

HLL 2005 Victorian Literature

Victorian Literature provides an introduction to some of the best literary works of the nineteenth century, while drawing attention to neglected aspects of this extremely versatile, fast changing, and intriguingly self-conscious age. The course aims to foster excitement about the indeterminacies, doubts, and fissures that shaped the Victorian period's greatest cultural achievements. At the same time, we shall critically reconsider the many legacies of the shifts it saw in epistemological, cultural, and specifically literary conceptualisations. The material discussed this semester will include novels by Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, and Wilkie Collins, a play by Oscar Wilde, as well as a selection of poems and paintings.

Essential requirement: A love of reading,
especially of very long novels.



Core Texts:

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*
Charles Dickens, *David Copperfield*
Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband*

Assessment:

Essay 50%: The essay should include a clear line of argument that is supported by close reading of the text. All paragraphs should be related to this topic and follow a coherent, defined pattern. Points should be thoroughly developed and be supported by quotations from the text (s) under discussion and include specific details, examples, and reasons. Students should seek to explain and interpret rather than summarize the text by focusing on literary techniques used, such as rhyme, verse-pattern, alliteration, voice (who is speaking) and their impact on the reader. Material from selected academic sources must be correctly cited and competently incorporated into the essay. The best discussions will also comment on such material and use them to refer back to the text being discussed. The final paper will be evaluated through the criteria of knowledge and understanding, intellectual skills, and transferable skills.

“Show and Tell” Presentations 20%.

In-class writing exercises, including quizzes 20%

Participation 10%

Provisional Lecture Schedule

Week	Topics	Readings
15 Jan	Introduction: The Rise of the Victorian Novel	
22 Jan	Novel Subgenres I: The Orphan and the Governess	Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
29 Jan	Novel Subgenres II: Other Outsiders and Colonial Subtexts	Charlotte Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i>
5 Feb	CNY	No class.
12 Feb	Novel Subgenres III: More Victorian Orphans	Charles Dickens, <i>David Copperfield</i>
19 Feb	Novel Subgenres IV: Bildungsroman versus Panoramic Novel	Charles Dickens, <i>David Copperfield</i>
26 Feb	Revision I (in-class mock-quiz)	Charles Dickens, <i>David Copperfield</i>
5 March	<i>Recess</i>	
12 March	Victorian Topics I: Science, Doubt, & Poetry	Selection (<i>Norton Anthology</i>)
19 March	Novel Subgenres V: The Sensation Novel	Wilkie Collins, <i>The Moonstone</i>
26 March		

Week	Topics	Readings
	Victorian Topics II: A Play with Moral Economies	Oscar Wilde, <i>An Ideal Husband</i>
2 April	The Victorians in Contemporary Culture I	Show and tell: an item to do with the Victorians (including neo-Victorian film or fiction, a catalogue, painting, exhibition, toy, advertisement, &c.) and how this course has changed your perceptions of it.
9 April	The Victorians in Contemporary Culture II In-class quiz.	Show and tell (continued).