In our first unit, we will be thinking about argument, the fundamental genre of most academic writing, through Austen’s *Persuasion*: a novel whose very title suggests its interest in the force of words, their ability to cause or prevent action, their complicated connection to human agency. It is the goal of Expos to help you discover your own agency and voice as an academic writer. Unit 1 launches that process by asking you to frame a problem or question about a source text; to identify compelling evidence; to analyze that evidence with rigor; and to organize your insights in support of a governing thesis that constitutes a contestable claim.

Through a close analysis of *Persuasion*—conducted both in isolation as readers and collectively as discussants—you will start to work through some of the arguments its narrative implicitly advances about such matters as marriage, family, society, and language. Then, pursuing one thread in the novel that you choose as the focus of your essay, you will develop your own argument about *Persuasion* through a sustained analysis of evidence derived exclusively from the text. (You'll find the essay assignment on pages 4-6 of this document. The response paper assignment, designed to help you develop your essay topic, is located on pages 7-8.)

**Getting Started:**
Before the second class, read the unit 1 essay prompt and the “Day 1 handout,” which presents important information about class policies for which you are responsible. Start reading *Persuasion* right away and aim to finish it within a week (by our third class). I urge you to read with a pen or pencil in hand. If there is a word or a sentence or a passage that strikes you as important or curious or puzzling, mark it. Within the first week of the course, download a copy of “The Elements of Academic Writing” from the course website and read it carefully. (The terms in boldface in the paragraph above refer to terms defined in that document.)

**Mon. Sept. 9 Introduction: Austen and Argument**

**Mini assignment due by email Tue. Sept. 10 by 5 pm:**
Identify one intriguing or significant piece of textual evidence from the first eight chapters of *Persuasion* (anywhere from one to several lines) that relates to a theme or issue in the novel warranting discussion. Add two or three sentences of commentary on that evidence. Some tips: 1/ Your comment should speak to specific terms or details of the quoted language. 2/ Don’t simply summarize the content of the quotation; rather, analyze it. What does it reveal or suggest that will not be obvious to any intelligent reader of the novel?
**Wed. Sept. 11**  
Evidence and Analysis  
Read as far into *Persuasion* as you can; our discussion will focus largely on the first third of the novel, as we start to tease out some of the contestable subjects it addresses by close **analysis** of textual **evidence**: key passages.

**Mon. Sept. 16**  
Questions and Claims (Finish *Persuasion* by today.) Also review the handout “Asking an Analytic Question” (posted on the class website).

**Wed. Sept. 18**  
Shaping an Argument: Analysis and Structure  
For today, read the following close analysis essay from the 2010 issue of *Exposé*: Madeline Magnuson’s “*Jane Eyre*: The Bonds of Matrimony,” which you can access through the Writing Program’s home page:  
A list of questions about the sample essay to help you prepare for class is posted on the website (under “Handouts”). You are not required to submit written responses to those questions, but you must be prepared to discuss them in class.

**Fri. Sept. 20**  
Response Paper #1 is due by 9 am. Watch your inbox over the next 2 days for feedback; sign up on the website for an appointment on Monday if you want to talk about that feedback and/or further thoughts for the draft.

**Mon. Sept. 23**  
What’s at Stake? Or, How to Write an Effective Introduction  
Prepare by carefully reading the handout “Introductions and Motive,” posted on the class website (under “Handouts”).

**Reading and mini assignment for this week:** From *The Harvard Guide to Using Sources*, read “Introduction,” “Why Use Sources,” and “Avoiding Plagiarism.” Email me by midnight Tuesday Sept. 24 (i.e., before Wed. morning) to confirm that you have read this assignment, and include in your email any questions you might have about it.

**Wed. Sept. 25**  
“Elements” review and “transferability” discussion

**Fri. Feb. 27**  
**Draft of essay 1 due by 9 am.**
Mon. Sept. 30
Workshop of Unit 1 Drafts
Follow workshop directions posted on the class website.

Conferences held Mon. Feb. 25-Wed. Feb. 27; revisions due 6 days after your conference.

Wed. Oct. 2
Visit to Houghton Library to view Austen materials. Class meets today in the lobby of Houghton Library.
Essay #1  Close Analysis of *Persuasion*
5-6 pages

**Deadlines, etc.:**
Draft due *Friday, Sept. 20 by 9 am, by email, as an attachment in doc or docx format.* You are also required to submit a **hard copy** of the same document; bring it to class on Monday.

