

**ENGLISH 200C / A02:
VICTORIAN/EDWARDIAN LITERATURE**

“Victorian Others”

Fall Semester 2008
M/W/R 2:30-3:20 PM — Strong C113

Dr. Lincoln Shlensky
Office: CLE D332
Office Hours: M/R 11:30 AM-1:00 PM
(please make an appointment)
Email: shlensky@uvic.ca
Course Web site: www.practa.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will present a survey of Victorian and Edwardian literature, with the aim of exploring how writers and texts position themselves as outsiders or others in aesthetic, political, and cultural terms. We will ask specifically how the Victorian fascination with speculation (seeing, conjecturing, evaluating, and theorizing) comes to be represented in literary and other cultural forms. How do cultural products of the period reflect, reinforce, and sometimes contest the specular practices of power characteristic of the British empire at its political zenith? To what extent does this literature expose the antinomies and contradictions of the idea of a unified British culture over which “the sun never sets?” How can we identify the contact zones through which Victorian literary production places into relation a shifting set of cultural insiders and outsiders? In what ways does the canonized literature of the era continue to direct our gaze, at a distance of more than a century, towards still active sites of political and cultural contestation?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will receive a general introduction to Victorian and Edwardian prose, drama, poetry, and essays, as obtained through the interpretation and analysis of British literary texts written between 1830 and 1911. The course will permit students to gain a deeper understanding of literary forms and rhetorical modes by introducing critical and theoretical approaches that elaborate on the primary literature and its themes. Students will build skills and increase their knowledge through reading assigned material, consistently attending seminars and participating in class discussion, taking and reviewing detailed preparatory and lecture notes, and writing assigned essays. Evaluation will take the form of regular reading quizzes, reader response papers, and a final examination.

REQUIRED TEXTS

David Damrosch et al., eds., *The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 2B: The Victorian Age (Second Ed.)*; ISBN: 0321106695

Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868; 465 pp; Oxford UP; ISBN: 0192833383)

Additional course materials are posted in the “Protected Area” of the course Web site: www.practa.com. These materials *must be printed out and brought to class* on the due dates. Printing costs for these materials may be considered part of your book costs for the course.

COURSE GRADES

Final course grades will be determined as follows (as a percent of the final grade):

1) CLASS PREPARATION, PARTICIPATION, AND OCCASIONAL POP QUIZZES (*NO MAKE-UPS*): 20%

2) ONE ORAL PRESENTATION (5 mins.): 10%

3) MIDTERM ESSAY (1200 words [apx. 4 pp]): 20%

4) FINAL ESSAY (1800-2000 words [apx. 6-8 pp]): 30%

5) CLOSED BOOK FINAL EXAM (identification, dating, explication, and comparison of texts from the whole term): 20%

Grades will be assigned according to the following English Department guidelines:

A+	90-100	B-	65-69
A	85-89	C+	60-64
A-	80-84	C	55-59
B+	75-79	D	50-54
B	70-74	F	0-49

For more specific information about my grading criteria, see my document “Assessment Criteria for Student Research Essays” at www.practa.com » Assignments, or at <http://tinyurl.com/2nsj42>.

Note: Students will be given adequate notification should it become necessary to alter the schedule of assignments or reduce the number of assigned readings.

Students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. If you require such accommodation, please register at the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability and inform me

of your needs at the outset of the semester.

ORAL PRESENTATION

During the semester, you will be asked to offer a five minute oral presentation related to a text we are reading.

Method: Your presentation should compare the text assigned for that day (or earlier that week) and a previous text we have read in the class in terms of Victorian culture. There are numerous connections you could consider; please focus on one. Among the comparisons you might make are aesthetic ones (style, form, structure, tone, meter, etc.), ideological ones (the politics of the text in terms of social or class attitudes, views of gender, sexuality, or race, and relation to modernity, technology, and power), and those of biographical or historical context (the author’s life or the text’s reception).

MIDTERM ESSAY

The assignment for your midterm essay (1200 words [apx. 4 pp]) is to propose an argument that helps to interpret two of the texts we have read. In order to make your argument, you will be expected to summarize and discuss at least one critical secondary source, and to make an argument based on your understanding of the differences and similarities between the two texts you are discussing.

Your midterm essay will be graded on the basis of its creativity, research care, clarity, and the overall persuasiveness of its argument. (For more information about my grading criteria, see my document “Assessment Criteria for Student Research Essays” at

www.practa.com » Assignments, or at <http://tinyurl.com/2nsj42>.)

