

# *Victorian Literature*

## *Fall 2020*

**Professor Jessica Pressman**  
ENGL 543, British Literature 1800-1900

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

The Victorian Age was a period of great transformation and global impact. Under the long reign of Queen Victoria (1837-1901), Great Britain colonized much of the globe, pioneered industrialization, and experienced the effects of urbanization, Darwinism, class and gender conflicts, secularization, etc. This was a time of immense social change and contradiction, and it was captured in the literature and art of the period. In this class, we will explore the Victorian Age by reading works by Jane Austen, Emily Brontë, Charles Dickens, Christina Rossetti, Lord Alfred Tennyson, H.G. Wells, and others. We will also consider the visual art of the Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris in our quest to understand this pivotal and passionate period as well as its impact on our own.

### **Learning Outcomes**

In this class, you will

- acquire understanding of seminal texts and concepts of Victorian literature and culture
- gain familiarity with a pivotal period in literary and cultural history
- hone your skills as a critical thinker, listener, and writer by focusing on the development of a thesis statement and the ability to prove it through textual explication

### **Administrative Information**

Email: jpressman@sdsu.edu *Do not expect a response within 24 hours	Course Website: <a href="https://fall2020-eng543.jessicapressman.com">https://fall2020-eng543.jessicapressman.com</a>
Office: AL 261 Office hours: Wednesday 11-12 (sign up on <a href="#">Google doc</a> ) and by appointment (sign up by email).	Course Meeting: T, Th 9:30-10:45 Zoom Meeting Room: 943-624-7815  <i>*webcam and speaker required*</i>
English Subject Librarian: Markel Tumlin	mtumlin@rohan.sdsu.edu

***NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change... and probably will change!***

## **BOOKS TO PURCHASE**

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) [Oxford]

Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) [Penguin]

Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) [Oxford]

Charles Dickens, *The Story of Little Dombey and Other Performance Fictions* (Broadview)

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891) [Penguin]

HG Wells, *Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) [Broadview]

Suggested, but not required, Additional Textbooks:

Broadview's *The Victorian Era*

## **VIRTUAL INSTRUCTION: PLANS & EXPECTATIONS**

Due to the virtual instruction necessitated by Covid19, we will be learning online and experimenting with ways to maintain high-level conversation and education. Our classes will be held on Zoom at our scheduled class-time. Even though we will be meeting virtually, I expect you to *attend class meetings via Zoom AND have your video on*. You can use a virtual background, but your presence and visibility are of utmost importance to developing a learning community. If you have concerns about virtual instruction, please reach out and do so early in the semester.

***COVID Caveat: I understand the pressures of sheltering-at-home and learning online. If something comes up and zooming in on a particular day proves an encumbrance, please email me. I will also record class meetings so that you can catch up. Please aim to attend all zoom sessions, but I certainly understand what we are all up against.***

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## **ASSIGNMENTS**

Participation 25%

Weekly Blog 25%

"Hacks" 10% each, 30% each

Final curated chapbook of hacks and learning 20%

## **Participation (synchronous and asynchronous) 25%**

This is *your* class, and your active engagement is vital to its success. This semester we are in the midst of crisis and are doing things differently, but this is still a college seminar wherein your presence, focus, and engagement matter.

- Preparation: reading, reviewing materials before class
- Focus: avoiding distractions on Zoom
- Synchronous discourse: *Talk, listen, chat*—in class on Zoom. This means speaking and listening actively, attentively, and respectfully. (If you have fear of speaking in public, this seminar is a good place to learn to address that fear. Please see me early in the term to discuss strategies for dealing with this fear).

- Asynchronous participation: timely and respectful interaction in the Google doc exercises
- *Your participation grade includes an office hour meeting with the professor.*

### **Weekly Blog 25%**

You will write **(250 words) blog responses to the reading and each provide a comment on a peer's blog each week**, before the next week's class meeting. The goal of the blog posts is to extend the conversation and coverage of the course by allowing you to 1) express, share, and comment upon interests, questions, and concerns related to the readings and also to 2) enable the professor to address and incorporate these topics in that week's meeting. It is also a place to draft ideas and text for use in your essays.

