



BRITISH VICTORIAN LITERATURE
ENGLISH 422

PROFESSOR JASON R RUDY

FALL 2018
MW 2:00-3:15PM
TAWES ROOM 1106

OFFICE HOURS: M 12-2:00PM,
AND BY ARRANGEMENT

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This rigorous, upper-level course will study the extraordinary literary achievements of Victorian Britain. An age of cultural, political, and aesthetic upheaval, the Victorian period was a time of working-class agitation, struggles for women's rights, industrialization, imperial aggression, scientific discovery, and shifting ideas about race. Through the study of novels, poems, and non-fiction prose, we will consider how Victorian literature engages with the disordered age in which it was composed. Authors will include Alfred Tennyson, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot, and Mary Seacole, among others. Coursework will include a significant research paper, enthusiastic participation, in-class presentation, and a final exam.

CLASS SCHEDULE

❖ = ELMS / Canvas site
H = Handout

L = Electronic link
A = Artwork (via Canvas/ELMS)

◆ = Course packet

PART I: RACE, SLAVERY, AND ENGLISHNESS

Week 1 (8/27, 8/29): Views from Afar

In 1820 the Scottish poet Thomas Pringle emigrated to South Africa with his entire family. Frustrated with the unjust racial politics of the colony, he eventually returned to London to work for the Antislavery Society. It was there that he met Mary Prince, who had recently escaped from slavery in the Caribbean. Along with Susanna Moodie, Pringle worked with Prince to publish her memoirs in 1831, a text influential in the 1833 banning of slavery throughout Britain's colonial spaces.

- I. Thomas Pringle, "Afar in the Desert" (H)
- II. Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* (H)

Week 2 (9/5): Creole, Scots, British

Mary Seacole was born in Jamaica to a Scottish father and a Jamaican mother. She was taught to be a "doctress" and, when war broke out in the Crimea, she traveled there to nurse British soldiers on the battlefield. Her white counterpart, Florence Nightingale, did not welcome her warmly to the region. Seacole composed her *Adventures* afterwards, to raise money, having spent all her savings while tending to the wounded. Her narrative is an important marker of race, gender, and empire in the middle decades of the nineteenth century.

- I. No class: Labor Day holiday
- II. Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (chapters I-X)
Bill Schwarz, "The Expansion and Contraction of England" ❖
A: Albert Charles Challen, *Mary Seacole*

Week 3 (9/10, 9/12): Black Atlantics

As we continue with Mary Seacole, we'll also read the foremost poem from the Crimean conflict, Tennyson's "Charge of the Light Brigade," and an African American rewriting of the poem in the context of the American Civil War. These works show how ideas of masculinity and race traversed the Atlantic: while keeping our eye on Britain, we should remember how important the American scene was through the Victorian era.

- I. Alfred Tennyson, "The Charge of the Light Brigade"
George Henry Boker, "The Second Louisiana" ◆
Stefanie Markovits, "On the Crimean War and the Charge of the Light Brigade" (L)
Daniel Hack, "The African Americanization of Victorian Literature" ❖
A: Richard Caton Woodville, *Relief of the Light Brigade*
- II. Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (completed)
Group Work #1
A: J. M. W. Turner, *The Slave Ship*

Week 4 (9/17, 9/19): Britons Abroad

In 1850 an American abolitionist newspaper asked Elizabeth Barrett Browning to compose a poem on the topic of slavery. We'll read her response along with two essays – written in opposition to one another – on the “Negro Question.” We'll then turn to colonial Australia, a popular destination for British emigrants in the 1850s and '60s, to see how colonial writers there grappled with race and gender.

- I. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” ◆
Thomas Carlyle, from “Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question” ◆
John Stuart Mill, from “The Negro Question” ◆
Group Work #2
A: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The Beloved*
- II. Henry Kendall, “The Wail in the Native Oak” ◆
Charles Harpur, “A Mid-Summer Noon in the Australian Forest” ◆
Fidelia Hill, “Adelaide” ◆
Warwick Anderson, “Antipodean Britons” and Pablo Mukerjee, “Victorian World Literatures” ❖
A: Gordon Syron, *Invasion*

Essay 1 due Saturday, September 22rd, by midnight

PART II: WOMEN QUESTIONS

Week 5 (9/24, 9/26): Ungovernable, Vulgar-Minded Women

We will read *Jane Eyre* and documents that contextualize its 1847 publication. One of the most influential English novels ever written, Brontë’s text still bristles with energy, feeling, and wit. Mill and Taylor’s foundational feminist account *The Subjection of Women* offers important contexts for Brontë’s narrative.

