

English 2321: British Literature

Course Theme: Revolution

Fall 2026 | Section 002 | TR 11:10 AM –12:30 PM | Lang 311

Instructor's Information:

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Office Hours: Tuesdays and Wednesdays 2-3 PM and by appointment

Course Overview

It is undeniable that we live in a revolutionary era. Alongside major sociopolitical and governmental shifts across the world, the so-called fourth industrial revolution (AI technology) is gaining momentum, and we are already seeing hints about the countless ways that AI is going to challenge traditional institutions, industries, and power structures. In 2007, American inventor Ray Kurzweil predicted that, by 2030, AI will reach human-level intelligence—and then, more significantly, move beyond human intelligence, inaugurating a period of such rapid technological advancement that, he argues, it is impossible for us to imagine what the world will look like in just twenty years. While Kurzweil generally promotes a glowing vision of humans joyfully merging with AI technology, many others—including thousands of global leaders, thinkers, scientists, and tech moguls around the world—are warning that AI technology poses an unprecedented threat to human existence and that we must pause AI development to give societies time to discuss and plan for the future. Among the many extreme opinions and the steady arrival of new, convenient advances in AI technology, it can be hard to find clarity. With AI deepfake videos steadily improving and trust in mainstream news declining, some say that we now live in a post-truth society in which the “truth” is whatever your social group and online echo chamber says it is. While the idea of “revolution” often invokes excitement or fear, we are seeing another effect: living through a time of revolution can be simply exhausting as we try to adapt to ever-accelerating change.

But maybe literature can help us navigate these changes. In 1918, just after World War I, Ezra Pound wrote that “artists are the antennae of the [human] race,” suggesting that writers and other artists tend to tune in to the first wobbles of coming change—or deep structural problems that will lead to great fissures in society—before many people have grasped what is happening. In revolutionary times, writers have a superpower: they can find the words and forms to portray new phenomena that, for many people, are still beyond words, and therefore almost beyond perception. Similarly, they can find the words to urge an exhausted, overstimulated population to wake up and take action. Finally, literature can bring the past alive on both a personal and cultural level, allowing us greater insight into patterns of events across time. What hopes and fears do we see rising repeatedly across the centuries when people faced great change? Which fears turned out to be justified, and which ones didn’t? Which debates from the past seem relevant today, and why? What types of literature and language caused real change in the world, and how?

To explore some of these questions, we will sample poetry, nonfiction, fiction, drama from the 1680s to the present, zooming in on key moments of significant political, social, and technological change. As we encounter a variety of styles, voices, and perspectives, we will work together to develop a greater understanding of the ways in which humans cope, move forward, and create enduring art in times of radical change and revolution.

Readings

All readings will be provided to you free of charge through two volumes of a provided course reader.

Occasionally, you will need to use online resources, such as ebooks from the UNT library or YouTube videos. The links for these materials will be provided on the course schedule on Canvas.

Materials

For every class, you should bring

1. a notebook and/or looseleaf paper
2. a pen or pencil
3. your copy of our course readings for the day

You should also familiarize yourself with our Canvas site, where you can find digital copies of the syllabus and schedule; resources for assignments; submission portals for in-class writing and major assignments; announcements; and other important course materials.

Low-Technology Class

This course is a low-technology class, which means that you should always put away your phone, laptop, tablet, and earbuds before class (unless you have ODA accommodations affecting these matters). I instituted this policy because studies show that digital devices (especially phones and laptops) are distracting not only to the person using them, but also to those around them. I have found that classes are far more engaged and energetic without digital devices.

Standard College Workload Expectations

Have you ever wondered why most university courses only meet for 3 hours per week, while most high school classes meet for 5 or more hours per week? For universities in the United States that use the college credit-hour system, the credit you receive is based on something called the Carnegie Unit, which dictates that **for every hour you spend in class, you are expected to complete at least 2-3 hours of work outside class (completing readings, doing assignments, and studying for exams)**. For instance, this course is a three-credit-hour class, so **you will be in class for approximately 3 hours per week, and you are expected to spend an additional 6-9 hours per week outside of class in completing readings and working on assignments**. It is my responsibility to carefully select readings and assignments that will not exceed this workload; it is your responsibility to be aware of these standard expectations and, if you want to succeed in this course, to put in the expected time outside of class.

