

**GENERAL STUDIES COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM**

**Course information:**

Copy and paste **current** course information from [Class Search/Course Catalog](#).

College/School	College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (the College)	Department/School	<b>English</b>
Prefix: <b>EN</b>	Number: <b>452</b>	Title: Permanent Title: Studies in the Novel Topic: The Transatlantic Novel	Units: <b>3</b>

Course description: This class examines key formal techniques and social themes of the novel as a transnational genre in the nineteenth century.

Is this a cross-listed course? No If yes, please identify course(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Is this a shared course? No If so, list all academic units offering this course: \_\_\_\_\_

*Note- For courses that are crosslisted and/or shared, a letter of support from the chair/director of **each** department that offers the course is required for **each** designation requested. By submitting this letter of support, the chair/director agrees to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and will teach the course in a manner that meets the criteria for each approved designation.*

Is this a **permanent-numbered** course with topics? Yes

If **yes**, each topic requires **an individual submission**, separate from other topics.

**Requested designation:** Hu, L

**Mandatory Review:** No

*Note- a **separate** proposal is required for each designation.*

**Eligibility:** Permanent numbered courses **must** have completed the university's review and approval process. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact [Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu](mailto:Phyllis.Lucie@asu.edu).

**Submission deadlines dates are as follow:**

For Fall 2020 Effective Date: October 10, 2019

For Spring 2021 Effective Date: March 5, 2020

**Area proposed course will serve:**

A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. It is the responsibility of the chair/director to ensure that all faculty teaching the course are aware of the General Studies designation(s) and adhere to the above guidelines.

**Checklists for general studies designations:**

Complete and attach the appropriate checklist

- [Literacy and Critical Inquiry core courses \(L\)](#)
- [Mathematics core courses \(MA\)](#)
- [Computer/statistics/quantitative applications core courses \(CS\)](#)
- [Humanities, Arts and Design core courses \(HU\)](#)
- [Social-Behavioral Sciences core courses \(SB\)](#)
- [Natural Sciences core courses \(SQ/SG\)](#)
- [Cultural Diversity in the United States courses \(C\)](#)
- [Global Awareness courses \(G\)](#)
- [Historical Awareness courses \(H\)](#)

**A complete proposal should include:**

- \* Signed course proposal cover form
- \* [Criteria checklist](#) for General Studies designation being requested
- \* Course catalog description [see above for short course catalog description; see syllabus for longer description]
- \* Sample syllabus for the course
- \* Copy of table of contents from the textbook and list of required readings/books [Note: as the table of contents for novels are not particularly instructive, I have attached a list of the novels read for the course.]

**It is respectfully requested that proposals are submitted electronically with all files compiled into one PDF.**

**Contact information:**

Name  E-mail Christine.holbo@asu.edu Phone 650-520-6805

**Department Chair/Director approval: (Required)**

Chair/Director name (Typed):

Krista Ratcliffe

Date: 10 March 2020

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Chair/Director (Signature):

*Krista Ratcliffe*

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**Arizona State University Criteria Checklist for**  
**HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN [HU]**

**Rationale and Objectives**

The humanities disciplines are concerned with questions of human existence and meaning, the nature of thinking and knowing, with moral and aesthetic experience. The humanities develop values of all kinds by making the human mind more supple, critical, and expansive. They are concerned with the study of the textual and artistic traditions of diverse cultures, including traditions in literature, philosophy, religion, ethics, history, and aesthetics. In sum, these disciplines explore the range of human thought and its application to the past and present human environment. They deepen awareness of the diversity of the human heritage and its traditions and histories and they may also promote the application of this knowledge to contemporary societies.

The study of the arts and design, like the humanities, deepens the student's awareness of the diversity of human societies and cultures. The arts have as their primary purpose the creation and study of objects, installations, performances and other means of expressing or conveying aesthetic concepts and ideas. Design study concerns itself with material objects, images and spaces, their historical development, and their significance in society and culture. Disciplines in the arts and design employ modes of thought and communication that are often nonverbal, which means that courses in these areas tend to focus on objects, images, and structures and/or on the practical techniques and historical development of artistic and design traditions. The past and present accomplishments of artists and designers help form the student's ability to perceive aesthetic qualities of art work and design.