**--Blog posts are due on Sunday at midnight weekly; late posts will not receive credit.**

- Comments on blog posts are due on Tuesday before class

-You will be given an *overall* grade for blog posts, based on completion and content, not a grade for each post. Rubric for grading is available on our website and below.

Your Blog Grade is based on 2-parts: 1) a completion grade, and 2) a content grade.

<b>The completion component of the blog grade</b> requires you to have the following number of posts:	<b>The content component of the blog grade</b> is based on the following grading rubric
A= 11-13 posts B= 8-10 posts C= 6-7 posts D= 4-5 posts F= 3 or less	A= Post contains a focused thesis or question and close reading of a passage, B= Post contains a close reading of content but no focused question or thesis C= Post contains no analysis of text (no close reading), just summary and undirected ideas D=Post contains little substantive thinking as content

### **"Hacks" 10% each, 30% each**

3 short hacks that prompt you to engage creatively with a chosen text or group or texts. You can do these in groups! Your "hack" must contain two parts: 1) creative remix, 2) short explanation. Your short (1 page) explanation should state what your "hack" does, shows, and achieves.

- **Digital Annotation:** This assignment invites you to use digital technologies to engage with the text. You will close read a section of the text—a page, a paragraph, etc.—by carefully explicating the relationship between form and content in the text AND by using the digital tools to *how* and *where* you see what you see.
- **Special Collections deep dive:** Explore an item from the archive and explain *how and why* it matters to our learning process. Be sure to document the item appropriately (seek help from Anna Culbertson)

- **Annotated Bibliography:** This assignment allows you to practice scholarly research skills and prepares you to write a final essay by prompting you to do research on the novel and on its content. An annotated bibliography is a list of sources about a topic in which each item of the list (each citation) is followed by a brief (usually about 150 words) descriptive and evaluative paragraph—this is the annotation. The purpose of the annotation is to inform the reader of the relevance, accuracy, and quality of the sources cited; this is where you add your subjective opinion about the value of the source and its relevance for your own research. For more on annotated bibliographies, see <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>
- **Creative Response:** This assignment allows you to explore the novel and criticism about it in a creative way. You will *make* something-- a sculpture, book art, painting, digital poem, etc.—that is inspired by the novel.
  - 1) Your creative piece should be documented so that it can be turned in online (e.g. if you create a sculpture, take photos that you can share on our website)
  - 2) You will write a short (1 page) explanation of *what and how* your creative piece shows us about the novel, citing passages that inspired you and explaining your creative interpretation.

**\*\*YOU CAN REVISE a HACK for a better grade. Revision is due before next hack is due**

### **Final curated chapbook of hacks and learning 20%**

The final assignment is an opportunity to reflect on what you learned and created during the semester via a curated portfolio of your learning. You will select and include:

- your favorite “hacks” and a narrative (1 page) about what you learned from each of them
- an annotated bibliography on a single research question/topic (5-8 citation items)
- a thesis-based, close reading of a passage from one of our texts (2 pages)
- a short essay (3-5 pages) reflecting on what you learned this term

*\*these can be taken from or built upon earlier assignments from the semester*

**\*\*—All assignments are docked 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late (for example, an A becomes an A- if turned in one day late)\*\***

## **READING SCHEDULE**

### **Week 1: introductions**

August 25: intro to the class and each other

August 27: intro to the period & class conversation about how to proceed virtually

“Introduction: The Victorian Age” in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*