If you are struggling with time management or your college workload, consider taking advantage of UNT's free personal academic coaching, which is like a personal trainer for your academic skills! Visit this link to make an appointment:

<https://learningcenter.unt.edu/academicsupport/coaching.html>.

Final Grade Components

Informal Weekly Contributions – 45% of your final grade

In-Class Writing and Group Activity Work: 15%

Weekly Quizzes: 15%

Participation, Engagement, and Attendance: 15%

Formal Assignments – 55% of your final grade

Social Media Adaptation, Presentation, and Reflection: 10%

Midterm (including a close-reading essay, Week 7): 15%

Ethical Conflict Essay (completed in class, Week 14): 10%

Final Exam 20%

More Information about Informal Course Components

In-Class Writing and Group Activity Work

You will have many opportunity to engage informally with readings through group activities and individual free-writing. At the end of each class, you should take pictures of any freewriting or group activity work from that day and upload them in your Canvas In-Class Writing portal for the week, which you can find on the Canvas Home page ("In-Class Writing" module) and in the Canvas "Discussions" section. Unless I explicitly state otherwise in the portal, all individual freewriting is private (only you and I can see what you write).

In-class free-writing is considered *informal writing*, which means that you are graded on the labor and energy you put into the exercises; you are NOT graded on your spelling, grammar, punctuation, organization, etc. That said, if you are not prepared for class (i.e. if you do not complete the readings before class), you may struggle to respond to class prompts and activities.

To receive full credit for in-class writing:

- 1) You will need to show up on time, prepared to respond thoughtfully to the literature. That does not mean that you will have a full and complete

understanding of the literature (arguably, no one “fully” understands any work of literature), but that you have read the work carefully enough to know basically what the piece is saying and that you have annotated your reader by marking or commenting on interesting or perplexing features that you can respond to.

2) You need to use the entire time I give you in class to extend and develop your response (i.e. if I give you seven minutes to write, I will expect to see more writing than if I give you two minutes for a flash-response);

3) you should respond to the specific questions in the prompt.

If you have a disability that may require accommodations for in-class writing, please email me or come to my office hours during the first week of class.

Quizzes and Reading Responses

To encourage on-time attendance and preparation (completing assigned readings before class to enable lively discussions and useful activities), we will have regular informal, open-book/open-note quizzes at the beginning of class at least once per week. [Note: “open-book and open-note” applies ONLY to handwritten notes and hard copies of readings—no computers, tablets, or phones should be open during quizzes unless you have disability accommodations.]

The open-book/open-note policy is designed to encourage you to take notes in class, annotate your readings, use time-saving bookmarks or sticky notes to allow you to locate readings faster, and jot down questions/observations while reading. Do NOT expect to use the quiz period to do the readings AND answer the questions—there won’t be enough time.

Because I recognize that different people are struck by different aspects of readings, the majority of quiz questions will be open-ended, allowing you to demonstrate that you have read and thought about the readings. I also almost always add an extra credit question that is slightly more obscure or challenging.

I will begin the semester with weekly quizzes held on Thursday at the start of class, with anything from that week’s readings being fair game for questions; however, if it seems like the class is lagging in preparation and engagement on Tuesdays, I reserve the right to implement pop quizzes that may be held any day.

Quizzes cannot be made up when you miss class unless you have a university-approved, excused absence (see the Attendance and Absences section for more information).

If you have any concerns or questions about these quizzes, or if you have accessibility/disability accommodations to arrange, please email me or come to my office hours.

I will drop the lowest quiz score at the end of the semester.

Participation and Engagement

You will receive grades for your participation and engagement throughout the semester. See the following table for behaviors that raise or lower your participation and engagement score.

Ways to Boost and Maintain Your Participation and Engagement Score	Ways to Lower Your Participation and Engagement Score
• Attending class • Being on time, prepared, and professional • Taking notes in your notebook • Giving your complete attention to class lectures, discussions, and activities. • Keeping your phone, headphones, and other devices put away (out of sight) and on "silent" or "do not disturb" for the entire class period until you need to take pictures of your work at the end of class. • Listening actively to your classmates and me; showing your attentiveness by responding verbally or nonverbally (nodding your head, using facial expressions, looking at the person who is talking, etc.) • Contributing to discussions • Being courteous and respectful to your classmates and me	• Missing class • Using your phone during class (except for times when you are specifically directed to do so or if you have disability accommodations) • Wearing headphones or earbuds during class • Using your laptop or tablet for things unrelated to class • Not paying attention (i.e. not knowing what is going on when I start a group activity, or being zoned out and staring at your laptop) • Having side conversations during lectures or class-wide discussions • Not participating in group work, doing the bare minimum for group work, allowing your group to do the bulk of the work for you, etc.

