

PRIDE, PREJUDICE, & THE PASSIONS: JANE AUSTEN AND UGLY FEELINGS

GNDR_ST 361 & ENGLISH 344

WINTER
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Jane Austen's beloved classic novels are often characterized as sweeping romances—but are they? *Sense and Sensibility* notoriously pairs its fanciful young heroine with a solemn middle-aged man she admires, but perhaps does not love; *Mansfield Park* ends with a peaceable marriage between two cousins who received more exciting proposals elsewhere; and even the heroine of *Pride and Prejudice*—that seeming romance par excellence—only begins to consider the hero as a romantic possibility after seeing his extensive estate. Readers of Jane Austen, know that love—be it affection, admiration, or desire—is never not a complicated emotion. In this class, we will read Austen's works with an eye to investigating how she uses narrative to capture the richness of what were known in the 18th century as “the passions.” How do we recognize what we are feeling, and how are these feelings shared—between individuals, or in prose? We will particularly consider Austen's gift for portraying what the critic Sianne Ngai deems “ugly feelings,” messy, negative affects like envy, irritation, disgust, and numbness that prove critical to Austen's sharp social commentary. While this class will particularly focus on reading Austen's six novels, as well as some of her juvenilia and her unfinished novel, *Sanditon*, we will also turn to selections by her contemporaries—including Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Collier, Phillis Wheatley, and Joanna Baillie—as well as recent film adaptations of her works to further contextualize Austen's view of the passions in light of the period's revolutionary discourse around gender, race, and class.

Samantha Botz

MW 12:30–1:50pm

Univ Hall 218