- I. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* – Part I, plus Victorian reviews of *Jane Eyre* ❖
To Walk Invisible: The Brontë Sisters, dir. Sally Wainwright (view on Canvas 9/10-9/23)
A: Richard Redgrave, *The Governess*
- II. John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, from *On the Subjection of Women* ◆
Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market” ◆
Linda H. Peterson, “Working with Publishers” ❖
A: Emma Sandys, *Portrait of a Girl*

Week 6 (10/1, 10/3): Critiquing Imperialism

After continuing with *Jane Eyre*, and thinking in particular of the novel’s colonial perspectives, we will discuss a range of poems composed in Britain’s imperial and colonial spaces, from India to Canada to British Guiana. Manu Chander’s talk on 10/26 will take up many of the issues discussed this week.

- I. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* – Part II
Gayatri Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism” ❖
Group Work #3
A: Thomas Jones Barker, *The Secret of England’s Greatness*
- II. Henry Derozio, “To India – My Native Land” (H)
Toru Dutt, “Our Casuarina Tree” and E. Pauline Johnson, “Ojistoh” ◆
Egbert Martin, “Beautiful Poems” and “With the Poets” (H)
Jane Stafford, Introduction to *Colonial Literature and the Native Author* ❖
A: James Atkinson, *A Sati, or Widow-Burning*

Week 7 (10/8, 10/10): Circumscribed Agency

Both Augusta Webster's dramatic monologue and Brontë's novel critique the limitations women felt within Victorian culture. Webster draws especial attention to "fallen women." We will examine how these authors explore the agency of their protagonists. What kind of choices do these women have, really?

- I. Augusta Webster, "A Castaway" ◆
Alfred Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott"
The Contagious Diseases Act ◆
Harriett Martineau, from "The Contagious Diseases Acts" ❖
Amanda Anderson, from *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces* ❖
Group Work #4
A: Augustus Egg, *Past and Present no. 1*
- II. Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* – Part III

Term paper proposal due Saturday October 13th by midnight

PART III: REALISM, POVERTY, AND SOCIETY

Week 8 (10/15, 10/17): Realistic Imaginations

The nineteenth century gave birth to many forms of realism. We will begin reading Dickens' *Bleak House* with an eye to the ways it catalogues the English world in which it was written and published. Ruskin's essay on "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" – alongside *Bleak House*'s opening attention to fog – will begin our conversation about Victorian environmentalism.

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* I-V (Chapters 1-16)
Hannah Crafts, from *The Bondswoman's Narrative* (H)
George Levine, from *The Realistic Imagination* ❖
A: Oscar Gustave Rejlander, *The Two Ways of Life*
- II. John Ruskin, from "The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century" ◆
Gerard Manley Hopkins, "Binsey Poplars" ◆
Jesse Oak Taylor, from *The Sky of Our Manufacture* ❖
Group Work #5
A: J. W. M. Turner, *Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway*

Week 9 (10/22, 10/24): Psychological Realism

Bleak House was written in the same period that saw the emergence of sociology as a discipline. The dramatic monologue was similarly invested in documenting the real lives of individuals, taking a psychological approach to realism. We will read both Tennyson and Browning from this perspective. Please plan to attend Manu Chander's lecture this Friday!

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* VI-X (Chapters 17-32)
Group Work #6
A: Henry Peach Robinson, *Red Riding Hood*
- II. Alfred Tennyson, "Tithonus" and Robert Browning, "Caliban upon Setebos" ◆

Friday, October 26: Professor Manu Chander (Rutgers Newark) will offer a lecture at 4:00pm in Tawes 2115. Attendance is highly encouraged and extra credit will be offered to those who attend.

Week 10 (10/29, 10/31): Social Realism

As in Victorian fiction, the Victorian stage offered theatergoers a view of the British class system. Drawing especial attention to the politics of social class, Gilbert and Sullivan's comic opera *H.M.S. Pinafore* parodies the culture Dickens treated with brutal realism across the pages of *Bleak House*.

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* XI-XV (Chapters 33-49)
A: William Powell Frith, *Derby Day*
- II. W.S. Gilbert, *H.M.S. Pinafore* ◆
Music from *H.M.S. Pinafore* ❖
Group Work #7
A: Poster advertisement for *H.M.S. Pinafore*

Week 11 (11/5, 11/7): Webs of Connection

As we reach the conclusion of *Bleak House*, we will consider the novel as a whole: a web of interconnected parts carefully woven together.