• Asking questions • Answering questions when I call on you • Participating fully in group activities	• Leaving the room (unless you have disability accommodations to do so) • Arriving late • Being unprepared for class • Sleeping • Being disrespectful or unprofessional
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More Information about Formal Assignments

Social Media Adaptation, Reflection, And Presentation

Students will create a contemporary, multimodal adaptation of one of the readings, authors, characters, and/or figures from a time period, showing what this person's social media profile(s) might have looked like if social media had existed in their time. Next, students will give a brief (5-10 minute) show-and-tell presentation to share their work with the class on the day we discuss the reading, followed by a Q&A session. After the presentation, students will write a 350+ word reflection about the experience. For more information, see the assignment description on Canvas in "Assignments."

Midterm and Final Examinations

The midterm and final will contain a mixture of multiple-choice, short-answer, and essay questions. They will cover the material we have read up until that point in the course. Preparation will be straightforward if you have attended class, completed the readings, participated in class exercises and activities, and taken notes.

In-Class Essay: Ethical Conflict

The Thursday before Thanksgiving Break, you will complete an in-class essay on an ethical conflict in one or two pieces of literature we have read. In the weeks leading up to that essay, we will discuss how to prepare for it. In a course with the theme of revolution, there are so many ethical conflicts to pick from that everyone should be able to find a topic they are interested in.

Course Policies

Attendance and Absences

I will take attendance daily, sometimes aloud and sometimes while the class is working. I do not deduct specific points for absences or impose limits on absences; however, attendance is a factor in your participation and engagement grade. **Overall, you cannot succeed in this course if you miss class regularly (i.e. more than 2-3 times per semester): unexcused absences will directly and significantly affect your grades for informal weekly work (quizzes, participation/engagement, and in-class writing), which together make up 45% of your final grade in this course.** Your attendance record can also affect my decision making when you are straddling the line between two grade categories, i.e. an "A" and a "B."

Of course, when you miss class, you will also miss important lessons and practice for techniques that I will expect to see you using in your weekly writing and formal assignments, as well as content that may appear on future quizzes, exams, or in-class activities. Because each day's classwork builds upon previously discussed and practiced ideas, you are also fully responsible for completing the reading for any days you missed.

When you cannot avoid missing class, it is important to be proactive: get notes from a classmate, complete the assigned reading, and check the Canvas site for announcements or notes. It is YOUR responsibility to use these methods to discover the work and material you missed—it is not my responsibility to "catch you up" or give you a detailed overview of what we covered in class. If you are struggling with techniques or content from class days you missed, please come to my office hours.

If you have an absence lasting longer than 5 days due to an extenuating circumstance (not related to the excused absence items below), I will request that you receive documentation through the Dean of Students.

Excused Absences: According to UNT's [Policy 06.039, Student Attendance and Authorized Absences](#), an absence will be considered "excused" for:

- a. religious holy day, including travel for that purpose;
- b. participation in an official university function;

- c. required military service, including travel for that purpose;
- d. pregnancy and parenting under Title IX;
- e. when the University is officially closed.

In addition, a student is responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, providing satisfactory evidence to the faculty member to substantiate excused absence, and delivering the request personally to the faculty member assigned to the course for which the student will be absent.

Students are permitted to make up work for excused absences. They must contact the professor to request an excused absence and complete any missed work within 10 calendar days of the beginning of the absence.

Deadlines, Extensions, and Late Work

Most of your work will be completed in class, so there aren't many deadlines or assignments eligible for extensions.

In-class weekly work such as in-class writing, activities, and quizzes cannot be made up if you are absent unless you have an approved, documented excuse (see above).

