In significant ways during the 19th century, literature defined itself against economics. If political economy since Adam Smith offered a theory of market values and market behavior, then literature often claimed access to another, higher sphere, a sphere of moral and aesthetic values. This view of things did a great deal to shape the study of literature in the modern period, and it is this view we will trace, and interrogate, in this seminar. The course will have 3 areas of focus. First, we will read literary texts that take up economic questions in direct or indirect ways. Emphasis will be on fiction (Gaskell, Eliot, Gissing), with some reading in non-fiction prose (Carlyle, Ruskin) and poetry (C. Rossetti). Second, the course will provide students with an accessible overview of British economic thought, from Smith and the rise of political economy, to the birth of neo-classical economics at the turn of the 20th century. (Political economy in Ireland develops in quite different ways, and we will look briefly at this tradition and at the literary culture that accompanied it.) Third, the course will look at several strands of literary theory that offer ways of studying literature and economics, and it will consider the work of literary critics writing in this area. (Theoretical readings by Marx, Williams, Derrida, Spivak; criticism by Gagnier, Gallagher, etc.). Thus, while the course will focus on Victorian Britain, it is designed to introduce students to recent studies in literature and economics (sometimes called The New Economic Criticism). Students in other fields may develop research projects that apply methods studied in the seminar to their own area, or may pursue a question or problem within this body of theory.

Books
Smith  The Essential Adam Smith, ed. Heilbroner
Derrida Of Grammatology
Gissing New Grub Street, ed. Bergonzi
Gaskell North and South, ed. Ingham
Ruskin Unto This Last, ed. Wilmer
Eliot Middlemarch, ed. Wilmer
Fitzgerald The Bookshop

Requirements

Three Reading Papers, roughly 1000 words each
These short essays provide space for you to formulate responses to major course readings. You should use these papers to work out your own position in relation to a critical or theoretical text, or to outline your interpretation of a literary text, or to clarify your understanding of a complex idea, etc.. These may be informal essays, written in the mode of journal entries, or if you like you may adopt a more formal tone. I encourage you write in the first person. But however you approach these essays, each should be driven by a clear argument. Please don't turn in something containing 10 unconnected reactions to 10 different aspects of a text. Rather, pursue one line of questioning or one proposition and explore it in some detail.
In-Class Presentation
A 10-15 minute presentation to launch the seminar discussion of one reading. Try to outline what you see as the major elements of the text you’re working on, and then highlight the most important questions or issues you feel we should examine.

Research Presentation
10-15 minute presentation in the last week of the semester on the research project you have designed for the course. Outline the central questions your project pursues, the texts and critical perspectives you will engage, and the nature of your argument, as you understand it at this stage. You may create a handout for us if you wish, or you could assign a short reading to help us understand the material you’re working on.

Research Paper
An article-length essay developing an original argument relating to texts or questions considered in the seminar.

Grades
Reading Essays, 3 @ 10% each 30%
In-Class Presentation 10%
Research Presentation 10%
Research Paper 50%

Office Hours
I’ll keep general office hours 1-3 on Wednesdays, just before class. I’m traveling from Memphis each week, so I will be in Nashville Wednesday afternoons and Thursday mornings. I’m happy to meet with you any time when I’m in Nashville.
Schedule of Readings

Regenia Gagnier, “On the Insatiability of Human Wants” (R)

J.G.A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (selection) (R)

1/31  David Ricardo, “Value” and “Rent” from *Principles of Political Economy* (R)
Raymond Williams, “Thomas Carlyle” from *Culture and Society* (R)
Thomas Carlyle, “Signs of the Times” (R)
Optional: Boyd Hilton, “The Rage for Christian Economics” from *Age of Atonement*

Reading Paper due on Derrida

2/7   Isaac Butt, “The Billiard Table” (R) and *Rent, Profits, and Labor* (excerpt) (R)
Boylan and Foley, *Political Economy and Colonial Ireland* (excerpt) (R)
Optional: Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, “The Room at the Dragon Volant”

2/14  Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*

2/21  Karl Marx, *Capital* vol. I, chapters 1-5, 10
Gayatri Spivak, “Scattered Speculations on the Theory of Value” (R)
Optional: Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (excerpt)
Optional: Mark Shell, “The Golden Fleece and the Voice of the Shuttle”
Optional Jean-Joseph Goux, “Numismatics”

Reading Paper due on a reading of your choice

John Ruskin, *Unto this Last*
Catherine Gallagher, from *The Body Economic*

3/7    Spring Vacation

3/14  Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market” (handout)
Optional: Herbert Tucker, "Rossetti’s Goblin Marketing: Sweet to Tongue and Sound to Eye" (Representations, 2003 Spring; 82: 117-33. Available through ProQuest.)

3/21 Eliot, Middlemarch

3/28 Eliot, Middlemarch
Reading Paper due on Eliot
(Alternative: 1000-Word reading paper on a text involved in your research project)

4/4 George Gissing, New Grub Street

4/11 Penelope Fitzgerald, The Bookshop

4/18 Student Research Presentations

Classes end Tuesday, April 24

Research Paper Due Monday April 30