The Humanities, Arts and Design are an important part of the General Studies Program, for they provide an opportunity for students to study intellectual and imaginative traditions and to observe and/or learn the production of art work and design. The knowledge acquired in courses fulfilling the Humanities, Arts and Design requirement may encourage students to investigate their own personal philosophies or beliefs and to understand better their own social experience. In sum, the Humanities, Arts and Design core area enables students to broaden and deepen their consideration of the variety of human experience.

Revised April 2014

Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

<b>ASU - [HU] CRITERIA</b>			
<b>HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN [HU] courses must meet <i>either</i> 1, 2 or 3 <i>and</i> at least one of the criteria under 4 in such a way as to make the satisfaction of these criteria A CENTRAL AND SUBSTANTIAL PORTION of the course content.</b>			
YES	NO		<b>Identify Documentation Submitted</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>1.</b> Emphasizes the study of values; the development of philosophies, religions, ethics or belief systems; and/or aesthetic experience.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>2.</b> Concerns the interpretation, analysis, or creation of written, aural, or visual texts; and/or the historical development of textual traditions.	syllabus
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>3.</b> Concerns the interpretation, analysis, or engagement with aesthetic practices; and/or the historical development of artistic or design traditions.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>4.</b> In addition, to qualify for the Humanities, Arts and Design designation a course must meet one or more of the following requirements:	syllabus
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>a.</b> Concerns the development of human thought, with emphasis on the analysis of philosophical and/or religious systems of thought.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>b.</b> Concerns aesthetic systems and values, especially in literature, arts, and design.	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>c.</b> Emphasizes aesthetic experience and creative process in literature, arts, and design.	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>d.</b> Concerns the analysis of literature and the development of literary traditions.	syllabus
		<b>THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF COURSES ARE EXCLUDED FROM THE [HU] DESIGNATION EVEN THOUGH THEY MIGHT GIVE SOME CONSIDERATION TO THE HUMANITIES, ARTS AND DESIGN:</b>	
		• Courses devoted primarily to developing skill in the use of a language.	
		• Courses devoted primarily to the acquisition of quantitative or experimental methods.	
		• Courses devoted primarily to teaching skills.	

**Humanities and Fine Arts [HU]**

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<b>Course Prefix</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>General Studies Designation</b>
ENG	452	The Transatlantic Novel	Hu

Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the **specific** designation criteria.  
 Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

<b>Criteria (from checksheet)</b>	<b>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</b>	<b>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</b>
2	Class centrally focuses on the interpretation of literary texts (the novel) and the historical development of the textual tradition of the realist and naturalist novel in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century	page 1 of syllabus (Course Description); page 3 of syllabus (Course Goals)
4d	Class centrally focuses on the development of literary traditions	page 1 of syllabus (Course Description); page 3 of syllabus (Course Goals)

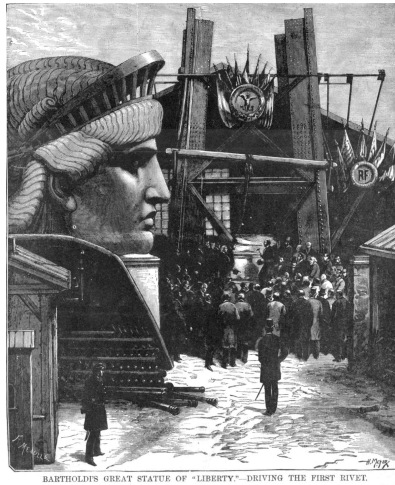
## ENG 452: Studies in the Novel The Transatlantic Novel

Dr. Christine Holbo  
Email: christine.holbo@asu.edu  
Office Hours:

Fall 2020  
ENG 452-xxxxx  
Office: RBH 253; Classroom:

### Course Description

In the nineteenth century, the French novel above all others set the standard for the genre as high art and social critique. This course examines American writers' self-definition in relation to the French novel, asking how Americans developed a novel of their own and what they learned from the naughty, refined, imperial, revolutionary, ironic and moralistic French. How did the French novel present lessons in luxury and misery, social ambition and social solidarity to their sister republic? How did American writers translate the landscape of French provincial and metropolitan life onto the spaces of American possibility—those of the frontier, the salon, the bedroom, the ocean voyage, the plantation? Comparing three classic French novels to three classic U.S.



novels, we will explore a story of uneven developments and asymmetrical comparisons, in which the French novelists taught their U.S. counterparts how to turn narratives into maps of the world, and in which writers on both sides of the Atlantic discovered the truth of their own society—the truth of social domination, of slavery and freedom—in the shape of the other.

### Required Reading:

Honoré de Balzac, *Le Père Goriot*, Signet, ISBN-10: 0451529596

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, W.W. Norton & Co.,  
ISBN-10: 0393963039

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, W.W. Norton & Co.; ISBN: 978-0-393-93853-1

Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Penguin Classics, ISBN: 014310649X

Émile Zola, *Germinal*, Penguin Classics, ISBN-10: 0140447423

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, Dover, ISBN-10: 0486460223

The above books have been ordered for your purchase at the bookstore. I have included the ISBN number if you choose to purchase them elsewhere in order to help ensure that you obtain the correct edition. You will undoubtedly find it disadvantageous if your pagination varies from the text we are using in class.

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**Week 1:** August...  
Read: *Le Père Goriot*

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**Week 2:**  
Read: *Le Père Goriot*

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**Week 3:**  
Read: *Le Père Goriot* (finish Tuesday)  
Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (begin Thursday)

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**Week 4:**  
Read: Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

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**Week 5:**  
Read: Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

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**Week 6:**  
Read: Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*

First Paper Due

Commented [CH1]: C-4: students receive feedback on first paper before second is assigned

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**Week 7:**  
Read: Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*

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**Week 8:**  
Read: Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*  
Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (begin Thursday)

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**Week 9:**  
Read: Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

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**Week 10:**  
Read: Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*

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**Week 11:**  
Read: Emile Zola, *Germinal*

Second Paper Due

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**Week 12:**  
Read: Emile Zola, *Germinal*

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**Week 13:**

Read: Emile Zola, *Germinal* (finish Tuesday)  
W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (begin Thursday)

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**Week 14:**

Read: W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*

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**Week 15:**

Read: W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece* (finish Tuesday)

*In-Class Test***Learning Goals**

This is a 400-level class, the most advanced level you can take as an undergraduate at ASU. In taking this class, you are not merely seeking to master a set of material; you are preparing to leave ASU and continue with a lifetime of learning. Your primary goal is therefore not only to become a proficient interpreter of the traditions of the nineteenth century novel, but also to integrate what you learn in this class with knowledge of literature you have acquired in previous classes and your own reading, and to bring it all together in conceptually sophisticated, literarily sensitive and historically informed writing. In the course of fulfilling this goal, you will need to communicate clearly (in class discussions, class writings, and exams) about the content, themes, literary genres and techniques, and larger cultural, historical and literary implications of the readings. Additionally, students who complete this class will be able to:

- Identify the key characteristics of the genres of realism and naturalism, as well as relevant sub-genres
- Analyze the way major nineteenth century novels innovate within and against generic conventions
- Articulate the relation between French and American literary traditions as exemplary of the dynamics of transnational literary movements more broadly

**Class Work and Grading Basis**

Your progress in this class will be measured through your writing on papers, your participation in class, your reading response assignments, and an in-class end-of-semester test.

You are expected to write two papers and do a *minimum* of eight weekly reading responses. You will receive extra credit for doing more reading response papers than the required eight and for turning in drafts of your papers a week in advance. (See **Reading Responses**, below, for further discussion of the extra credit system.)