Revision due *6 days after your conference date by 5 pm, posted in doc or docx format to the unit 1 folder in the dropbox on the course website.* Also submit a **hard copy** of the revision to my box at 1 Bow St. (or to me in class if applicable) **no later than noon the following day. Your draft with my comments on your draft must be submitted as well at that time;** paperclip it to the hard copy of your revision. For **both draft and revision,** be sure to **follow the formatting instructions that are posted on the class website** and **remember to cite your source in MLA format.**

**The assignment:**
Our study of Austen begins with a concentrated reading of *Persuasion.* By scrutinizing the author’s last published novel, whose marriage plot unfolds in the context of a society in transition, we are attempting to arrive at a deeper understanding of what’s at stake in Austen’s fiction. Your unit 1 writing assignment is likewise an exercise in concentrated reading; in this first essay, you will explore a problem or issue in the novel by undertaking a close analysis of relevant, selected textual evidence. (Identifying that issue, one that interests you and that you can discuss in a way that sustains a reader’s interest, will be a major step in the development of this essay; college-level writing assignments often require you to develop your own question to address.) The “elements of academic writing” that this assignment prioritizes (and therefore the elements most heavily weighted in the evaluation of your essay) are evidence; analysis; thesis; and defining the “question or problem.”

**Evidence:**
Close analysis essays (or close readings, to use the term more often adopted in literature classes) are built out of material the writer pulls out of the source text. In other words, **evidence in the text generates the question the essay proposes to answer as well as the means to arrive at an answer** (in the form of a thesis claim). **In a one-source close analysis assignment like this, it’s essential that you don’t consult outside sources or browse the Web to brainstorm.** Instead, turn to the text of the novel--to its language, especially--in search of questions, ideas, and inspiration. (As you are reading the novel, read with a pen or pencil in hand so you can mark lines or passages that seem particularly important or puzzling to you. Reviewing what you marked will help get you started when it’s time to sit down to figure out what might be worth writing about.)
One feature of writing about a novel as opposed to, say, a sonnet, is that you can’t deal with the entire text. Therefore, a close analysis of a novel generally focuses on a few specific passages that speak to a common issue or problem. Your challenge is to find specific moments in the text that bring a broader issue or problem into particular focus. These crystallizing passages will provide the building blocks for the argument you construct. (A passage might be as short as a paragraph or as long as a scene that plays out over several pages. Remember that it’s better to discuss a few pieces of evidence in depth and detail than to treat numerous passages more superficially.)

There are many issues a reader might find interesting or puzzling in *Persuasion*: issues including, to name just a few, ambiguities or complications in the novel’s treatment of social class; contrasting versions or notions of family; the tension between the importance of discretion on the one hand and the importance of frank and effective communication on the other. Your first response paper will ask you to identify and start to work through two or three passages, each of which sheds light on an issue or idea or problem you think is worth writing about.

**Analysis:**
As a critical practice, close analysis of a text requires careful attention to the writer’s language. As you discuss your evidence in the essay, it’s important to bear in mind the distinction between summary and analysis. The point of close reading or close analysis isn’t to summarize what the text literally says, but rather to interrogate and explain underlying meanings and implications of your textual evidence. *Your analysis should reveal something to your reader that he or she would not see without the intervention of your critical intelligence.* Think about implicit as well as explicit meanings, about what value systems seem to be operating in the fictional world you’re writing about, and about the way elements like word choice and sentence structure advance the communication of ideas and values. (If the passage employs specific rhetorical devices like allusion, imagery, or metaphor, you’ll want to think about their significance. Remember, though, that the point isn’t to identify literary devices as such, but rather to explicate the meaning they help to convey, if those meanings are relevant to your argument about the novel.)

**Thesis:**
Your thesis should advance a **claim** about the issue or topic or problem that your passages allow you to interrogate. It should be an analytic claim, not a descriptive statement, i.e., a proposition that is not self-evident. (In class we’ll discuss this distinction and the features that make for a strong college-level thesis claim.) *The best close analysis arguments are formed when a writer allows her reflection on the textual evidence to lead her to a thesis claim (rather than looking to the text to support a thesis generated in advance of that reflection on the evidence).*

**Defining the “Question or Problem”:**
A major goal of your introduction is to communicate to the writer not only what the focus of the essay is, but why. What question or problem will the analysis address?
Why is that a significant question or problem? That gives the reader a sense of what’s at stake in the thesis claim the essay announces and develops. The handout “Introductions and Motive,” posted on the course website, provides some guidelines and suggestions for the treatment of our fourth prioritized “element” as you fashion your introduction.

