

English 351, Spring 2011
MW 3:00-4:15

Office: Palmer 319, x3980

Office Hours: W 10-11; Th 2:30-3:30 & by appt.

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Victorian Poetry and Prose

Every period in history can be said in some way to be a direct ancestor of our own. But while every period can make some claim of this kind, the nineteenth century can in a more powerful and far-reaching way be seen as the creator of the present. The pervasive influence of the industrial system of production and relatively rapid global transport, the economy of commodities and consumers it created, the rapid change characterizing social systems based on such an economy—all these elements of life in the twenty-first century were new in the period 1837-1901, Victoria's reign and the period we consider in this course.

In response to and alongside huge changes in the shape of human life, nineteenth-century people invented ways of coping, ways of thinking about themselves and other people, that helped things make sense. These strategies for coping with modernity (a good word for summing up the strangeness of what was new in the nineteenth century) include a different sense of "the self," of human subjectivity; a changing set of ideas about gender and sexuality; a set of positions—for and against—the new industrial economy; a set of positions about global relations, about England's "identity" as a nation and the meaning of its conquest of a worldwide chain of colonies. These concepts and strategies, in many ways, still form the foundation of the dominant cultures in Europe and the U.S. I don't mean that everyone believes now the same things people believed 150 years ago. There's rarely any one unified "Victorian" belief on a given issue anyway. Rather, we inherited assumptions, concepts, norms, which are the tools of contemporary action and analysis.

Concepts and strategies like these aren't created overnight; they emerge with a kind of geologic slowness, layer on layer, out of all manner of cultural discourse: journalism, professional and academic writing, political reportage, and literature. This course weaves together the work of 6 major poets of the Victorian period with various contemporary prose works to illustrate this broad cultural process.

Course Texts:

Broadview Anthology of British Literature, vol. 5: The Victorian Era

John Stuart Mill: *Autobiography*, Ed. Jack Stillinger

Additional Readings in handouts and on Moodle

Course Requirements:

Readings: To prepare readings for class, whether prose selections or poetry, make some note of passages or ideas or formal features that you're interested in or have questions about. It's your responsibility to raise questions you're interested in, and to direct our discussion to issues you feel are important. I will often call on individual students at the start of a discussion and ask them to outline the basic features of a reading, or to describe their responses to a reading.

Papers: All written work must be typed or printed, double-spaced with standard margins, grammatically correct and carefully proofread. I will provide a range of topics for papers, but I will encourage you to write about the ideas that you care most about, if necessary at the expense of my suggested topics.

When grading your essays, I will be looking most centrally for your ability to provide detailed and thoughtful *close readings* of quoted passages--both long and short--from the texts you're writing about. If the concept of close reading is unfamiliar to you, don't worry; we'll spend a good deal of time on this in class. Secondly, I'll want to see that you can link a number of individual quoted passages together, using your readings as evidence to support a single overall argument. As I move between individual paragraphs in your essay, I'll look for connections between each piece of quoted evidence and a developing emphasis on your overall argument. These are very general guidelines; I will provide a handout on standards for excellent critical essays. If you have specific questions I urge you to raise them in class or in office hours. I encourage you to bring ideas or drafts to office hours if that would be useful for you.

Late Papers will be marked down one third of a grade per day; e.g. an A paper would receive an A- if one day late, a B+ if two days late, etc. If I need to return a paper to you for proofreading, I will consider it late until it is corrected and turned in again to me.

Research Workshops: In the last section of the course, you will present some elements of your research in a workshop group. You will be responsible both for making complete and coherent research presentations, and for providing lucid critical responses to the other members of your workshop group. I will discuss the guidelines for these sessions as the time approaches.

Grades will be figured as follows:

Essay I	10%
Essay II	20%
Essay III	15%
Annotated Bibliography	10%
Research Paper	35%
Class Participation	10%

Absences: You may miss up to 3 classes without excuse or penalty. More than three absences will affect your overall grade, and further absences will be considered grounds for failing the course.

Final Note: I reserve the right to schedule reading quizzes and/or a final exam for this course if it appears that students aren't doing the reading.

Schedule of Assignments*

Introduction: The Romantic Artist and the Problem of the Individual

1/17	Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday – No Class
1/19	Wordsworth Selections (M) Williams <i>Culture and Society</i> , "Introduction" and "The Romantic Artist " (M)
1/24	J. S. Mill <i>Autobiography</i> , 3-79
1/26	J. S. Mill <i>Autobiography</i> , 80-131

Alfred Tennyson

1/31	"Ode to Memory" (M), "Mariana," "Lady of Shallot"
2/2	"Ulysses," "Locksley Hall," "The Epic / Morte D'Arthur"

Friday 2/4: Essay I (2pp) due at Palmer 319 by 3pm

2/7	Begin <i>In Memoriam</i>
2/9	Finish <i>In Memoriam</i>

2/14	Thomas Carlyle, "Signs of the Times" (M)
2/16	Florence Nightingale, "Cassandra" (Online at Broadview Anthology Website); "Contexts: The Place of Women"

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

2/21	All poems through "The Runaway Slave"
2/23	Excerpts from <i>Aurora Leigh</i>

Robert Browning

2/28	"Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister," "My Last Duchess," "Home Thoughts from Abroad," Begin reading "Andrea Del Sarto"
3/2	"Andrea Del Sarto," "A Grammarian's Funeral" (M)

Friday, 3/4: Essay II (5pp) due at Palmer 319 by 3pm

On Industrialization

3/7	Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic"; "Contexts: Work and Poverty"
3/9	Marx, from <i>Capital</i> (M)

3/14 & 3/16 – spring break

* Expect some changes and some rearranging.

Matthew Arnold

3/21 All poems through "Dover Beach"

3/23 "Dover Beach" and all that follow; "Preface"; Excerpts from *Function of Criticism and Culture and Anarchy*

Christina Rossetti

3/28 "Goblin Market"

3/30 All remaining poems, focusing on "An Apple-Gathering," and "In an Artist's Studio"

Algernon Charles Swinburne

4/4 All poems up to "Anactoria"

4/6 "Anactoria"

Friday, 4/8: Essay III (2pp) due at Palmer 319 by 3pm

4/11 Research Session; Reading from Isobel Armstrong, *Victorian Poetry* (1993) (M)

4/13 Wilde, from "Decay of Lying" (M); Pater from *The Renaissance*

4/18 Research Day; Individual Conferences

4/20 W. B. Yeats, selections (M)

Friday, 4/22: Annotated Bibliography due at Palmer 319 by 3pm

4/25 Research Workshop: Key Passages

4/27 Research Workshop: Critical Conversation

Final Paper Due Wednesday, May 4 by 5:30pm at Palmer 319

Department of English Expectations and Policies

A college course is more than simply a set of assignments; it is an intellectual process, one which requires active engagement from beginning to end in order to achieve its intended results. With this in mind, the Department of English has formulated a number of expectations and the policies that support them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to the syllabus for a particular course, you should address them to the instructor.

Attendance: The success of a course depends to a significant extent upon the presence of students alert and prepared to address the subject under discussion. Unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor, ideally before they occur. Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F.

Deadlines: Writing assignments, test, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfillment of the course's goals and cannot be indefinitely deferred without frustrating those goals. Brief extensions for good reasons may be permissible with the instructor's prior approval; otherwise, late assignments will be penalized and may result in their not being accepted for credit.

Submission of all work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

Intellectual honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval.

Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.