Participation + Reading Response Assignments: 25%

First Paper (7 pp.): 20%

Second Paper (12 pp): 40%

End-of-Semester Test: 15%

Commented [CH2]: C1, C3



### **In-Class Expectations**

Our class time will be divided between short lectures, discussions, and small-group discussions and activities. No matter what the planned activity, you are expected to come to every class session prepared to discuss the weekly reading. No matter how far you have read through each book, you should arrive in class with a fresh impression of the text and an opinion about the kinds of issues you would like to discuss. Please bring your book to every class session: I frequently call on students to read passages aloud in class, and it will count against your participation grade if you cannot fulfill this role.

### **Reading Responses**

You are required to turn in short, one- to three-paragraph responses to your weekly readings. The minimum number you must complete to pass the course is eight.

**Commented [CH3]:** C-4: weekly pre-writings allow for early intervention in paper development process

Reading Responses are due by 8 p.m. on Sunday evenings. These assignments will be graded on a base scale from 0 to 50 points. I use the *entire scale* for these assignments. A weak effort may well receive as low as 5 points. I also occasionally give extra credit (on rare occasions up to 70 points) for particularly thoughtful and complete reflections. For the purposes of the course grade, I consider an A on this portion of the grade to be the equivalent of 500 points total. Please note that **you will also receive extra credit if you turn in more than eight** reading response assignments, up to a cap of 700 possible points (that is a lot of possible extra credit!). I will generally not provide further comments on these mini-essays, but I will read them to get a sense of the degree to which you have engaged with the reading *and* of which aspects of the readings have proven challenging.

Please see the first-day handout for further information, and of course please talk to me during office hours if you have questions about your response scores.

### **Contacting Me**

Office Hours:

If you have any questions, or simply want to talk about something, the easiest and best way of contacting me is by coming to office hours. I always perk up when you come see me during office hours. If you cannot come during my normal hours, we can arrange a different time.

If you are uncertain about a reading or writing assignment, please post your question to the “logistics forum” online. Both the question and the response are visible to everyone enrolled in the class. I give top priority to responding to these questions. If you have a question about anything that you believe all the other students would reasonably like to have answered as well, you have done the entire class a favor by posting it to the forum.

One last special note about email—it is not for turning in your assignments except under previous arrangement. Assignments should be turned in by hardcopy in class. If we do end up arranging for you to send the work to me by email, you are responsible for making sure that I have received it. I will confirm receipt of any such work by email, and you should not consider it turned in until this happens.

### **Attendance, Absences, Extensions**

Participation is a central part of this class. You are expected to attend class regularly and to contribute to discussions. Absences count substantially off of the participation grade. Students participating in university sanctioned activities and religious holidays should notify me prior to each class that will be missed.

Extensions will be granted only in exceptional cases. If you need an extension on an assignment you must work it out with me before the due date. Late papers will be marked down one half of a letter grade for every class day the paper is late.

### **Writing**

This is a writing intensive course; writing well will be crucial to your success in this course. I will be available in office hours to discuss paper ideas, and to read and comment on paper drafts, and I strongly encourage you to bring your drafts to me at any stage of the process. Additionally, I will be offering an optional seminar on “how to write a long paper” while you are working on your second papers (Date and time TBA), which you are encouraged to attend. For further editorial help with your writing, visit the Writing Center. Here’s how the Writing Center describes its activities:

**Commented [CH4]: C.4:** students are encouraged to come to office hours and an extra workshop on developing longer papers. This allows for early intervention in the writing process.

The Writing Center offers tutoring for

- Understanding assignments
- Planning and organizing ideas
- Drafting and revising
- Developing effective writing strategies.

Please call for your 30 minute appointment. An ASU Suncard is required for check in.

Tempe Campus: Noble Science Library, Room 280. Phone (480) 965-4272

Please visit the website at <https://tutoring.asu.edu/student-services/writing-centers> for more information and for hours of operation

If non-academic issues in your life are interfering with your ability to complete the course assignments, please be aware that ASU provides counseling and connections to off-campus mental health resources through the Counseling and Career Services office.

See <https://coas.asu.edu/counseling> .