**Writing Beyond Expos (Or, How to Transfer What You’re Learning in Unit 1 to Other Writing Assignments)**

In literature classes, close analysis will generally be referred to as “close reading.” That term can be used as a noun or a verb; it is both a common essay genre in literature departments, and a method of analysis you can employ at key moments in virtually any kind of essay about literature. It is practiced as well in history classes, where you might be expected to perform textual analysis of a document. In other humanities classes, you’re likely to encounter analogous writing assignments. In an art history course, for example, you might be asked to analyze a painting or a sculpture; though the “language” in visual rather than verbal, the idea is the same: you’re looking closely at the formal elements that make up a work of art and explaining how they communicate specific meanings, just as you are doing in your essay on a Jane Austen novel. In the social sciences, students are often asked to perform close analysis of arguments or theories. This kind of assignment is similar to literary close reading in that you are looking to the text for your evidence and building your thesis out of a careful unpacking of that text. However, you will probably do less sentence-level analysis than you would in a literary close analysis; your scrutiny of the text will likely focus more on such elements as claims, assumptions, logic, and evidence. Such assignments may be encountered in sophomore tutorials, where students are sometimes asked to write about seminal essays in that academic discipline.
Unit 1 Response Paper
Due Friday, Sept. 20 by 9 am. Email it to me in doc or docx format, and also drop off a hard copy to 1 Bow St. (1 hour grace period for hard copy delivery)

A response paper in Expos represents the first stage of your essay-in-development. However, it is not a draft of your draft; rather, it is a distinct writing exercise whose terms are intended to help you develop building blocks for the draft. Your response paper assignment for Unit 1 asks you to identify a focus for your close analysis essay; to isolate potential evidence; and to perform preliminary analysis of some of that evidence. Please label your sections by number (corresponding to the prompt). With respect to spacing, font, etc., follow the formatting instructions for essay submissions posted on the website.

I. Identify the question or issue you propose to explore in your Unit 1 essay.

Explanation/Directions for Part I: To write this paper, you need to identify a contestable issue in Austen’s *Persuasion* that will provide the subject for an argument you will construct about the novel. The unit 1 syllabus proposes that *Persuasion* implicitly advances arguments about various matters (matters that include, to name just a few, social class and class mobility; the role of women in society; and changing definitions of family). Contestability might adhere as well to specific characters that represent a problem or tension in the novel, or keywords that provide a clue to one of the novel’s implicit “arguments.” In Part I, you are to articulate in several sentences or a short paragraph the issue you propose to explore in your close analysis of *Persuasion*. Bear in mind that your essay will requires a specific focus, a particular angle on the contestable issue your address addresses. For instance, while “the role of women in society as reflected in *Persuasion*” is too broad a topic for the kind of essay you will be writing, considering what *Persuasion* suggests about the different kinds of power available to middle class versus aristocratic women is a usefully specific approach. If you like, you may identify your focus by posing an analytic question your essay will address. (Be sure to review the handout titled “Analytic Questions” that is posted on the website.) As you frame your response to Part I, consider how discussion of this issue will contribute to a better understanding of the stakes of Austen’s novel. (That will help prepare you to write a strong introduction.)

II. Identify 5 or 6 passages in the novel that bring your proposed topic into focus and that constitute evidence out of which you can build your argument.

Directions: These pieces of evidence might be as short as a couple of sentences or as long as a scene that unfolds over several pages. Indicate your selections by chapter and a very short description of what that selection is about.

III. Write a preliminary analysis of two or three of these pieces of textual evidence. (go to next page)
Directions: Choose the two or three passages that you think are meatiest, about which you can imagine writing the most at this stage in your thinking about the essay-in-development. Ideally, the passages you choose will cast somewhat different lights on the issue; successful essays need tension and development, so you don’t want three passages that illustrate precisely the same idea. See if you can make your second or third passage choice one that complicates either or both of the others. Transcribe those two or three passages (single space these transcriptions, or you can attach a photocopy of them if you prefer) and write a preliminary analysis of each (separately). The passage as a whole is proposed as evidence, but now you need to break that down further: what details in the passage are telling? What do they tell us that is not immediately obvious? Aim to write about 1 ½-2 pages total of commentary for part III. (The transcription or photocopy of the passages does not factor into the page length.)
Jane Austen, Then and Now
Unit 2: “Jane Austen at the Movies”

