

English 385: Charles Dickens & J K Rowling | Professor R. Sirabian, 425CCC

*This course is for Muggles who want to experience the adventurous, socially aware, magical worlds of Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield* (published serially, 1849-1850) and J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (1997) and *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire* (2000). We will read these novels for their imaginative worlds, heroes and villains, and descriptive language. In addition, we will compare and contrast novels, thinking about the parallels between the worlds of the novels and even our own (e.g., education, social class, and magic/fairytales). Through class discussions, you will have the chance to share your thoughts about the novels—to analyze and evaluate them, to debate issues, and to explore personal connections to the reading. Literature, after all, is an imaginative engagement of life. Films are the perfect complement to novels, so we will watch adaptations of the novels (clips), which will help us realize why these novels (and their authors) continue to have popularity and cultural power today.*

During the semester, we will work to

- Analyze literature critically in writing to demonstrate an understanding of key themes, of the conventions/language of literature, and of key concepts about nineteenth- and twentieth-century British culture*
- Explain the reciprocal relationship between literature and culture—how literature and culture interact to reinforce and challenge social attitudes and values—by comparing and contrasting Charles Dickens and J. K. Rowling as writers and as authors*
- Evaluate and engage literature as an imaginative expression of the human condition*

Tentative Requirements

This is a reading course. However, there will be quizzes, some assignments, a midterm examination, and a course (research) essay.