



**BRITISH VICTORIAN LITERATURE:  
WRITING SOCIAL CHANGE**

ENGLISH 422

PROFESSOR JASON RUDY

SPRING 2020  
MW 2:00-3:15PM  
TAWES ROOM 0205

OFFICE HOURS: W 12-2:00PM,  
AND BY ARRANGEMENT

OFFICE: TAWES 3207  
EMAIL: JRRUDY@UMD.EDU

This rigorous, upper-level course will study the extraordinary literary achievements of Victorian Britain. An age of cultural, political, and aesthetic upheaval, the Victorian period was a time of enormous social change: working-class agitation, struggles for women's rights, industrialization, imperial aggression, scientific discovery, and shifting ideas about race and colonialism. Through the study of novels, poems, and non-fiction prose, we will consider how Victorian literature engages with the disordered age in which it was composed. Authors will include Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, George Eliot, Alfred Tennyson, and Mary Seacole, among others. Because this is an Advanced Writing course, students will be engaging in significant writing and revision. Coursework will include three essays (one a significant research paper), an in-class presentation, a midterm assignment, and a final exam.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

❖ = ELMS / Canvas site  
H = Handout

L = Electronic link  
A = Artwork (via Canvas)

⚙ = Course packet

### Week 1 (1/27, 1/29): Views from Afar

In 1820 the Scottish poet Thomas Pringle emigrated to South Africa with his entire family. Frustrated with the unjust racial politics of the colony, he eventually returned to London to work for the Antislavery Society. It was there that he met Mary Prince, who had recently escaped from enslavement in the Caribbean. Along with Susanna Moodie, Pringle worked with Prince to publish her memoirs in 1831, a text influential in the 1833 banning of slavery throughout Britain's colonial spaces.

- I. Thomas Pringle, "Afar in the Desert" (H)
- II. Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince* (H)



### Week 2 (2/3, 2/5): Black Atlantics

Mary Seacole was born in Jamaica to a Scottish father and a Jamaican mother. She was taught to be a "doctress" and, when war broke out in the Crimea, she traveled there to nurse British soldiers on the battlefield. Seacole composed her *Adventures* afterwards, to raise money, having spent all her savings while tending to the wounded. Her narrative is an important marker of race, gender, and empire in the middle decades of the nineteenth century. In 1850 an American abolitionist newspaper asked Elizabeth Barrett Browning to compose a poem on the topic of slavery. We'll read her response along with two essays – written in opposition to one another – on what was called the "Negro Question."

- I. Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (chapters I-X)  
Bill Schwarz, "The Expansion and Contraction of England" ❖  
A: Albert Charles Challen, *Mary Seacole*
- II. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" ⚙  
Thomas Carlyle, from "Occasional Discourse on the Negro Question" ⚙  
John Stuart Mill, from "The Negro Question" ⚙  
*Group Work #1*

### Week 3 (2/10, 2/12): Britons Abroad

This week we finish Seacole's autobiography and then turn to colonial Australia, a popular destination for British emigrants in the 1850s and '60s, to see how colonial writers there grappled with race and gender.

- I. Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (completed)  
A: J. M. W. Turner, *The Slave Ship*

- II. Henry Kendall, “The Wail in the Native Oak” ✨  
 Charles Harpur, “A Mid-Summer Noon in the Australian Forest” ✨  
 Fidelia Hill, “Adelaide” ✨  
 Warwick Anderson, “Antipodean Britons” ❖  
 Pablo Mukerjee, “Victorian World Literatures” ❖  
*Group Work #2*  
 A: Gordon Syron, *Invasion*

*Essay 1 due Saturday, February 15th, by midnight*

**Week 4 (2/17, 2/19): Realistic Imaginations**

The nineteenth century gave birth to many forms of realism. We will begin reading Dickens’ *Bleak House* with an eye to the ways it catalogues the English world in which it was written and published.

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* I-V (Chapters 1-16)  
 Listen: *In Our Time* podcast: “Victorian Realism” ❖  
 A: Oscar Gustave Rejlander, *The Two Ways of Life*
- II. Writing Workshop I: on style, voice, and argument  
 Read workshop packet in advance ❖



**Week 5 (2/24, 2/26): Environmental Realism**

Ruskin’s essay on “The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century” – alongside *Bleak House*’s attention to the London climate – will begin our conversation about Victorian environmentalism.

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* VI-X (Chapters 17-32)  
*Group Work #3*
- II. John Ruskin, from “The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century” ✨  
 Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Binsey Poplars” ✨  
 Jesse Oak Taylor, from *The Sky of Our Manufacture* ❖  
 Listen: *In Our Time* podcast: “The Industrial Revolution” ❖  
 A: J. W. M. Turner, *Rain, Steam, and Speed – The Great Western Railway*

**Week 6 (3/2, 3/4): Sociological Realism**

*Bleak House* was written in the same period that saw the emergence of sociology as a discipline. We will continue our investigation of the novel, bearing mind the ways it represents London’s communities.