Reading/Viewing assignments for Unit 2
Our class sessions will focus on the film adaptations of Pride and Prejudice that are the primary object of analysis for the Unit 2 essays. Because you will be making an argument about one of them as an adaptation, you need to have a handle on the Austen novel it is adapting. Therefore, you are responsible for reading (or re-reading) Pride and Prejudice. (Do this as early in the unit as possible, but if necessary, you can use the gap between classes over the Columbus Day holiday to finish reading the novel.) We will discuss selected clips from the film adaptations in class, but you are required to view in their entirety episode 1 of the 1995 BBC mini-series (you’ll only need to watch the remaining episodes if that is the adaptation you choose to write about); Joe Wright’s Pride & Prejudice; and Gurinder Chadha’s Bride and Prejudice. The 1940 Pride and Prejudice is optional viewing. The coursepack (available for purchase at Gnomon Copy) contains a required reading from Timothy Corrigan’s manual about film analysis that offers essential tips for working with film evidence.

SCHEDULE:

Mon. Oct. 7 Adapting Austen
Carefully read the Unit 2 essay and response paper prompts. Also read—as close to class as possible—the final chapter of Pride and Prejudice. We will be comparing Austen’s terms of closure to some of the film adaptations’ final scenes as a way of thinking about adaptation.

Wed. Oct. 9 Taking a Closer Look at Film Evidence
Before today’s class, you are expected to have watched Wright’s adaptation and episode 1 of the BBC mini series and to have read the Corrigan chapters.

Mon. Oct 14 No Class (Columbus Day)

Mini assignment due Tue. Oct. 15 by 5 pm. In an email, identify one specific shot or sequence from Bride and Prejudice that you think is worth pausing over. (“Shot” and “sequence” are terms drawn from the Corrigan reading.) In at least several sentences and no more than one paragraph, explain what you find significant or interesting about that piece of film evidence.

Wed. Oct. 16 Reinventing Austen
We’ll be discussing Bride and Prejudice.

Fri. Oct. 18 Response Paper 2 due by 9 am. Optional meetings Monday to discuss response paper feedback and the draft plans.
**Mon. Oct. 21**  Analyzing Film Evidence, cont’d.; forms of comparative analysis comparison

**Wed. Oct. 23**  Today we’ll discuss some “management on the page” issues pertinent to the Unit 2 essay, in particular representing film evidence on the page and citation of film evidence.

**Fri. Oct 25**  **Unit 2 Draft due 9 am.**

**Mon. 28**  **Unit 2 Workshop** (Drafts will be posted by Saturday afternoon.)

**Conferences Mon-Wed.**
**Revisions due 5 days after your conference.**

**Wed. Oct. 30**
TBA
Essay 2:

*Pride and Prejudice* as novel and film (6-7 pages)

**DRAFT due: Fri. Oct 25 by 9 am.** Deliver a hard copy to my mailbox by noon. 
**REVISION due 5 days after your conference by 5:00 pm** via electronic submission to the dropbox. Get a hard copy to my mailbox by noon the next day (or to me in class if applicable). **Remember to attach the draft with my comments to that hard copy.**

In unit 2, you will write about one film adaptation of Austen’s most iconic novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, in order to advance an argument about some aspect of that film in relation to the novel. Filmed versions from which you may choose are the 1940 Hollywood classic with Greer Garson and Laurence Oliver; the 1995 BBC miniseries starring Colin Firth and Jennifer Ehle; Joe Wright’s 2005 film starring Keira Knightly and Matthew Macfadyen; and Gurinder Chadha’s 2004 Bollywood-inspired *Bride and Prejudice*. It can be helpful to think of the film as an interpretation of the novel on which it is based, and also to think of the film as a text that can be compared to Austen’s text. Think about what slant or emphasis the film seems to place on Austen’s novel.

To write this essay, you will need to focus on a particular aspect of the film-novel relationship. Questions you might think about upon viewing the films to help you to arrive at your analytic focus for your essay about one of those films include the following:

-- What happens to the characters, now performed by actors whose acting styles and physical qualities contribute to characterization? What strikes you about a given film’s characterization of Elizabeth, of Darcy, of Mr Bennet, etc.? What do these film versions emphasize or change about their counterpart in the novel?

-- Are there significant changes to the original text (changes in dialogue, in narrative event, in detail, etc.), and if so, what do you think is at issue or at stake with those alterations?

