ENGL 533
“American Literary Realism”
Tuesday 5-7:30; Faner Hall 2367
Dr. Shapiro

Course Description/Goals
The goal of this graduate seminar is to theorize American literary realism. We will be guided by two interrelated questions. First, how does American literary realism work as a form? Second, in what ways is American literary realism political?
In order to answer these questions, we will focus on a handful of novels by two of the major—and self-professed—practitioners of realism: W.D. Howells and Henry James. We will also discuss recent scholarship on nineteenth-century American realism and influential accounts of nineteenth-century European realism.
Students in this seminar will become familiar with a significant episode in the history of American fiction, but they will also explore research questions and methods for the study of the American novel more broadly.

Course Requirements
• 2 short in-class presentations, one on primary reading and one on secondary reading (each ~15 minutes)
• multiple short response papers (each ~1 page)
• a final research paper (15-20 pages, plus annotated bibliography)

Required Texts
• W.D. Howells, A Hazard of New Fortunes (Penguin Classics, 2001)
• W.D. Howells, Novels, 1886-1888: The Minster’s Charge, April Hopes, Annie Kilburn (Library of America, 1989)
• Henry James, The American (Penguin Classics, 2010)
• Henry James, The Bostonians (Penguin Classics, 2001)
• Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady (Norton, 1995)
• Henry James, The Princess Casamassima (Penguin Classics, 1987)