:

1. Pick one of the following words used by Austen in *Sense and Sensibility*, and note too its various forms. Look your word up in the *OED*, which you can [access here](#) through your CSUC login:

- acquit
- evidence/evident/evidently
- judge/judgment
- prove/proven/proof
- testimony
- witness

2. Write a few paragraphs, using quotes from the *OED*, describing the etymology, various meanings, and connotations of your chosen word to which Austen might have had access or recourse. In other words, what had that word meant up to the time Austen was writing? What possible meanings or shadings of it might she have had in mind?

3. Post your paragraphs on the appropriate webpage on the class site, as a response.

4. While reading *Sense and Sensibility*, keep track of the instances of your chosen word. You will need this information in order to complete the next assignment, Austen Legal.

Austen Legal assignment (100 points)

As you read through *Sense and Sensibility*, you hopefully kept track of the many occurrences of the word on which you wrote your [Austen OED assignment](#). Now that you've finished the novel, revisit a few scenes in which your word appeared, and close-read them again. In a few paragraphs, and with the aide of quotes from and engagement with the text, describe how that word functioned in the scene and what it added to the scene. What effect does Austen's use of legalistic or

epistemological diction in the novel have on our reading of it? Post your paragraphs as responses on the appropriate webpage on the class site.

Law Reports Report (150 points)

One of the main ways that legal knowledge circulated in the 19th century was through regularly published volumes of “Law Reports.” These reports described what was said during a court proceeding, and they indicated the outcome and the reasons for the outcome.

As you notice when you read these, they are as invested in story-telling and narration as they are in legal motions, and they are deeply interested in what sorts of questions one can ask and what sorts of evidence one can consider. In other words, they’re interested in some of the same questions that fascinate our novelists and our novels.

For some useful historical background on the law reports, read this section, “Reports of Cases,” from J.H. Baker’s *An Introduction to English Legal History*, fourth edition (Oxford UP, 2005). For a fantastic example of how to read these documents closely for their use of literary devices and their relationship with story-telling, read the chapter “Law Reports: Form and Function” from Ayelet Ben-Yishai’s *Common Precedents: The Presentness of the Past in Victorian Law and Fiction* (Oxford UP, 2013), pages 41-49.

For this assignment:

1. Pick one of the cases below, or another one you come across in 19th-century law reports that strikes you as interesting. I have selected fairly brief ones that range in length from 2 pages to about 10 pages.
2. Read through the report carefully, but don’t worry too much about stumbling over Latin legal phrases, etc. Read for the big picture: What sort of story is the report telling? How does it tell this story? Does it merely report events? Does it describe those events in some detail? Does it deploy any interesting stylistic devices, such as metaphors, repetition, etc.?
3. Write a few informal paragraphs reflecting on the report you read. Give a brief synopsis of the case or problem at hand (e.g., who’s accused of doing what to whom), tell us what is ultimately decided, and talk a little bit about what evidence appeared to matter, what sorts of questions arose, and how the report was written (the stylistic issues I mentioned above).

***The Moonstone* Whodunit? Logs (50 x 50 x 50 = 150 points)**

One of the reasons Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* has so consistently been a gripping page-turner is the novel spends hundreds of pages trying to figure out, and lead its readers to, the person(s) who, as the saying goes, done it.

At the end of each week as we read *The Moonstone*, jot down and then post here, as responses below, your ideas of who's responsible for the crime(s) related in the text, based on what the text reveals to us each week. (If you've already read the novel and already know who done it, attend instead to the ways in which Collins seeks to cast suspicion on different characters at different points of the narrative.) Avoid seeking spoilers online—try to enjoy Collins's creation of suspense and uncertainty, as his first audience did.

As your sense shifts (or doesn't) week to week, post subsequent responses as replies to your original, so we can chart the manner in which *The Moonstone* offers conflicting and changing evidence in order to keep its audience grasping for the answer until the ending.