-- Is there a particular scene or episode in which the relationship between the original and the adaptation is particularly interesting or revelatory?

-- Does the film seem to highlight one particular aspect of Austen’s narrative?

A number of things you worked on in Unit 1 will be transferable to this second essay. As you did in the last essay, you will develop a contestable thesis claim; will support your argument with textual evidence; and will write an introduction that communicates what’s at stake in the argument. You will also apply the specific analytic practice you learned in unit 1, close analysis, to the evidence you isolate for commentary. **Whatever your argument is, its development will depend on careful analysis of film evidence.** Since you are considering the film in relation to the adaptation of the novel on which it is based, some of your essays may also include some “close reading” of passages from the novel, though in other cases briefer
explications of pertinent elements in the novel will suffice. In other words, it follows
from the terms of the assignment that the film will provide the majority of the
specific evidence you will closely analyze in this essay (just as you analyzed
*Persuasion*'s terms of representation in Unit 1).

While close reading a film is analogous to close reading literature, it requires you to
analyze visual language. As Timothy Corrigan explains in *A Short Guide to Writing
About Film*, “Films are not just about a story, character, or place, or a way of life; they
are also what John Berger has called a ‘way of seeing’ those elements...To write an
intelligent, perceptive analysis of the stories and characters in the movies, you must
be prepared to see them as constructed...” (20, emphasis added). Therefore the
writer of an essay on film must communicate “not just what you see but how the
image makes you see people and things in a certain way and in a certain relationship
to one another” (Corrigan 56-7, emphasis added). To get a handle on working with
this new kind of evidence, carefully read the chapters from Timothy Corrigan’s
manual that are included in the coursepack. These chapters from Corrigan provide
helpful tips about what to look for in film images and will introduce you to the
standard vocabulary used to talk about the language of film. We will spend some
time in class collectively examining some shots or sequences from several *Pride and
Prejudice* film adaptations in order to practice the analysis of film evidence. (I have
also placed a handout on the website that reviews relevant points from Corrigan;
this document is intended as a supplement to Corrigan, not a substitute for the
assigned reading.)

Don’t undertake research for this essay; as in Unit 1, the point is for you to engage
directly with the primary sources in order to generate an essay from your own ideas
about them. However, I will distribute a handout with some claims made by a critic
or scholar about one of these adaptations—or about the phenomenon of adaptation
itself—that may prove useful for furthering our own thinking about our Unit 2
primary sources. If you would find it helpful to draw on one of those claims in your
introduction in order to suggest what is stake in your argument, i.e., to help
establish the essay’s “motive,” you may do so. If you do, confine your use of the
secondary source to your introductory framing; the body of the essay should
consist exclusively of your own textual analysis. Please note that this use of a
claim from a secondary source to help launch your argument is allowed but not
required; it is equally possibly to derive the sense of “what’s at stake” from the
friction between the two primary sources, the novel and the film.
Writing Beyond Expos

You are likely to be assigned many essays that require you to compare sources, ideas, or phenomena. Some will be straightforward comparisons (i.e., compare the cultural politics of *Pride and Prejudice* with those of *Persuasion*), while others, like your Unit 2 Expos assignment, will ask you to consider one thing in relation to something else (in this case, a film in relation to the novel of which it is an adaptation), or to assess some idea with reference to different expressions of that idea (i.e., what’s the best way to foster democracy, according to two or three different political theorists). In the case of any essay predicated on comparison, it will be important to anchor your analysis and argument in specific grounds for comparison; if those are not identified for you in the prompt, you need to develop them. The goal of a comparative essay is to make your reader see something by considering two (or sometimes more) sources, ideas, theories, or phenomena together that would not be as visible if we only looked at each in isolation. Beware of simply cataloguing similarities and differences: in college-level writing, those similarities and differences you observe between two things are likely to be the starting point for an argument, but *to move from description to analysis you must think about what those similarities or differences suggest or reveal.* A good way to get started with a comparative essay assignment is to ask yourself what you noticed about A when you looked at it in conjunction with B that you might not have picked up on if you weren’t thinking about it in those comparative terms. (Comparison is a strategy for thinking as well as a kind of writing.) The Harvard College Writing Center’s website has an excellent guide to writing comparative essays that you can find at [http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/documents/CompAnalysis.html](http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/documents/CompAnalysis.html). That document provides tips for identifying strong *grounds for comparison* as you frame your argument, for fashioning comparative thesis claims, and for structuring comparative essays. It also discusses lens analysis, a cousin of the comparative essay in which you read one source through the interpretive “lens” provided by another source.
Response Paper # 2  
Due Fri. Oct. 18 by 9 am via email attachment. Drop off a hardcopy by noon. Remember to include your Works Cited.