### **Sensitive Course Material**

Any course in nineteenth century literature necessarily involves reading texts that express values and perspectives very different from our own. Students taking the course should be aware that the representations of race, gender, or culture they encounter in these books may be considered offensive from the perspective of the twenty-first century. These are great books; they are also artifacts of an unjust and damaged society. One of the most important things we do in college education is learn how to take the sense of discomfort we feel on encountering such works and transform that feeling into articulate ideas one can share with others and use to better understand the past and the present. Class discussion is the primary place in which we will be working to develop this articulacy. However, if you feel personally offended by our readings to the point of

not being comfortable participating in the discussion, please contact me. This too is part of the educational process, and you should not hesitate in bringing your concerns to me.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a violation of ASU's Student Academic Integrity Policy. Any student found plagiarizing or cheating in any way will be subject to the sanctions outlined in the main ASU web resource on academic integrity, at:

<http://provost.asu.edu/academicintegrity>

If you have any doubts about the definition of plagiarism, you should come talk with me before turning in your work.

### **Title IX**

ASU requests that the following language be included in all ASU syllabi, so please read carefully:

Title IX is a federal law that provides that no person be excluded on the basis of sex from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity. Both Title IX and university policy make clear that sexual violence and harassment based on sex is prohibited. An individual who believes they have been subjected to sexual violence or harassed on the basis of sex can seek support, including counseling and academic support, from the university. If you or someone you know has been harassed on the basis of sex or sexually assaulted, you can find information and resources at <https://sexualviolenceprevention.asu.edu/faqs>.

As a mandated reporter, I am obligated to report any information I become aware of regarding alleged acts of sexual discrimination, including sexual violence and dating violence. ASU Counseling Services, <https://eoss.asu.edu/counseling>, is available if you wish to discuss any concerns confidentially and privately.

### **Disability Resource Center**

If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation, please call Disability Resources for Students at 480-965-1234 or visit their webpage at <https://eoss.asu.edu/drc>. If you wish to request accommodation for a disability you must submit appropriate documentation from the DRC.

*Thank you for reading to the end!*

*This syllabus is subject to revision. Reading assignments in particular will be amended (added or shortened) during the course of the semester. Announcements will be made in class or posted online. It is your responsibility to keep informed about the class.*



## ENG 452 • Paper One Instructions and Prompts

### Instructions

Write a seven-page analytic paper in which you address either Balzac's *Père Goriot* or Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. You may decide to write about both novels, but be careful: seven pages don't give you a lot of space, so be careful how you set up your comparison.

The basics: seven pages. Double spaced. Times 12 or equivalent font. Stapled, submitted in hard copy by class time on February 13. Drafts submitted in hard copy by February 6 will receive +5 extra points on the next reading response.

A successful paper will be at once argumentative and analytic.

- Your paper should be organized around a thesis. That means that it will advance your own argument about the text you have chosen, an argument that teaches your reader something new and significant about the text.
- Your paper should define its central terms of analysis carefully. It will make clear what you interpret your authors to have meant by their key terms. (For example: what does Balzac mean when he says his work is "true"? How is this definition reflected in his work?) You may also find it necessary to define what *you* mean by your terms, and how your understanding differs from that of the authors you examine.
- Your paper should draw upon close observations of the text, citing specific passages and explicating them thoroughly.
- Your paper should be informed by a sense of the work as a whole. The passages you cite should point toward larger patterns in the work and in nineteenth century culture.
- The most successful papers draw all of these elements together: definitions serve the thesis, and emerge out of readings of the text; quotations clearly support the thesis; explications of quotations pull definitions and theses together again.

Commented [CH1]: C-2, C3

As you work with the prompts below, please keep in mind that these questions are there to help you advance a new argument. You should not attempt to respond to every question they pose, nor should you take them as limits on your freedom to develop a thesis. Creativity and critical thinking will both be rewarded.

### Prompt-o-rama

#### 1. "Men, Women, and Things"

Women had few legal rights in nineteenth century France and America, but social historians tell us that they nonetheless wielded certain forms of social power. Balzac and Stowe would have agreed. Develop an argument in which you explore the relation between men's and women's spheres in *Uncle Tom's Cabin* or *Père Goriot*. What privileges do women enjoy? What special responsibilities are they entrusted with? To what degree can women influence men? What is the nature of their power? If women's worlds are defined by both power and powerlessness, what kinds of contradictions or ironies characterize their experience?