FINAL ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

Your final essay will be a 1800-2000 word (apx. 6-8 page) research essay that includes references to at least two critical secondary sources from peer-reviewed academic sources (i.e., scholarly books or academic journals). In the essay, you must compare at least texts discussed in the latter half of the course. Your essay should be an argumentative essay: that is, in the course of your essay, you will offer reasons for your comparison, and make an argument about the importance of understanding the differences and similarities between the texts you discuss. *In the introductory paragraph* of your essay, you must present your argument about the purposes of the comparison, explain why your argument will help your reader better understand the two relevant texts, and offer a “road map” as to how your essay will prove the comparative argument you are making. The essay must prove your argument and reach a conclusion that elucidates the problem you lay out. Be sure to carefully proofread your essay; errors of grammar, diction, and structure will lower your grade. Citations in your essay can be in Chicago or MLA in-text citation format (see www.practa.com » Guidelines for Writing and Research, or <http://tinyurl.com/2ybkax> for citation pointers), with a works-cited list at the end.

ESSAY FORMAT

All written work must be submitted to me in electronic form by email on the due date (no paper copies are due). When you send me your essay, you must send it in .doc or .rtf format, with the

suffix shown in the file name. No other formats (e.g., .wpd, .pdf, .docx) will be accepted. Your essay should include a title page with your name, date, and the course number. The file you send must include your name in the document's file name. Keep a copy of your essay with the final file name; you will need this to download your graded essay. Failure to keep a copy of the essay will result in denied credit should the submitted materials be lost.

LATE & MISSING ASSIGNMENTS

If writing assignments are submitted after the beginning of the class period during which they are due, credit will be deducted by 1/3 of a letter-grade per day, starting with the due date. Electronic submissions will be considered to have been received as soon as the UVic email system gives them a received time-stamp in my inbox; do not wait until the last minute to submit electronically, in case the UVic system is down or delayed. Extension of a due date must be negotiated with me *in advance*, and medical or other emergency exceptions to this policy must be properly documented. Students are required to complete all assigned course work in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT

I may require you to seek general writing improvement and/or assignment tutoring at The Writing Centre. If so, you will be required to do so and to rewrite your work within three weeks of receiving notice from me. Please consult [practa.com](http://www.practa.com) » UVic Resources for information on making appointments at The Writing Centre. There you will also find a form required by the Centre

authorizing you to receive tutoring for a given assignment.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

More than four (4) absences shall result in reduction of the student's grade by half a grade per additional absence. Medical and other emergency exceptions to this policy will be accepted with proper documentation.

COMPUTER POLICY

Please refrain from using computers in the classroom, except for specifically designated assignments. Students with documented disabilities who require a computer for note-taking are excluded from this policy.

ELECTRONIC MATERIALS

Some required materials for the course will be available exclusively on the course Web site (www.practa.com). These materials *must be printed out and brought to class* on the due dates. I will expect students to check email at least twice a week for possible course updates. Please alert me immediately of any e-mail address changes.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. Students and faculty members are expected to adhere to the UVic human rights policy, located at: <http://tinyurl.com/35rptl>. Please alert me if you have any questions about this policy and its application, or if you have concerns about course proceedings or participants.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to adhere to the UVic academic integrity policy, available at: <http://tinyurl.com/37x2mc>. Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade for the given assignment and may additionally result in a failing grade for the course. By taking this course, you agree that all submitted assignments may be subject to an originality review.

RESOURCES:

You may find some of the following resources on the Web helpful during the course of the semester:

Victorian Research

<http://victorianresearch.org>

The Victorian Web

<http://www.victorianweb.org>

Victorian Web Sites

<http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Victorian.html>

Victorian Women Writers Project

<http://www.indiana.edu/~letrs/vwwp/>

My world literature site:

<http://www.practa.com>

In the reference section of the library:

G.A. Cevasco, ed. *The 1890s: An Encyclopedia of British Literature, Art, and Culture*. New York: Garland, 1993.

Sally Mitchell, ed. *Victorian Britain: An Encyclopedia*. New York: Garland, 1988.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to have read the material assigned before they come to class, and to arrive prepared to discuss all the material for the day. Occasional 'pop' quizzes will cover materials for the course up to and including the assignments due for that day. I expect you to bring your textbook to every class meeting where a reading assignment from it is due.

Wednesday, September 3

Course Introduction

Distribute and discuss syllabus.

Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899) and contemporary response.

Thursday, September 4

Required: Read "The Victorian Age," Longman, pp. 1099-1115.

Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden" (1899), (continued).

Required: Send an email message with "[your full name] - English 200C" in the Subject line, and **your phone number(s)** in the body of the message to shlensky@uvic.ca.

In class: sign up for oral presentations.

Monday, September 8

Longman, "The Victorian Age," 1115-1122 and Alfred Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott" (1832), 1235-39.

Wednesday, September 10

Alfred Tennyson, "Ulysses" (1832/42), 1244-46.

Thursday, September 11

First two oral presentations.

Required: bring to class, typed, your suggestions as to which *three* features make "The Lady of Shalott" or "Ulysses" identifiably a Victorian text,

and why. Use Longman's discussion of "The Victorian Age" to provide general evidence for your views.

Monday, September 15

Thomas Carlyle, "Midas," from *Past and Present* (1843), 1125-36.

Wednesday, September 17

Fanny Kemble, "First Ride on a Steam Engine" (c. 1830) 1140-41. Thomas Macaulay, "The Natural Progress of Society" (1830), 1142-3. Parliamentary Papers: "Testimony of Ann Eggle" (1842), 1144-45.

Thursday, September 18

Oral presentations and discussion. Charles Dickens (1812-1870), pp. 1146-1149.

Monday, September 22

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Jenny" (1848/1858/1869), ll. 1-206 (online at www.practa.com » Protected Area [password:_____]).

Wednesday, September 24

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Jenny," ll. 207-end.

Thursday, September 25

Oral presentations and discussion. Robert Browning, "Porphyria's Lover" (1836/42), 1411-13.

Monday, September 29

Charles Darwin, from *The Voyage of the Beagle* (1839/45), 1345-57; from *On the Origin of the Species by Means of Natural Selection* (1859), 1357-62; from *The Descent of Man* (1871), 1362-68.

Wednesday, October 1

Charles Darwin, from *The Descent of Man* (1871), 1362-68.

Thursday, October 2
Oral presentations and discussion.
Charles Darwin, from *Autobiography*
(1876-1882), 1368-74.

Monday, October 6
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, from
Sonnets from the Portuguese (1850),
1200-03.

Wednesday, October 8
Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market"
(1862), 1731-44.

Thursday, October 9
MIDTERM ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE
VIA EMAIL: 300 words, typed.
Class cancelled.

Monday, October 13
Thanksgiving Day

Wednesday, October 15
Algernon Swinburne, "The Leper"
(1866), 1767-71.

Thursday, October 16
Oral presentations and discussion.

Monday, October 20
Matthew Arnold, from *Culture and
Anarchy* (1869), 1695-1705.

Wednesday, October 22
FIRST DRAFT OF MIDTERM ESSAY
DUE IN CLASS: 1000 words minimum,
typed.
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868),
1-50.

Thursday, October 23
Oral presentations and discussion (on
Arnold).
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, 50-110.

Monday, October 27
MIDTERM ESSAY DUE (1200 words)
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, 110-
160.

Wednesday, October 29
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, 160-
220.

Thursday, October 30
Oral presentations and discussion.
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, 220-
280.

Monday, November 3
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, 280-
340.

Wednesday, November 5
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, 340-
400.

Thursday, November 6
Oral presentations and discussion.
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*, 400-
466.

Monday, November 10
Reading Break

Wednesday, November 12
Reading Break

Thursday, November 13
Oral presentations and discussion.
George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil* (1859), 1-
26 (at practa.com)

Monday, November 17
Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being
Earnest* (1894), 2003-23.

Wednesday, November 19
Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being
Earnest*, 2024-43.

Thursday, November 20
FINAL ESSAY PROPOSAL DUE: 300
words, typed.
Oral presentations and discussion.

Monday, November 24
Thomas Hardy, "The Withered Arm"
(1888), 1538-56.

Wednesday, November 26
A. Conan Doyle, "A Scandal in
Bohemia" (1891), 1557-72.

Thursday, November 27
FIRST DRAFT OF FINAL ESSAY
DUE IN CLASS & BY EMAIL: 1200
words minimum, typed.
Meetings with peer editors; no class
meeting.

Monday, December 1
Rudyard Kipling, "Without Benefit of
Clergy" (1890), 1860-74.

Wednesday, December 3
Course conclusion.

FINAL ESSAY DUE DECEMBER 8.