You will be watching several film adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*. Before starting on the response paper assignment, you need to decide which one you will write about. (If you want to write about the BBC mini-series, you need to view it in its entirety.) The first sentence of Part I should identify your choice of adaptation.

**Part I Analytic Focus**

Write approximately one page (double-spaced) explaining the proposed analytic focus of your two-source essay. **What specific aspect of the relationship between the film and Austen’s novel will you analyze?** What invites, or what led you to, this specific focus, and what are your preliminary observations, questions, or conclusions?

**II. Preliminary Film Analysis**

Choose **one** shot or scene that reflects particularly well what you are exploring about the film adaptation. Write a preliminary analysis of that shot or scene. (Aim for 2 solid paragraphs.) As you discuss this piece of film evidence, remember to draw on Corrigan’s tips about the formal elements of this medium and how to write about them.

*If you are having trouble arriving at an analytic focus for your Unit 2 essay, try doing the “brainstorming” exercise posted on the course website.*
Jane Austen, Then and Now

Unit 3: “Civil Discourse: Jane Austen and the Critics”

Mon. Nov 4
Library class with Sue Gilroy; **today we meet in Lamont B30**
This class will teach you how to find sources to develop your independent research project on an Austen novel or adaptation. **These are the required readings for this class:** 1/ the sections in *HGUS* on “Evaluating Sources” and “Locating Sources” and 2/ the essay and response paper prompts. Bring your laptop to this class if you can; otherwise, you can use one of the loaner laptops in Lamont B30.

Wed. Nov. 6
Working with Secondary Sources
What kind of source is this? (or, judging a book by its cover);
Engaging with secondary sources at the college level
Before class, review the essay prompt, especially the second paragraph (the one detailing source parameters).

**Mini assignment due by email by Friday Nov. 8, 9am** Write me a brief description (a few sentences) of your research topic for Unit 3. What potential sources have you found so far (sources additional to the novel or adaptation about which you are writing)?

Mon. Nov. 11
Reading Scholarly Articles
Read the chapter by Claudia Johnson in the coursepack; a writing assignment due in class will be distributed by email.

Wed. Nov. 13 Source Functions
For today’s class, you will read a multi-source essay from *Exposé* and a handout on source functions; both of these documents, along with instructions for how to prepare for class discussion, are posted on the website.

**Response Paper (the annotated bibliography) due Friday, Nov. 14 (any time)**
Once you have submitted your response paper, it’s time to work on formulating your essay plan. Follow the cues on the handout attached to the unit’s prompts. Sign up for a meeting Monday or Tuesday to present your plan.

Mon. Nov. 18
Responsible Citation
Read the sections in *HGUS* titled “Integrating Sources” and “Citing Sources.” Assignment for today’s class: read the short extract from Tony Tanner in the coursepack and do the exercise on scrupulous citation distributed last week. We’ll go over the exercise in class, but **it must be submitted at the start of class.**
Wed. Nov. 20
TBA

Saturday Nov 23
Draft of Unit 3 Essay Introduction due by noon.

Mon. Nov. 25
Unit 3 Workshop
You will be assigned to small groups for the Unit 3 workshop and will be responsible for reading and critiquing the drafted introductions of the other writers in your group. By Monday morning I will email you your group assignments and your peers’ introductions that accompany that assignment.

No class Wednesday: Happy Thanksgiving!

Mon. Dec. 2
Writing and Disciplinary Difference

Tuesday Dec. 3 Unit 3 Complete Draft due by 9 am. (Bring the hard copy to class Wed.)

Wed. Dec. 4
Evaluations (Bring your laptop to class if you conveniently can.)

Conferences held Wed. Dec. 4 -Fr. Dec. 6

All unit 3 revisions due Wed., Dec. 11 by 5 p.m. That’s the dropbox deadline; the hard copy must be delivered to my mailbox at the Expos office by 10 am Th. Dec. 12 (accompanied, as always, by the draft and draft comments).
Unit 3: “Civil Discourse: Jane Austen and the Critics”

Essay Assignment: Joining an Academic “Conversation” (multi-source research paper of 8-12 pages)

A draft of your introduction is due Sat. Nov. 23 by noon by email.