## 2. Mapping the Social World

Balzac and Stowe don't just tell stories; they depict worlds. They offer us new maps of the worlds we live in, new ways of understanding the spaces we inhabit. Develop an argument about the way one of these novels maps out society. Where is the center? The periphery? What is not on the map? Don't forget, as you focus your argument, that maps, like fictions, involve some artifice. To what degree do these maps distort the world? To what degree do they transpose other kinds of maps or models onto the geography of France and the United States?

## 3. The Social Imagination and the Melodramatic Imagination

Stowe and Balzac broke new ground in representing society, but readers loved them just as much for their melodramatic stories and scenes. To what degree does the effect of reality depend on such theatricality? To what degree does the representation of society depend on simplifications, even stereotypes? Develop an argument about the connection or tensions between reality and artificiality in Stowe and Balzac's writing.

## 4. "The family, society, and Vautrin"

The family is the basis of society; the family is the opposite of society. Both statements may be proven true in *Père Goriot* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Construct an argument about the role of the family in society. You may want to consider as well whether there is any alternative to the opposition between family and society. What are the limitations of the kinds of group affiliation and identity that either family or society provide? Do these novels imagine a space that lies outside either family *or* society? What does it look like?

## 5. Social Responsibilities, Social Complicity

The extended economies and large cities of the nineteenth century brought people into connection with each other, but simultaneously hid these relationships. One of the goals of the realist novel was to make visible the social connections among people who might not even be aware of each other's existence. In so doing, realist novels invented new ways of thinking about moral responsibility. At the same time, they demonstrated how difficult it is to establish responsibility in a world in which every event and every person is bound up with so many others. Develop an argument about the problem of recognizing moral responsibility in *Père Goriot* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

## 6. The Hero of his Own Story

*Père Goriot* and *Uncle Tom's Cabin* share a curious feature: their plots diverge from the subject suggested by the title. *Père Goriot* himself, that is, does not receive the narrator's full attention, while Uncle Tom's "cabin" appears only briefly in that novel. Develop an argument about how the oblique relationship between title and plot informs the meaning of the novel. Is the title character the main character of the novel? Is he the novel's hero? (What's the difference?) How would a different title change our reading of the novel? How does the actual title direct the reader's attention and contribute to our understanding of nineteenth-century society?

ENG 452: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Nineteenth Century Novel  
Paper the Second; or, “the big one”

*Instructions*

Write a 12 page analytic paper in which you address two of the works we have read so far this semester. The prompts below were written in the expectation that you would write about Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary* and Henry James’ *The Portrait of a Lady*. However, you may substitute one of the earlier novels for either James or Flaubert if you have not yet written on that earlier novel.

The basics: twelve pages. Double spaced. Times Roman 12 or equivalent font. Stapled, submitted in hard copy by class time on March 27. Students who submit a draft by class time on March 20 will receive +5 extra credit points on their next reading response.

The paper should have a title, but it does not need a separate title page. Your paper should include a brief works cited page; you may choose the bibliographic style, but MLA will work well for a paper of this sort. You should include in-line page citations when you quote passages from the work.

The essence of this paper is analytic comparison. Your job is to develop an argument about a theme common to two of these novels. You will need to start by observing points of similarity and difference, but you will also go beyond simply making comparisons to observing something about the two novels that might not be evident were you to study one novel alone.

Commented [CH1]: C2, C3

As always, a successful paper will be at once argumentative and analytic.

- Your paper should be organized around a thesis. That means that it will advance your own argument about the texts you have chosen, an argument that teaches your reader something new and significant about the relationship between these two books.
- Your paper should define its central terms of analysis carefully. It will make clear what you interpret your authors to have meant by their key terms. (For example: what does James mean by “experience”?) You may also find it necessary to define what *you* mean by your terms, and how your understanding differs from that of the authors you examine.
- Your paper should draw upon close observations of the text, citing specific passages and explicating them thoroughly.
- Your paper should be informed by a sense of the work as a whole. The passages you cite should point toward larger patterns in the work and in nineteenth century culture.
- The most successful papers draw all of these elements together: your definitions serve your thesis, and emerge out of your readings of the text; your quotations clearly support your thesis; your explications of your quotations pull your definitions and your thesis together again.