Your social media project presentation is time-sensitive because you will present on the day we cover an author/work; and one or two students are presenting every class, making it difficult to reschedule. Therefore, I will not give extensions for these projects. If you miss your presentation, you should email me (ideally in advance so that I can adjust the day's agenda), but I cannot guarantee that there will be time in class for you to make up your presentation without disrupting the discussion for other students' presentations or other authors' works that we must cover.

Academic Freedom

UNT has a robust policy regarding academic freedom and academic responsibility. Crucially, this policy encompasses not only the rights of faculty members but also the rights "of the student to freedom in learning." As a student in this classroom, therefore, you have the right to encounter and debate new ideas, diverse forms of knowledge, and unfamiliar or contrary points of view. According to UNT policy, "it is not the proper role of the University to attempt to shield individuals from ideas and opinions they find unwelcome, disagreeable, or even deeply offensive." At the same time, to encourage the free exchange of ideas, and to ensure that your right to learn

is protected, the tone for such discussion must always be civil and respectful; personal attacks, insults, discriminatory speech, and disrespectful approaches will not be tolerated. For more information, please consult the full UNT policy at <https://policy.unt.edu/policy/06-035>. Together, we can ensure a safe and welcoming classroom for all. If you ever feel like this is not the case, please stop by my office and let me know.

Audio/Video Recording

Although UNT is a publicly supported institution, our classroom is not a public space. Therefore, in order to protect the intellectual property and privacy rights of both faculty and students, video and audio recordings are prohibited during class. The exception is for students who have been granted explicit approval as an ODA accommodation. For more information, please consult the full UNT policy at <https://studentaffairs.unt.edu/office-disability-access/faculty/faculty-guide/accommodations-explained/Audio-Recording-Faculty.html>

Use of Text-Generating AI

In this class, generative AI use is NOT permitted for any portion of your work. That's because this course is designed to build your own skills in brainstorming, analysis, picking quotes to interpret, reading, writing, choosing words, varying your sentence structures, thinking critically, revising, and more. These are vital life skills that you cannot develop if you do not do the work yourself. The only exception to the no-gen-AI policy will be for occasional focused in-class activities that involve AI exploration and discussion. Also, if you have an idea for incorporating gen-AI technology into your multimodal social media project, you must run it past me—I can approve such a request if you have a compelling project idea and will not be using AI in a way that will replace your own thought, creativity, and effort.

Because AI tools are increasingly built into everyday technology, they are not always obvious. **Please note that generative AI includes not just chat resources like ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and Bard (etc.), but also resources like Grammarly, Quillbot, and anything that says it will “help you write” or that it will polish your writing, paraphrase your writing, rearrange/combine your sentences, reduce or increase your word count, or correct a large number of errors for you all at once.** That's because

these seemingly harmless tools often do a lot more than correct errors: by suggesting different words and different sentence structures, they change the logic and content of your argument. They also often sneak in extra content instead of just working with what you wrote. Please be aware that using Grammarly or other plug-ins in Google Docs may result in your paper's revision history showing that you wrote only a certain percentage of your paper, which will trigger an integrity investigation. If you have Grammarly installed in Google Docs as a plug-in, remember to either ignore it, disable it, or choose to use write.processfeedback.org.

If you are ever unsure about whether a resource constitutes an unauthorized use of generative AI, you should contact me to ask.

AI Glasses are not permitted during quizzes, examinations, graded in-class writing, or any other graded work. If you have AI glasses, it is your responsibility to notify me about them and bring alternative non-AI prescription glasses so that you can complete your assignments.

Communication Expectations

Communication is key to your success. Connect with me through email and/or by attending office hours. During busy times, my inbox becomes rather full, so if you contact me and do not receive a response within two business days, please send a follow up email. A gentle nudge is always appreciated.

Important college skill: **check your UNT email at least once per day.** Class cancelations and other announcements will be sent via email (sometimes through Canvas—sometimes not). If I need to communicate with you about your grade, missing work, or other concerns, I will also use UNT email, and it is often vital for you to respond in a timely manner.

When you need to reach me follow these practices:

- Communicate with me formally through my UNT email address: laura.hensch@unt.edu.
- Send emails only from your own UNT email account. Legally, I cannot respond or provide information to you if you write from a personal account because I cannot verify it is really you.
- Include the course number (i.e. ENGL 2321) in your email.