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* XVI-XX (Chapters 50-67)
Group Work #8
A: James Abbott McNeill Whistler, *Nocturne: Blue and Silver* – Chelsea
- II. *In-class work shopping of thesis statements and bibliographies: bring 4 copies with you to share*

PART IV: THE SOCIAL ORGANISM

Week 12 (11/12, 11/14): Sweetness and Light

George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* traces the life of Maggie Tulliver, a young woman whose intelligence and independent spirit sets her at odds with her community. With its grappling between individual impulse and communal norms, Eliot's story seems as pertinent today as it did on first publication. Ruskin and Arnold were two of the most important non-fiction writers of the century.

- I. George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* – books 1-2
A: Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*
- II. John Ruskin, from *The Stones of Venice* ◆
Matthew Arnold, from *Culture and Anarchy* ◆
Group Work #9
A: John Ruskin, *Part of St Marks, Sketch after Rain*

Week 13 (11/19): Victorian Elegy

The greatest elegy of the Victorian period, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* was beloved by his contemporaries, including Queen Victoria. Composed over a seventeen-year period following the death of Tennyson's closest friend and possible lover, Arthur Henry Hallam, *In Memoriam* meditates on loss and the process of grieving. The poem's opening sections, which we'll read for this week, follow the progression of Hallam's body back from Vienna, where he died, to England, where he was buried.

- I. Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam* I-XXI
- II. No class: Thanksgiving holiday

Week 14 (11/26, 11/28): Strong Currents

We will continue reading *The Mill on the Floss*, following Maggie's life as she matures and faces new challenges and frustrations.

- I. George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* – books 3-5
Group Work #10
A: Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless*
- II. *In-class work shopping 3-4 page drafts of your term paper: bring 4 copies with you to share*

Week 15 (12/3, 12/5): Origins and Floods

Evolutionary biology and cataclysmic shifts to our planet as we know it: our final readings for this course leave us with much to think about in our present moment. Term papers must be submitted by midnight Saturday.

- I. Charles Darwin, from *The Origin of Species* ❖
Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam* XCV-CXXXI, Epilogue
A: Photograph of Queen Victoria with Empress Frederick
- II. George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* – completed
Group Work #11
A: Francis Danby, *The Deluge*

Term Papers due Saturday, December 8th by midnight

Week 16 (12/10): Conclusions

On our final day of class, we will review the ideas we've traced throughout the semester and discuss strategies for doing well on the final exam. Please take some time in advance of this discuss to review your notes from the semester, so we can have a robust and meaningful conversation!

Final Exam: Saturday, December 15th, 1:30-3:30pm

◆ Course Requirements ◆

Required Books

→ For Brontë, Dickens, Eliot, and Tennyson, physical books are required for class discussion. Copies are available to borrow at McKeldin library if you wish to avoid purchasing your own.

Course packet (not for sale at the University book store; details TBA)

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Broadview ISBN 9781551111803)

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Penguin ISBN 9780141439723)

George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (Oxford ISBN 9780198707530)

Alfred Tennyson, *The Major Works* (Oxford ISBN 9780199572762)

Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave Narrative* (Dover ISBN 9780486438634)

Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (Penguin ISBN 9780140439021)

Grading (out of 500 possible points)

First essay: 50 points (10%)

Term paper: 110 points + 40 points for bibliography, meeting, proposal, thesis, and drafts (30%)

Artwork Presentation: 25 points (5%)

Participation and group work: 165 points (33%)

Final Exam: 75 points (15%)

Quizzes: 35 points (7%)

A 469-500 points

A- 449-468 points

B+ 434-448 points

B 417-433 points

B- 397-416 points

C+ 384-396 points

C 369-383 points

C- 349-368 points

D+ 334-348 points

D 319-333 points

D- 299-318 points

F 0-298 points

Writing Assignments

1. The first essay, due Saturday, September 22nd, will be an 800- to 900-word writing exercise.

2. The term paper (between 2200 and 2800 words) will be due December 8th. A project proposal is due October 13th and a revised thesis statement and annotated bibliography is due November 7th (you will workshop one another's papers on this day). On November 28th you will workshop in class a 3-4 page version of the term paper. The details of these assignments will be elaborated separately.

Each of you will schedule a one-on-one meeting with me *after* you have submitted the project proposal for your term paper. In our meeting, we will discuss your project; we also might take time to look at your first essay, and to strategize for doing well on your term paper. You will sign up for this meeting early in the semester.

Submitting Your Work

Unless otherwise noted, papers are to be submitted via Canvas. On the assignment page, look for the place to upload your Word doc or docx file. Late papers will be downgraded by 25% for each 24-hour period following the deadline. Unless otherwise noted, all papers are due by 11:59pm on the due date. For students unable to turn in papers because of illness or dire emergency, a written note is required, and essays must be turned in as soon as possible.