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* XI-XV (Chapters 33-49)  
*Group Work #4*  
 A: William Powell Frith, *Derby Day*
- II. Writing Workshop II: on argument and scholarly conversations

*Essay #2 due Saturday, March 7th, by midnight*

### Week 7 (3/9, 3/11): Webs of Connection

As we reach the conclusion of *Bleak House*, we will consider the novel as a whole: a web of interconnected parts carefully woven together.

- I. Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* XVI-XX (Chapters 50-67)
- II. Midterm exercise



### SPRING BREAK

*Term paper proposal due Monday, March 23rd, by midnight*

### Week 8 (3/23, 3/25): Social Realism

This week we will begin Elizabeth Gaskell's great novel of 1854, *North and South*. Whereas Dickens' *Bleak House* offers a view of Victorian London, Gaskell looks northward to Manchester, the heart of industrial Britain. Her characters are drawn from across the social classes, with especial attention to factory laborers, bringing a working-class perspective to her mostly middle-class readers.

- I. Scheduled one-on-one meetings with Prof. Rudy to discuss term paper proposals
- II. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* – Chapters 1-18  
A: Ford Madox Brown, *Work*

Those of you interested in Victorian Studies should consider attending the Northeast Victorian Studies Association (NVSA) conference this weekend, March 27-29, at Johns Hopkins.

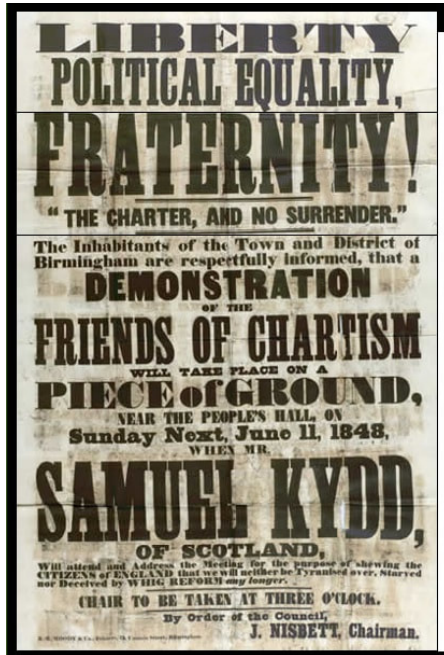
### Week 9 (3/30, 4/1): Indigeneity and Empire

E. Pauline Johnson (Takahionwake) was an important late-Victorian Canadian Native American poet. She toured both North America and Britain performing her work. She was an Indigenous Rights activist and a poet of great agility and many voices. Mill and Taylor's foundational feminist account *The Subjection of Women* offers important contexts for both Johnson's poems and Gaskell's novel.

- I. Professor Ryan Fong will visit class today to discuss Indigenous Victorian Studies  
Pauline Johnson, from *Flint and Feather*: "Author's Forward," "Ojistoh," "As Red Men Die,"  
"The Cattle Thief," "A Cry from an Indian Wife," "Wave-Won" ⚙  
Theodore Watts-Duncan, "Preface" to *Flint and Feather* ⚙  
Group Work #5  
A: Two photographs of Pauline Johnson

At 3:30pm today (March 30<sup>th</sup>) in Tawes 2115, Professor Ryan Fong will deliver a lecture on Pauline Johnson. Attendance strongly encouraged.

- II. John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, from *On the Subjection of Women* ⚙️  
 Listen: *In Our Time* podcast, “Mill” ❖  
 Mary Poovey, *Uneven Developments: “The Ideological Work of Gender”* ❖  
 A: Emma Sandys, *Portrait of a Girl*



### Week 10 (4/6, 4/8): Chartist Imaginaries

*North and South* was composed in the aftermath of both revolutions on the European continent and unrest in Great Britain, which took the specific form of the Chartist movement. We will continue reading Gaskell’s novel while also learning about Chartism and its place in mid-Victorian society.

- I. Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* – Chapters 19-36  
 Listen: *In Our Time* podcast: “1848” ❖  
 Frederick Douglass, “Chartists of England” ⚙️  
 Gregory Vargo, from *An Underground History of Early Victorian Fiction* ❖  
 Group Work #6  
 A: Kennington Common Photograph
- II. *In-class work shopping of thesis paragraphs: bring 4 copies with you to share*

### Week 11 (4/13, 4/15): Circumscribed Agency

Both Augusta Webster’s dramatic monologue and Gaskell’s novel critique the limitations women felt within Victorian culture. Webster draws especial attention to “fallen women.” We will examine how these authors explore the agency of their protagonists. What kind of choices do these women have, really?

- I. Augusta Webster, “A Castaway” ⚙️  
 Harriett Martineau, from “The Contagious Diseases Acts” ❖  
 Amanda Anderson, from *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces* ❖  
 Listen to: Dolly Parton, “Down from Dover” ❖  
 Group Work #7  
 A: Augustus Egg, *Past and Present no. 1*
- II. Gaskell, *North and South* – completed

### Week 12 (4/20, 4/22): Strong Currents

George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* traces the life of Maggie Tulliver, a young woman whose intelligence and independent spirit sets her at odds with her community. With its grappling between individual impulse and communal norms, Eliot’s story seems as pertinent today as it did on first publication.

