

Choose two of the following questions on which to write your two (2) one-hour take-home essays, one from Category A and one from Category B. The essays will be due in class, Friday, 14 October. Although you may prepare to write these essays as much as you wish, you may not use sources other than your notes and primary texts in writing them. No outside sources, cited or uncited, may be used in your essays. The writing must be entirely your own. You are honor-bound to spend no more than one hour each in actual writing. Experience enables me to gauge your honesty. Please write your essays in blue books and keep a copy. I will not return your original. Turn in your essays on Friday.

Write two essays of no more than 60 minutes each, on your choice of the following questions, one from each category:

Category A:

1. When Elinor Dashwood discovers Edward's engagement to Lucy Steele, she bides her time until she is alone and "at liberty to think and be wretched" (p. 98). To what extent does such thinking often entail wretchedness for Austen's characters? What are the forms of thought, and what are the forms of wretchedness? Does Austen believe that our most significant moments are private?
2. Kierkegaard said that to fall in love is to create a religion—with a fallible god! Does Austen believe this? How does she repeatedly demonstrate the superiority of rational love to romantic, passionate love? Is rational love cold and calculating? If not, what is rational about it?

Category B:

3. Before she ever wrote a novel, Jane Austen was a talented correspondent. How does the personal letter figure in her novels? What is the difference between an epistolary novel and one with a narrator? How does the epistolary art inform and enhance the art of narrative? How much more do Austen's narrators know than an inquisitive postman who was reading the characters' mail?
4. It used to be said, "Behind every successful man, you'll find a woman." But to what extent does the opposite hold true in Austen? How are men indispensable in the definition of Austen's heroines? How does the interaction of men and women contribute to the fulfillment of both? Conversely, are deficient characters equally deficient in their relationships with the opposite sex?