The complete draft is due Tue. Dec. 3 by 9am, by email as an attached document. Bring the hard copy to class on Wed.

Revision due to the dropbox Wed. Dec. 11 by 5 pm. Hard copy, attached to your draft with my comments on it, must be in my mailbox by 10 am Th. Dec. 12. (If you don’t submit those hard copy materials on time, you will not receive comments on the revision.)

For the Unit 3 essay, you will write a research paper about an Austen work of your choice, or an adaptation of an Austen work, on a topic that you develop. (If you write about an adaptation, you will need to read the novel on which it is based so that you have the authority to advance convincing claims about it as an adaptation of Austen.) While in Units 1 and 2 you developed arguments exclusively through analysis of the primary source exclusively, the unit 3 assignment requires you to develop your argument and analysis in a way that engages with pertinent secondary sources that relate to your topic. As our research unit, Unit 3 is very much concerned with “element” # 6 (Sources), so here are the specific source parameters for this essay:

The Unit 3 essay must incorporate at least four sources in addition to the novel and/or adaptation you’re writing about. At least two of these must be secondary sources, and at least one of those must be a scholarly source whose argument you will engage with in a substantive way. (What constitutes a scholarly source as well the distinction between primary and secondary sources will be covered in the library class and the class that follows it.) The other two required sources will be comprised of any combination of the following: scholarly sources; non-scholarly but appropriate secondary sources drawn on for interpretive claims (such as a New Yorker review article, for example) and/or additional primary sources that help you advance your argument in some way (for example, a conduct book from Jane Austen’s time, or in the case of an adaptation, another film that provides an instructive comparison).

In contrast to your first two Expos essays, your research paper requires you to engage in a sustained way with what other people have written about your topic (or matters pertaining to your topic). By doing so, you will be joining an academic “conversation” about Austen’s work. While research undertaken for a science essay or some kinds of social science essays involve discovery of data about an observable physical or social phenomenon (often presented in articles that report on empirical research conducted by their authors), research in the humanities generally involves discovery of ideas and interpretive claims advanced in the published “conversations” about a subject. Some “hard facts” about your text and its context may be useful, even necessary, to advance your argument, but you’re not primarily researching hard facts; rather, you’re primarily
researching interpretations of the work you’re writing about, and doing so to develop an argument of your own in some relation to what others have argued. The first step in developing your essay, therefore, will be to identify the “conversation” about Jane Austen, or about the reinvention of Jane Austen in a modern adaptation, that you propose to join. Start by reviewing secondary sources whose titles suggest an intersection with your area of interest in the work you are writing about. Our library class with Sue Gilroy at the start of our unit will teach you how to do this. The research you do at this stage will culminate in the Annotated Bibliography.

Effective engagement with your secondary sources will require you to discuss and evaluate the arguments they advance, but will also require you to analyze relevant textual evidence from the primary source (the novel or adaptation). In other words, the skill of close analysis of a primary source text will transfer over from the first two units; the difference is that now this analysis will be undertaken in the service of an argument that you develop in “conversation” with other voices, in what Gerald Graff calls the “They say/I say” move that is central to academic discourse. By exercising your own analytic skills as you do so, directing your critical lens at the primary source you and the critics you cite are all writing about and at the secondary sources with which you are engaging in the essay, you will be able not simply to report on what others have argued, but to argue along with them, to add something to the “conversation.”

Part of your work toward this essay involves the selection of a good research topic. (Note that you are required to email me about your research topic by Fri. Nov. 7) You should start, of course, by choosing the particular work you want to write about, but then you will need to identify a specific focus for your inquiry (just as you had to do in unit 1 and unit 2). You want to write about something that can sustain your interest over the several weeks you will be working on this essay, and, given the terms of this essay prompt, about something on which writers before you have weighed in. Your essay topic also needs to be of a scope suitable to the assigned length. If you don’t know at the outset what, specifically, you want to explore about the Austen novel or adaptation of an Austen novel you chose, it can be helpful to browse titles of secondary sources, to see what kinds of issues or themes are present in the published “conversation” about that work, and start from there.

Please note that that you will be required (as are all Expos students in Unit 3) to submit copies of your secondary and additional primary sources (PDFs or photocopies). Details about that will follow in a separate document.

