

One day, one novel: Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*

Start date 22nd February 2020

End date 22nd February 2020

Venue Madingley Hall
Madingley
Cambridge

Tutor Dr Jenny Bavidge

Course code 1920NDX005

Director of Academic Centres

Sarah Ormrod

For further information on this course, please contact

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To book See: www.ice.cam.ac.uk or telephone 01223 746262

Tutor biography

Dr 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

Please plan to arrive between 16:30 and 18:30. You can meet other course members in the bar which opens at 18:15. Tea and coffee making facilities are available in the study bedrooms.

09:30 *Terrace bar open for pre-course tea/coffee*

10:00 – 11:15 **Session 1: Introduction – What is sense? What is sensibility?**

In this session we'll place the novel in the context of Austen's life and other writing and think about the way it is structured and plotted.

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 Life-Style**

In this session, we'll take a close look at Austen's distinctive and innovative style of writing. We'll look at examples of her juvenilia and excerpts from her letters and think about how we might find elements of her own life in the novel.

Preparation: See if you can identify some examples of 'free indirect discourse' in the novel, that is, when the narrative voice of the novel is actually speaking in the voice of a character.

13:00 *Lunch*

14:00 – 15:15 **Session 3: Sense / Sensibility**

In our third session, we'll look in detail at the central tension in the novel between 'sense' and 'sensibility'. What do these two qualities signify within 18th / 19th society and culture and how does Austen use Elinor and Marianne to explore their relative merits as approaches to life?

Preparation: You could usefully follow up Marianne's reading lists for a sense of literary influences on her thinking: for example, have a look at William Cowper's 'The Shrubbery', the sort of poem which Marianne makes poor Edward read aloud.

15:15 *Tea*

15:30 – 16:45 **Session 4: Money, Houses and Work**

Our final session will focus on the social and economic context of the novel. We'll also think about how Austen views adolescence, youth and age.

Preparation: Critic Ian Sansom says that 'Money in Austen is a language: it talks.' Have a look at some of the conversations and observations about money in the novel (see the Dashwoods' conversation with Edward at the beginning of Chapter 17 for example.)

16:45 *Day school ends*

Content:

This day school will offer an intensive introduction to Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*. Appearing anonymously ('By a Lady') in 1811, *Sense and Sensibility* was Austen's first published work and its themes and style anticipate many of the concerns and innovations of her later novels. The plot of Elinor and Marianne's search for happiness and financial security becomes a vehicle through which Austen can discuss the relative merits of their different approaches to life and love, and allows the novel to explore ideas as well as incidents. We will think about what the novel has to say about reading, money and marriage and read closely to discover how Austen's subtle style encourages the reader to judge her characters, but to empathise with them as well.

Please read the novel in full before the course and bring a copy with you. If you are buying an edition of the novel in preparation for the course then the Oxford World's Classics or Norton editions are recommended, but any edition will do. If you have the opportunity before the beginning of the course there are 'Preparation' suggestions for each session, but don't worry if you don't have time.

You may also wish to view one or more of the adaptations of *Sense and Sensibility*, particularly the popular film directed by Ang Lee to Emma Thompson's screenplay (1995) and the 2008 BBC adaptation, scripted by Andrew Davies. For more contemporary, international adaptations see *Prada to Nada* (Angel Gracia, US, 2011,) or the Tamil-language *Kandukondain Kandukondain* (Rajiv Menon, India, 2000 – available to view on youtube.)

Aims:

- to introduce students to *Sense and Sensibility*, 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. There are some suggestions of close-reading in the description for each session which would form useful preparation for the course.

Aims:

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

- understand *Sense and Sensibility* in its literary and historical context;
- be able to employ appropriate critical vocabulary to describe the style and form of *Sense and Sensibility*;
- 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
John Mullan	<i>What Matters in Jane Austen: Twenty Crucial Puzzles Solved</i>	Bloomsbury, 2012
Tanner, Tony	<i>Jane Austen: A Life</i>	Macmillan, 1986
Todd, Janet	<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

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

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: 13 January 2020