***Phineas Redux* Topics blogs (2 x 50 = 100 points)**

Like the *Moonstone* blogs, these assignments will allow us to post quick discussions of the portrayal, within Trollope's novel, of key contextual issues such as the Irish Tenants Rights Bill, the role of "foreign" places (to the English in the nineteenth century) such as Prague and Scotland, or the debate in Phineas' trial over what sort of evidence counts. Details are on the appropriate web page on the course site.

Research papers help us to hone the most valuable and portable skills we learn as literature students: research using databases and a line of inquiry developed by each of us independently; careful, critical reading of primary, secondary, and theoretical sources; and clear, organized, analytical writing that works in conversation with primary and secondary texts in order to interpret a literary work and explain the significance of this work to an audience. By "significance," I don't just mean "awesomeness" or "importance," although it is entirely possible that we'll find these works awesome and/or important. I mean what the text's meaning and potential impact might be on our understanding of how both literature and the world work. This assignment will represent the culmination of a series of smaller steps.

For the **annotated bibliography** (150 points) assignment, you will read at least 5 scholarly secondary sources and write a ca. 250-word synopsis of each. These sources can be biographical, historical, theoretical, or critical, but they should probably be heaviest in the critical category—that is, articles about the primary text you're planning to write about. Correct MLA style for works cited is worth 25 points, and each entry is worth 25. (If you are consulting only a limited section of a larger work—say, one chapter of a monograph—you can indicate this in your annotation.) If one of your sources is a whole book, this can count as three articles, but the annotations must try to grasp the whole book, and they should aim for 500 words. These cannot be secondary works we read together in class, though you may use those in your paper, and each source must be at least 10

pages in length. Be wary of random websites or blogs; in my experience, these almost never conform to the most rigorous standards for scholarship. That is, they are almost never—not never, but almost never—peer-reviewed by experts in the field nor conversant with the long scholarly conversation on a topic that one finds in most peer-reviewed material. You are safest to procure your articles via JSTOR or the MLA Bibliography. The **bibliography** must be submitted by email. An example is available at the end of the document “How to Write a Research Paper,” posted on Blackboard, and you will have to consult this to see what the assignment should do and resemble.

The **proposal** (50 points) will consist of a brief description of your project and a list of a few sources you will incorporate into it. This does not yet have to be a full-blown thesis statement, but it should be a viable working hypothesis. The proposal must:

1. give a sense of how your argument will make use of the secondary sources you consult (Will you lean on them, dispute them, etc?);
2. and include a provisional list of works to be cited in the paper.

The proposal will be submitted in hard copy and discussed with me individually during a week set aside for the purpose (during which the class will not meet). **Showing up to the meeting without a printed copy of your proposal will result in a failing grade, as will missing your appointment.** An example of the proposal is available at the end of the document “How to Write a Research Paper,” posted on Blackboard.

The **term paper** will be submitted by email on the day of the final exam, will be 8-10 pages in length (inclusive of the list of works cited), and must include at least 5 outside sources. Papers should be nicely proofread and follow the standards for written work in the field of English: MLA style, including a list of works cited: 8.5" x 11" paper, 1" margins all around, 12-point Times New Roman, in black. The OWL site at Purdue University is an invaluable and quick resource for your questions about MLA style: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/> Any questions not answered by that site can usually be resolved by consulting the print edition of the *MLA Guide*, available in the library.

There will not be time, obviously, for revisions *after* the due date, but I encourage you to make use of my office hours in order to get help on rough drafts *before* the due date. I am happy to discuss with you as many drafts as you bring me, and this kind of diligence can help you to produce your finest work.

N.B. The list of works cited is part of the paper. Please do not send it as a separate file.

Occasional classwork and homework will help us to kickstart class discussion by getting us thinking about the day's topic—and **participation** in class is especially encouraged, because the best way to learn is by doing. Failure to complete homework or to participate meaningfully in classwork will see you marked absent.

Pop quizzes will happen regularly in order to assess the extent to which we're doing the reading regularly and understanding it. Because there are no exams for this course, I will be using quizzes often as a means of monitoring our keeping up with the reading.

Absences

Six absences will not affect your grade at all. All absences beyond the sixth one incur a 20-point deduction from the grade. If you will need an exception to this for medical or other compelling reasons—that is, if you have an emergency that will require you to miss more than three weeks of class—please talk to me.