### **Week 2: Victorian Contexts**

September 1: Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility*

September 3: Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*

**Week 3: Victorian Contexts: Class and domesticity**

September 8: Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*

September 10: *Guest Visitor--Anna Culbertson (Special Collections Librarian)*

**Week 4: Gothic and Nature**

September 15: Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

September 17: Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

**Week 5: Gothic and Nature**

September 22: Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

September 24: *\*asynchronous group project on a Victorian archive\**

**\*Extra Credit:** 11-12 Professor Pressman book talk with the American Antiquarian Society (on Zoom)

**\*\* First Hack Due: Sunday at midnight, posted to the blog\*\***

**Week 6: Gender & Aesthetics**

September 29: excerpt from John Ruskin's *The Stones of Venice*, "The Slave Ship," and *Queen's Gardens*

October 1: Lord Alfred Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott" and "In Memorium"; View related paintings

Additional Reading: excerpt from Florence Nightingale's "Cassandra"

**\*Extra Credit:** 5-6pm: Dr. Elizabeth Hunter (SFSU): Second lecture in the Digital Shakespeares series: "Something Wicked: A Macbeth Video Game and Critical Making"

**Week 7: Art: The Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood**

October 6: Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "The Blessed Damozel," "Lady Lillith," and "Jenny"

-View Dante Gabriel Rossetti's paintings and other Pre-Raphaelite paintings

October 8: Christina Rossetti: "In an Artist's Studio," "De Profundis," and "After Death"

-View Julia Margaret Cameron's photos

-View William Morris art and design

**Week 8: Class & Labor**

October 13: excerpt from Friedrich Engels, *The Great Towns*

-View "Black Britons of Victorian Era"

October 15: Charles Dickens' *Little Dombey* (the performance fiction version)

**Week 9: The Sensation Novel**

October 20: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*

October 22: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*

**Week 10: The Sensation Novel**

October 27: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*

October 29: Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*

***\*\*Second Hack Due: Sunday at midnight, posted to the blog \*\****

**Week 11: Election Week & Evolution**

November 3—*election day*— **go vote!** *asynchronous workshop*

November 5: excerpts from Charles Darwin, *The Origin of the Species* and *The Descent of Man*

**Week 12: Realism**

November 10: Thomas Hardy' *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

November 12: Thomas Hardy' *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

**Week 13: Realism**

November 17: Thomas Hardy' *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

November 19: Thomas Hardy' *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*

***\*\*Third Hack Due: Sunday at midnight, posted to the blog \*\****

**Week 14: Thesis & Thanksgiving**

November 24: *asynchronous thesis peer review session*

November 26: *no class. Thanksgiving*

**Week 15: Science and Science Fiction**

December 1: H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

December 3: H.G. Wells' *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

**Week 16: Conclusion**

December 8: Concluding discussion

December 10: Concluding discussion

***Wednesday, December 16: Final project due, posted to the blog***

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**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

I take teaching seriously, and I expect you to take seriously your work as a student. That means that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonest includes, but is not limited to: (a) using assignments that you wrote for another class, (b) representing work done by someone else as your own (i.e., plagiarism), and (c) copying someone else's work on an assignment, basic cheating. Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities for further action. If you have questions at all, you should consult me immediately.

**SDSU as “safe space”**

The CSU has affirmed its commitment to ‘protecting access, affordability, intellectual freedom, inclusivity, and diversity for all students . . . including supporting DACA students.’ Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against students, faculty, and staff on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status and other categories of identity is prohibited. If you have concerns about your status at the university, please visit <http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/EOP/> for information or contact the Dean of Students or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in your College.”

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at [\(619\) 594-6473](tel:6195946473). To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.

**Student Privacy and Intellectual Property:** The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) mandates the protection of student information, including contact information, grades, and graded assignments. I will use email and our WordPress blog to communicate with you, and I will not post grades or leave graded assignments in public places. Students will be notified at the time of an assignment if copies of student work will be retained beyond the end of the semester or used as examples for future students or the wider public. Students maintain intellectual property rights to work products they create as part of this course unless they are formally notified otherwise.

**Religious observances:** According to the University Policy File, students should notify the instructors of affected courses of planned absences for religious observances by the end of the second week of classes.