

One day, one novel: Jane Austen's Persuasion

Start date 18th November 2018**End date** 18th November 2018**Venue** Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge**Tutor** Dr Jenny Bavidge**Course code** 1819NDX013**Director of Academic Centres**

Sarah Ormrod

**For further information on this
course, please contact**Head of Academic Centre Administration, Zara Kuckelhaus
zara.kuckelhaus@ice.cam.ac.uk or 01223 746204**To book** See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Jenny Bavidge is University Senior Lecturer and Academic Director for English at ICE and a Fellow in English at Murray Edwards College, University of Cambridge. She was President of the Literary London Society from 2013-17 and currently sits on the committee of the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment. Jenny teaches within a wide range of areas, including modern and contemporary American and British literature, and has published on a variety of topics, including the literature of London, E. Nesbit, ecocriticism, rats, and balloons. She was elected a Fellow of the English Association in 2017.

Course programme

09:30

Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee

10:00 – 11:15

Session 1: Introduction – Persuasion and Persuaders

In this session we'll discuss the theme of 'persuasion', noting the various incidents of persuasion and different kinds of persuaders we encounter throughout the novel. We'll outline the other themes at work and place the novel in the context of Austen's life and other writing.

Preparation: Please look closely at Chapter 1 and think about the way the characters are introduced to us and how the themes of the novel begin to be established.

11:15

Coffee

11:45 – 13:00

Session 2: Austen's Style

In this session, we'll take a close look at Austen's distinctive and innovative style of writing.

Preparation: See if you can identify some examples of 'indirect discourse', that is when, the narrative voice of the novel is actually speaking in the voice of a character (see for example the beginning of Chapter 15 where the narrative says 'Sir Walter had taken a very good house in Camden-place' and then the following phrase 'such as becomes a man of consequence', which seems to be in Sir Walter's own voice and so is his own opinion of himself.

13:00

Lunch

14:00 – 15:15

Session 3: Anne Elliot, Melancholy and Reading

In our third session, we'll have a long look at Anne Elliot. Austen described her as being 'almost too good for me'. We'll discuss Anne in relation to Austen's other heroines and also consider how she is contrasted with other female characters in *Persuasion* (Louisa Musgrove, for example, or Miss Elliot).

Preparation: We'll also think about the idea of 'melancholy' in early 19th century literature and culture. If you want to understand more about the literary conversations between Anne and Captain Benwick you could dip into Byron's 'The Giaour'

(<https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/b/byron/george/giaour/poem.html>)

and/or Walter Scott's 'Marmion'

(<https://www.gutenberg.org/files/4010/4010-h/4010-h.htm>). Don't feel obliged to read them in their entirety! They're both very long, so we'll look at extracts in class.

15:15

Tea

15:30 – 16:45

Session 4: Class, War and the Professions

In our final session, we'll turn our attention to the context and wider social commentary of *Persuasion*. The Napoleonic Wars had drawn to a close in 1815 and the characters' involvement with the military and maritime world is a significant element of the novel. If you're not familiar with this period of history and the effect of the War on British society, there is a useful overview on the British Library site:

(<https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/the-impact-of-the-napoleonic-wars-in-britain>)

16:45

Day school ends

Content:

This day school will offer an intensive introduction to Jane Austen's *Persuasion*. Published in 1817, *Persuasion* is the last full novel Austen completed before her death. As funny and clear-sighted as her other works, it has a melancholy element running through its sharp social satire. We will ask who is persuaded of what, by whom, and to what purpose.

We will begin the day by placing the novel in the context of Austen's life and times and then move on to think about particular themes in the novel. During each session we will analyse selected passages, taking time to identify notable aspects of Austen's style, such as her use of 'indirect discourse' and irony, and to comment on the form and structure of her development of the novel's plot. Each of the sessions will trace a different theme in the novel; we will begin each seminar session with a brief lecture and then read and discuss selected passages together. In her *Mansfield Park*, Austen says 'Let other pens dwell on guilt and misery. I quit such odious subjects as soon as I can...'. How far does *Persuasion* steer its course away from 'odious subjects'? Does Austen critique the society she depicts in the novel or does she support the status quo? And why is it significant that Anne Elliot ends the novel as the 'mistress of a very pretty landaulette'?

Please read the novel in full before the course and bring a copy with you. If you are buying an edition for the course then the Oxford World's Classics or Norton editions are recommended. There are some suggestions of close-reading in the description for each session which would form useful preparation for the course.

You may also wish to view one or more of the adaptations of *Persuasion*, particularly the most recent version *Persuasion* (2007, dir. Adrian Shergold) or *Persuasion* (1995, dir. Roger Michell). You could also glance at the excerpts of the 2016 production of *Persuasion: A Musical Drama*, available on youtube.

Aims:

- to introduce students to *Persuasion*, encouraging depth of reading and critical attention to the novel and to encourage an enjoyable atmosphere in which to discuss and debate
- to investigate questions about literary style, form and content
- to place students' own reading and knowledge of the novel in a broad context of literary, historical and critical contexts

Presentation of the course:

Each session will begin with a short informal lecture followed by structured class discussion.

Aims:

As a result of the course, within the constraints of the time available, students should be able to:

- understand *Persuasion* in its literary and historical context;
- be able to employ appropriate critical vocabulary to describe the style and form of *Persuasion*;
- feel confident in their discussions of the themes and ideas explored in the novel.

Reading and resources list

Listed below are texts that might be of interest should you wish to supplement your learning on the course.

Author	Title	Publisher and date
Austen, Jane, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye	<i>Collected Letters of Jane Austen</i>	Oxford U P, 1997
Copeland, Edward and Juliet McMaster	<i>The Cambridge Companion to Jane Austen</i>	Cambridge U P, 2011
Tanner, Tony,	<i>Jane Austen: A Life</i>	Macmillan, 1986
Janet Todd,	<i>Jane Austen in Context</i>	Cambridge UP, 2005

Website addresses

Jane Austen at the British Library: <https://www.bl.uk/people/jane-austen>

Helpful essays and fascinating images of some of Austen's manuscripts

***Persuasion* at Pemberley.com (not a University site but lots of scholarly resources and excellent lists!):** <https://www.pemberley.com/janeinfo/janewrit.html#persuas/>

Additional information

Venue

Details of how to find Madingley Hall can be found on our website:

<http://www.ice.cam.ac.uk/who-we-are/how-to-find-the-institute>

Refreshments

Tea and coffee and lunch will be provided. If you have any specific dietary requirements or allergies and have not already advised us, please inform our Admissions Team on ice.admissions@ice.cam.ac.uk or +44 (0)1223 746262.

Note Students of the Institute of Continuing Education are entitled to 20% discount on books published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) which are purchased at the Press bookshop, 1 Trinity Street, Cambridge (Mon-Sat 9am – 5:30pm, Sun 11am – 5pm). A letter or email confirming acceptance on to a current Institute course should be taken as evidence of enrolment.

Information correct as of: 06 November 2018