Attendance implies not just physical but also mental presence in the classroom. To really be there, you have to have done the reading carefully and have a good grasp of it or, if you didn't understand it, you should have good questions to ask about exactly what you didn't understand.

Ways to be marked absent:

- no book or supplemental reading material with you
- no homework (if homework was assigned)
- no participation in group work or other class work
- failure on a pop quiz (which means you didn't do the reading and will thus be singularly unprepared to contribute to class discussion)
- use of a device in class when not sanctioned by class activity: e-reader, laptop, phone, tablet, etc.

I will not accept **late work** unless the Dean tells me otherwise.

Submitting Work

Work submitted by email (annotated bibliography, final paper, and both exams) should be sent to gabaker@csuchico.edu on time, and it must be in either Word format (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf). Files in other formats will be ignored and counted as late if and when I do get them in the right format. I will confirm receipt of anything you send me, usually within 24 hours. If you do not hear from me after submitting your paper, do not assume that I received it. There is no such thing as telling me, one month later, "But I sent that to you and thought you got it." If I got it, you'll know. If I didn't, then it's missing.

Academic Integrity

Cheating, Misuse of Sources, and Plagiarism are not acceptable, whether on exams or on Blackboard assignments. Those guilty of misusing sources will likely be given a warning. Those guilty of cheating or plagiarism will be referred to Student Judicial Affairs, and consequences can be severe. We will go over this in class before the first assignment is due, but you are strongly urged to consult this web page for details on what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it:

http://www.csuchico.edu/sjd/_assets/docs/integrity/Avoiding%20Plagiarism.pdf

Devices in the Classroom

Laptops, tablets, and ereaders are permitted in class for class purposes. On some days, specified in advance by me (on which we will use them for collaborative work in class), you will be especially encouraged to bring a laptop.

NB: If these devices begin interfering with class discussion—which is the primary purpose of our face-to-face meetings—this policy will change.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. Please also contact the Disability Support Services office to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

My availability

I'm here to help in any way I can, but, because I am currently an Undergraduate Advisor for the English Department (serving over 200 majors and minors), I often have very busy office hours. In order to keep you from having to wait in a long line to meet with me, I will ask students to sign up beforehand. The sign-up sheet is posted on my office door, Siskiyou 141, and you can sign up as far as two weeks in advance. Please know that, if you cannot find a convenient time during my posted hours, we can arrange a time that will suit your schedule, and meeting on the phone or via Skype or FaceTime is also an option. Please also know that I am often in my office simply working with the door open, you should feel free to pop in.

Contacting me: Email is the best way to get a hold of me, and I answer all emails promptly (within 24 business hours).

- I am accessible and eager to help, but I do ask that you respect my time by not emailing with questions you can easily find the answers to in class, on the syllabus, or through university websites or Google.com (questions like, for example, “I wasn’t in class today; what did we talk about?”; “What’s the reading for next week?”; or “How many points is this paper worth?”).

- Please do not ask me whether you will earn credit for submitting an assignment late. If you want to submit it in order to learn from having done it, just do so.
- Please do not ask whether it is “okay” to miss class on a certain day. It is never “okay” to miss class. Sometimes it’s unavoidable, and there’s nothing we can do about that, which is why I allow a certain number of absences. If you can make it to class, I’m sure you will, and, if you can’t make it, then my okay won’t matter much either way. The attendance policy allows for instances just like this.

Contacting you: I use email—via Blackboard—very frequently to update you on class business, so please make sure that I have an email address that you check regularly (once daily, if possible). If you are not receiving any emails I send (you will know, because I will refer to these emails in class), it is your responsibility to apprise me.