All written work for this class will be graded by the following criteria:

- Strength of argument (have you articulated a clear and forceful position?)
- Clarity of writing (grammar, syntax, eloquence, directness)
- Persuasive use of materials to support argument (quotes from text, etc.)
- Relevance of topic to this course
- Focused attention to argument (avoidance of tangential space-filling)
- Appropriate use of citations for both quotes and materials consulted

Presentation

You will each sign up for a three-minute presentation on a work of art. The aim of the presentation will be to introduce the work of art to the class: who created it, how we might understand the composition, and how we might begin to understand its meanings. You may use notes for your presentation, but you should not read from a script. Practice your presentation to make sure you stay within the three-minute window.

- Wikipedia should not be the primary source for your knowledge and thoughts. I expect you to explore other sources, even if the painting and/or artist is not well known. If you need help with this research, please come ask for it!
- Important: on the day of your presentation, *you will submit on Canvas* (on the assignment page for the Artwork Presentation) *a bibliography of works consulted*. This bibliography must include at least one scholarly source from a peer-reviewed journal. Please remember to upload your bibliography by the end of the day on which you give your presentation.

Group Work

You will participate in two group work projects, to be completed online via Google Docs by specific deadlines. The group work assignments will involve answering prompts and then engaging with your classmates' responses (two steps, both required). The group work exercises are opportunities for you to engage with one another in more complex ways than are generally available in the classroom.

Quizzes

There will be a syllabus quiz plus weekly online quizzes, to be completed via Canvas before the start of Monday's class (except Week 2, when the quiz is Wednesday). The quiz will include questions on the reading for that Monday *and also* questions on the previous week's readings and class discussion. Each quiz is designed to be easy for those students who are keeping up with the reading and attending all class discussions. Once you start a quiz, it cannot be retaken, no matter what the circumstances (the technology doesn't all for it). The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- understand the key developments in British literature of the Victorian era;
- think critically about the intersection of British literature with historical and cultural phenomena of the nineteenth century;
- interpret literary texts using the skills of close reading; and
- communicate these ideas both orally and in writing.

Final Exam

The final exam will be a combination of multiple choice questions and essays. You will be asked to identify passages from texts on the syllabus, and to put different texts in conversation with each other. We will discuss the exam, and strategies for doing well on it, on our last day of class.

Course Related Policies

I will adhere to University of Maryland policies with regard to excused absences, registered disabilities, incidents of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, and student conduct. [Please refer to this website](#) for more detailed information: *really, please do click over and review the university's guidelines*. Our course policies will rigorously follow those outlined on the linked page.

Participation

Your participation grade (40% of total course grade) will be determined according to the following table, wherein A = almost always; U = usually; S = sometimes; I = infrequently; and N = never:

	A	U	S	I	N
Participated actively and thoughtfully in class discussion	5	4	3	2	0
Came to class prepared (with books, notebook, pen, etc.)	5	4	3	2	0
Arrived on time for class	5	4	3	2	0
Was present for all class activities	5	4	3	2	0
Respected fellow students, instructor, and others involved with our class: listened while others spoke, responded constructively, did not try to dominate the conversation, avoided cellphones and other technology in the classroom	5	4	3	2	0
Completed all group work exercises in a timely fashion	5	4	3	2	0
Participated in group work thoughtfully and constructively	5	4	3	2	0
Actively showed interest and paid attention during class activities	5	4	3	2	0

Total / 40

Etiquette and Expectations

- Readings for each class must be brought with you. Many of the course materials are in the course packet, so that will be especially important to have in class on most days.

- Laptop computers, iPhones, and other digital devices are not permitted in class unless you provide written documentation showing that they are necessary (e.g. for medical reasons).
- Cellphones must be turned off for class. Use of cellphones during class will result in immediate downgrading for your participation grade.
- You are expected to be *active listeners* in this class. Show your engagement with the course material by *looking interested, taking notes, and, when appropriate, asking questions and engaging in conversation*. Even if you are not completely interested in the material, it is never acceptable to show your disinterest.
- If you are ill, please stay home. If you cannot keep your eyes open due to exhaustion, please stay home.
- Please use the restroom before class to minimize disruptions to our discussion.
- Please use our ELMS/Canvas messaging to contact me (rather than email). Consider all communication directed to me – or any professor – as a *professional correspondence*. Compose them accordingly:
 - ▶▶ They should not look like text messages or informal emails to friends (substitute “Hey!” for a more professional greeting, and avoid abbreviations like “ttyl”).
 - ▶▶ Write in full sentences.
 - ▶▶ Proofread, checking both spelling and punctuation.
 - ▶▶ Remember that tone can be a real problem with emails. They almost always come across as brusquer than the writer intended. Adjust your writing to allow for this.

Caveat Participes

This course contains materials on sensitive subjects, including issues having to do with race, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, and gender.