- Use appropriate salutation such as "Dear Dr. Hensch" or "Hi, Professor Hensch!"
- Treat all emails as professional communication.
- Respect the personal identities and privacy of yourself, of me, and of others.
- Think carefully about what you reveal and do not reveal, particularly if this information involves your health and/or personal information. If your emails contain any information that causes me to be concerned for your safety or the safety of others, I am required by law to report it.
- Refrain from making personal attacks or using language that discriminates based on sex, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, and/or culture. Such language is a violation of the UNT Code of Conduct and will be reported.

Note | I cannot discuss any information relating to academic records through email.

Disruptions

Respect the class environment by using your time effectively and helping your classmates do the same. Like you, your classmates are financially invested in this course, and they have the right to a non-disruptive environment that is conducive to learning. Disruptive behavior includes

- Using your phone (except for activities that use your phone in class and disability accommodations that you have set up with me)
- Eating an elaborate, loud, messy, or fragrant meal; snacks are okay as long as they are not disruptive through sound, sight, or smell
- Holding side conversations during lectures and discussions
- Entering late, especially when done in a noisy or distracting way
- Leaving the room during class (exceptions will be made for occasional emergencies and for those with disability accommodations)
- Being disrespectful – see "Participation and Civility"

If any student is behaving in a disruptive manner, I have the right to remove that student from class with zero credit for attendance or participation for the day.

Syllabus Change Policy

I have made every attempt to provide your syllabus as an accurate overview of the course. However, unanticipated circumstances may make it necessary for me to

modify the syllabus during the semester. These circumstances may arise in response to the progress, needs, and experiences of students. Advance notice will be given for any changes made to the syllabus, and announcements of changes will be made both in class and on Canvas Announcements.

University Policies

Academic Integrity Standards and Consequences

According to UNT Policy 06.003, [Student Academic Integrity](#), academic dishonesty occurs when students engage in behaviors including, but not limited to:

- Cheating: submitting work that is not your own (including use of generative AI)
- Fabrication: i.e. making up information/sources/passages/citations
- Facilitating academic dishonesty: helping someone else cheat
- Forgery: pretending your work is someone else's (fake doctor's notes, etc)
- Plagiarism: using someone else's words or ideas without citing it correctly
- Sabotage: setting someone else up to fail
- Submitting previously submitted work: you may not "re-use" any work from another class.

A finding of academic dishonesty may result in a range of academic penalties or sanctions ranging from admonition to expulsion from the University. I am obligated to report any academic dishonesty.

In this class, a first integrity violation results in a zero on the assignment; a second violation results in an automatic failure of the course. In certain circumstances, if an integrity violation is particularly egregious, I may elect to impose a harsher penalty, even for the first violation.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor's ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Dean of Students to consider whether the student's conduct violated the [Code of Student Conduct](#). The University's expectations for student conduct

apply to all instructional forums, including University and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

The [Dean of Students Office \(opens in a new window\)](#) enforces the [Code of Student Conduct \(opens in a new window\)](#). The Code explains:

- What conduct is prohibited
- The process the DOS uses to review reports of alleged misconduct by students
- The sanctions that can be assigned

When students may have violated the Code, they meet with a representative from the Dean of Students Office to discuss the alleged misconduct in an educational process.

Sexual Assault Prevention

UNT is committed to providing a safe learning environment free of all forms of sexual misconduct. Federal laws and UNT policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex as well as sexual misconduct. If you or someone you know is experiencing sexual harassment, relationship violence, stalking and/or sexual assault, there are campus resources available to provide support and assistance. The Survivor Advocates can be reached at: SurvivorAdvocate@unt.edu and the Dean of Students Office (940-565-2648).

Visit [Title IX Student Information](#) for more resources.

ADA Accommodation

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. To receive accommodation, follow these steps:

1. Register with the Office of Disability Access (ODA) to verify their eligibility.
2. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide a student with an accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding one's specific course needs.
3. Students may request accommodations at any time; however, ODA notices of accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation.
4. Students must obtain a new letter of accommodation every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. For

additional information see the [ODA website](#). You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

Emergency Notification & Procedures

UNT uses a system called [Eagle Alert](#) to quickly provide students with critical information in the event of an emergency (i.e., severe weather, campus closing, and health and public safety emergencies like chemical spills, fires, or violence). In the event of a university closure, please refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course materials.