

Carleton University
Fall 2025 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English

ENGL 2100: Literature and Popular Culture
Topic: Jane Austen and Popular Culture

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***** This is a preliminary syllabus only—texts and assignments are subject to change. A complete version will be available closer to the start of the term. *****

2025 marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of Jane Austen in 1775, and the 30th anniversary of the 1995 so-called “Austenmania.” Ever since Amy Heckerling’s film *Clueless* was released in 1995, critics and fans have talked excitedly of a “Jane Austen revival.” Thirty years later, the revival shows no sign of abating and in fact demands that we rethink the very idea that Austen needed to be “revived” in the first place. She has always been “popular” and in this course we will explore the history of her reception and consider the uses to which her work has been put. But we will also devote a significant amount of time to our own cultural moment and the Jane Austen phenomenon – that is, to Austen’s pervasive and persistent popularity in contemporary popular culture. From Seth Grahame-Smith’s parody, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*; to *Lost in Austen*; to the web series *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*, and the viral “Jane Austen’s Fight Club” video (“The first rule of fight club is that one never mentions fight club. No corsets, no hatpins, and no crying”), we will delve into the world of all things Jane Austen. And then there is Austen as robust global brand: the thriving literary tourism and heritage industry devoted to capitalizing on Austenmania; the love affair with Hollywood; and the seemingly infinite variety of ways in which Austen has been commodified, consumed, personified, impersonated, ventriloquized, appropriated, remediated, parodied, satirized, and embodied. We will pursue these issues and many others in our course. Because zombies.

Required Texts:

Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*
Persuasion
Emma

Jo Baker, *Longbourn*

Seth Grahame-Smith, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*

Books will be available for purchase at the Carleton Bookstore. Other course material will include film adaptations, fanfiction, YA adaptations, TikTok videos and other social media content that will be posted on the course syllabus.

Course Requirements:

Mid-term test – 20% (written in-person, during class)

Proposal for Austen adaptation assignment - 15% (details to come)

Austen adaptation assignment – 30% (details to come)

Final exam – 30% (to be written in December examination period)

Participation and attendance – 5%