As you work with the prompts below, keep in mind that your job is not to respond to all of the questions I ask, but rather to develop and focus your own thesis. Creativity, critical thinking, and convincing deployment of evidence will all be rewarded.

And please don’t forget to sign up for the “How to Write a Longer Paper” workshop on March 14! (RBH 115)

### Prompts

1. “*Men, Women, and Things*” (*redux*). Flaubert and James shared with earlier realists a sense of the importance of the material world: human beings are formed through our relations to the economy, to money and work, to material environments and commodities. What kinds of “things” are important to these two novels, and why? How is the self related to its material accoutrements? To what degree is the self *not* related to the material world? In what ways have the presuppositions of earlier realist novels become a problem in Flaubert and James’ more self-conscious texts?
2. *The Real World*. Flaubert and James were famously inconsistent in their relation to realism as a literary movement: they alternately embraced and rejected the term “realism” as a descriptor of their work. Many of their characters appear to have felt similar ambivalence, seeking either to find “the real world” or to escape it. Write a paper in which you explore *either* how “the real” is defined by Flaubert or James *or* how their characters imagine and relate to “the real world.” What truth claims do these authors make? What promises does “the real world” hold out for their characters? What makes the real an object of desire, of terror, of disgust?
3. “*Oh, why did I ever get married?*” Most nineteenth century novels follow the conventions of the “marriage plot”: the story ends in a wedding and a happily-ever-after. It was only in the late nineteenth century that the novel became deeply interested in life after marriage. What do the novels we have read tell us about this institution? How are women’s lives and possibilities formed by social expectations placed on married women, or by economic and legal asymmetries in the relation? How are men’s lives and possibilities formed or limited by marriage? (What do women expect of men?) How might the representation of life after marriage make it possible for the novel to explore human experience in new ways? How might this affect the concept of “experience” itself?
4. “*The mill of the conventional.*” It might be argued that while Stowe and Balzac take their readers on tours of the world, Flaubert and James take their readers on tours of the world of conventionality and cliché. To what degree is this true of these two novels? In what way does conventional behavior or language become the focus of these novels’ exploration? How does the focus on conventionality alter the novels’ exploration of other themes or topics? What, for example, does “freedom” mean in relation to a conventional world?
5. *The Pursuit of Happiness*. The right to pursue happiness is enshrined in the United States’ Declaration of Independence, a document much admired on both sides of the Atlantic for its vision of the sovereignty of the individual. But what does such a right entail? Wisely, perhaps, the writers of the Constitution omitted further discussion of this ambiguous right; only novelists were willing to take up this question. Examine the pursuit of happiness in two of the novels we have read. What are the consequences of the pursuit of happiness, or of having one’s right to the pursuit of happiness thwarted? What is happiness, what are the prerequisites of happiness, and what other things may be substituted or confused for it?
6. *Interested Observers*. Both of these novels explore a series of multi-sided relationships: among husbands and lovers and wives, but also along extended networks of interaction. Who has a stake in any given marriage or any given relationship? You may want to consider the roles played by outside observers, benefactors, creditors, relatives, friends, or neighbors.
7. *Your own argument*. Do you have a thesis you want to pursue? Go ahead! But do please drop by office hours to discuss it with me before you start.





**Required Reading for English 452:**

Honoré de Balzac, *Le Père Goriot*, Signet, ISBN-10: 0451529596

Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, W.W. Norton & Co.,  
ISBN-10: 0393963039

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady*, W.W. Norton & Co.; ISBN:  
978-0-393-93853-1

Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*, Penguin Classics, ISBN: 014310649X

Émile Zola, *Germinal*, Penguin Classics, ISBN-10: 0140447423

W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Quest of the Silver Fleece*, Dover, ISBN-10: 0486460223