Writing Beyond Expos

You can expect to encounter many essay assignments that require you to research sources beyond the course’s assigned readings. Unit 3 gives you an introduction to the research paper, but such assignments outside of Expos may involve a longer essay than this one. (That’s because you will have more time for the research and writing than we could allow you in the context of Expos, with its three essay cycles.) Research papers tend to be due well into or toward the end of the semester, so with this kind of assignment, it’s important
to avoid procrastinating and to do some forward planning. This unit’s introduction to the research paper will show you that several time-consuming preliminary steps are necessary before you can tackle a draft for a research paper, steps that include identifying relevant sources; reading and reflecting on potential sources; and figuring out your terms of engagement with the various sources you will incorporate in your essay. If you see on the syllabus at the start of a course that you will have to write a research paper, map out a timeline that will allow you to accomplish these steps before you need to start drafting the essay. Skills targeted in this unit that you can carry forward into a range of writing assignments include finding appropriate sources and positioning your argument in relation to the published scholarship on your topic.
Unit 3 Response Paper: Annotated Bibliography
Due Date: Fri. Nov. 14 any time before midnight (bring hard copy to class on Monday)

Your work on the unit 3 essay begins with a “discovery” process during which you will identify and review potential sources. You will start by investigating what articles and books have been published that might help you focus and develop your argument. Our library classes with Sue Gilroy will teach you how to search effectively and efficiently for sources; Sue is also willing to meet with students individually to provide more targeted assistance for individual research projects. Bibliographic research will yield titles of works that may prove useful, which you then need to read in order to assess their relevance, if any, for your essay. (Take careful notes and keep track of citations as you go.) The “discovery” phase culminates in the creation of this annotated bibliography, in which you will identify and briefly summarize at least 7 potential sources for your essay and reflect on how you expect to use them in your essay. (At least 5 of these must be secondary sources and at least 3 of those secondary sources must be scholarly articles or books.) Not all of the sources you include in the bibliography will necessarily feature in the essay you ultimately write, but you should concentrate on sources that you expect to be helpful.

There will be three components to each entry on your bibliography. Individual entries are single-spaced, but you should double space between entries. Here are those three components of the entries:

--CITATION IN MLA FORMAT
Make sure your entry follows whatever the MLA rule is for that kind of source (i.e., essay in an anthology, book-length study by one author, etc.).

--SUMMARY OF THE SOURCE
Aim for three to five sentences. Your summaries must be based on your own reading of the sources, not a second hand account or book review, and they should be substantive. Focus on the main ideas and claims rather than on the supporting details. Don’t just record the topic of the essay or book chapter; communicate the argument or central claim of each source. (If your source is one that provides essential information, you can describe what the piece covers and the main relevant points or areas of information for your purposes, but if it is a source that advances claims you might reference and engage with in your essay, as many of them will be, your summary should communicate the governing argument.) If one of your sources is a book-length study, a good strategy will be to read the introduction and also read the chapter that sounds most pertinent to your topic. Your entry could offer a one-sentence account of the book’s overall focus and argument based on its introduction, followed by a summary of the chapter you have singled out as the most pertinent for you. (Helpfully, many book-length studies of Austen are organized by work, and your papers are centered on a single work, so in many cases you would only need to read the introduction and that one chapter in
any case.) Identify the chapter as such in the first sentence of your summary; the citation itself will be to the book.

--BRIEF EVALUATION OF THE SOURCE’S USEFULNESS TO YOUR ESSAY
Aim for two or three sentences. If you expect to use the source, be as specific as you can about how you expect to use it, the way in which it can help you advance your analysis or argument. (Recalling the class on source functions will be helpful here.) If you have determined that it will not be useful to you, indicate why not.

In some cases it may be easier to do #2 for all your sources first, and then tackle #3 for each, because the process of reading and reflecting on all of your potential sources may help you refine the focus and approach of your essay, which in turn determines whether and in what way a given source will be useful. (The best order of operations will depend to some extent on how clear a sense you have at the outset of what you want to argue about.)

Your annotated bibliography must have a TITLE. Call it: “An Annotated Bibliography of [blank].” Fill in the blank with something more specific than just the title of the Austen work you are writing about; come up with a phrase that signals something about the specific critical direction of the research project (such as “An Annotated Bibliography of Post-Colonialist Treatments of Mansfield Park” or “An Annotated Bibliography of Feminist Interpretations of Sense and Sensibility”).

Rest assured that your annotated bibliography is not a binding contract; you may find additional or alternative sources between submitting this bibliography and writing your draft, or even between draft and revision. (Re-evaluation of sources can be a useful step as a research project develops.)