Course readings

All of the course books are available at the campus bookstore, but feel free to buy them used elsewhere if you can save a few bucks. Please have the edition listed, so that we don’t have to hunt around for page numbers, and so that you can fully participate in and follow class lectures and discussion. N.B. There are two popular editions of Shelley’s *Frankenstein*: the initial 1818 text and a later, definitive 1831 edition. We are using the 1831 edition

Required texts:

Mary Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (Oxford)	ISBN: 9780199537167
Jane Austen, <i>Sense and Sensibility</i> (Oxford)	ISBN: 9780199535576
Wilkie Collins, <i>The Moonstone</i> (Oxford)	ISBN: 9780199536726
Anthony Trollope, <i>Phineas Redux</i> (Oxford)	ISBN: 9780199583485
Arthur Conan Doyle, <i>A Study in Scarlet</i> (Oxford)	ISBN: 9780199554775

Various course readings, **also required, will be available through the course site.** These must be printed, read and brought to class in hard copy; or accessible in class through an approved device.

Strongly recommended:

<i>MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers</i> , 7th edition	ISBN: 1603290249
--	------------------

English 454 Calendar

Wk 1	Week of Jan 19	reading
T	Introduction	
Th	John Locke, from <i>An Essay concerning Human Understanding</i> (1690) Book IV, ch. XI, “Of our Knowledge of the Existence of Other Things” Book IV, ch. XI, “Of Probability” Sir Geoffrey Gilbert, from <i>The Law of Evidence</i> (1754)	1-5

- Wk 2 Week of Jan 26
- T Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein: Or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818) 5-31
Alexander Welsh, from *Strong Representations*, 2-31
- Th Shelley, cont. 31-89
- Wk 3 Week of Feb 2
- T Shelley, cont. 90-149
Jean-Jacques Rousseau, from *Discourse on the Origins of Inequality* (1754)
“Preface” (164-73)
- Th Shelley, cont. 149-223 (end)
- Wk 4 Week of Feb 9
- M OED Assignment due by midnight**
- T Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) Vol. I, 1-102
- Th Austen, cont. Vol. II ch 1-VIII, 103-149
- Wk 5 Week of Feb 16
- T Austen, cont. Vol. II ch IX-Vol. III ch VIII, 150-252
- Th Austen, cont. Vol. III ch IX, 252-end
- F Austen Legal Assignment due by midnight**
- Wk 6 Week of Feb 23
- T Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868)
Gilbert, from *The Law of Evidence*
- Th Collins, cont.
- F Whodunit? Log 1 due by midnight**
- Wk 7 Week of Mar 2
- T Collins, cont.
- Th Collins, cont.
- F Whodunit? Log 2 due by midnight**

Wk 8 Week of Mar 9

T Collins, cont.

Th Collins, cont.

F Whodunit? Log 3 due by midnight

Spring Break

Wk 9 Week of Mar 23

T Meet in regular classroom, and **bring a laptop or tablet** for a research methods workshop led by Ms. Rachel Arteaga, from the Merriam Library. This will be most useful to you if you bring ideas—even vague ones—for a project topic.

Th No Meeting in Class: Work on Law Reports Report

F Law Reports Report due

Wk 10 Week of Mar 30

T No Class: César Chávez Day

Th Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Redux* (1874) 1-253 (ch XXVIII)
[Plot summary of *Phineas Finn*](#) (1867-68), the precursor to *Phineas Redux*. Even more detailed [summary here](#).

Wk 11 Week of Apr 5

T Trollope, cont. 253-364 (end Vol. I)

Th Trollope, cont. 1-57 (ch. XLVI)

F *Redux* Topics blog 1 due by midnight

Wk 12 Week of Apr 12

T Trollope, cont. 58-184 (ch. LX)

Th Trollope, cont. 184-247 (ch. LXVII)

Wk 13 Week of Apr 20

- M *Phineas Redux* Topics blog 1 due by midnight
- T Trollope, cont. 247-360
- Th Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887) Part 1, 1-66

Wk 14 Week of Apr 27

- T Doyle, cont. Part 2, 69-127
- Th Doyle, cont.

Friday, May 1: Annotated bibliography due by midnight

Wk 15 Week of May 4

- T Watch *Sherlock: A Study in Pink*
- Th *Sherlock*, cont.

Final Exam Meeting Time (Optional Workshop for Final Papers): Tuesday, May 12, 2-3.50pm

Final Papers due by midnight, by email, on Friday, May 14