- I. George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* – books 1-2  
 A: Jean-François Millet, *The Gleaners*
- II. *In-class work shopping 4-page drafts of your term paper: bring 4 copies with you to share and upload a copy with your bibliography to Canvas*

### Week 13 (4/27, 4/29): Sweetness and Light

We will continue reading *The Mill on the Floss*, following Maggie's life as she matures and faces new challenges and frustrations. The essays by John Ruskin and Matthew Arnold examine the place of the individual in relation to the social whole.

- I. George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* – books 3-5  
*Group Work #8*  
A: Emily Mary Osborn, *Nameless and Friendless*
- II. John Ruskin, from *The Stones of Venice* ⚙  
Matthew Arnold, from *Culture and Anarchy* ⚙  
Listen: *In Our Time* podcast on John Ruskin ❖  
*Group Work #9*  
A: John Ruskin, *Part of St Marks, Sketch after Rain*

### Week 14 (5/4, 5/6): Victorian Elegy

The greatest elegy of the Victorian period, Tennyson's *In Memoriam* was beloved by his contemporaries, including Queen Victoria. Composed over a seventeen-year period following the death of Tennyson's closest friend and possible lover, Arthur Henry Hallam, the poem's opening sections follow the progression of Hallam's body back from Vienna, where he died, to England, where he was buried.

- I. Alfred Tennyson, selections from *In Memoriam* ⚙  
Listen: *In Our Time* podcast, "Tennyson's *In Memoriam*" ❖
- II. George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* – completed  
*Group Work #10*  
A: Francis Danby, *The Deluge*

### Week 15 (5/11): Conclusions

On our final day of class, we will review the ideas we've traced throughout the semester and discuss strategies for doing well on the final exam. Please take some time in advance of this discuss to review your notes from the semester, so we can have a robust and meaningful conversation!

**Term Papers:** due Friday, May 17th by midnight

**Final Exam:** Monday, May 18th, 1:30-3:30pm



## ◆ Course Requirements ◆

### Required Books

→ For Gaskell, Dickens, and Eliot, physical books are required for class discussion. Copies are available to borrow at McKeldin library if you wish to avoid purchasing your own. Alternate editions are acceptable so long as you have the full text.

Course packet (not for sale at the University book store; details TBA)

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (Penguin ISBN 9780141439723)

George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss* (Oxford ISBN 9780198707530)

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (Penguin ISBN 9780140434248)

Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave Narrative* (Dover ISBN 9780486438634)

Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (Penguin ISBN 9780140439021)

### Grading (out of 500 possible points)

Artwork Presentation: 20 points (4%)

Quizzes: 35 points (7%)

First essay: 40 points (8%)

Second essay: 40 points (8%)

Group work: 40 points (8%)

Final Exam: 75 points (15%)

Participation 100 points (20%)

Term paper: 110 points + 40 points for bibliography, meeting, proposal, thesis, and drafts (30%)

A 469-500 points

A- 449-468 points

B+ 434-448 points

B 417-433 points

B- 397-416 points

C+ 384-396 points

C 369-383 points

C- 349-368 points

D+ 334-348 points

D 319-333 points

D- 299-318 points

F 0-298 points

### Writing Assignments

1. Both the first and second essays, due February 15<sup>th</sup> and March 7<sup>th</sup>, will be 900- to 1000-word writing exercises.

2. The term paper (between 2600 and 3000 words) will be due May 17<sup>th</sup>. A project proposal is due March 23<sup>rd</sup> and a revised thesis statement and annotated bibliography is due April 8<sup>th</sup>. On April 22<sup>nd</sup> you will workshop in class a 4-page version of the term paper. The details of these assignments will be elaborated separately.

Each of you will schedule a one-on-one meeting with Professor Rudy *after* you have submitted the project proposal for your term paper. This will be an opportunity to discuss your project; we also might take time to look at your first essay, and to strategize for doing well on your term paper. You will sign up for this meeting early in the semester.

## **Submitting Your Work**

Unless otherwise noted, papers are to be submitted via Canvas. On the assignment page, look for the place to upload your Word doc or docx file. Late papers will be downgraded by 25% for each 24-hour period following the deadline. Unless otherwise noted, all papers are due by 11:59pm on the due date. For students unable to turn in papers because of illness or dire emergency, a written note is required, and essays must be turned in as soon as possible.

## **Presentation**

You will each sign up for a three-minute presentation on a work of art. The aim of the presentation will be to introduce the work of art to the class: who created it, how we might understand the composition, and how we might begin to understand its meanings. You may use notes for your presentation, but you should not read from a script. Practice your presentation to make sure you stay within the three-minute window.

- Wikipedia cannot be the primary source for your knowledge and thoughts. I expect you to explore other sources (a minimum of 3 in all), even if the painting and/or artist is not well known. One source must be a peer-reviewed essay located via McKeldin library's online resources. If you need help with this research, please come ask for it!
- Important: on the day of your presentation, *you will submit on Canvas* (on the assignment page for the Artwork Presentation) *a bibliography of works consulted*. This bibliography must include at least one scholarly source from a peer-reviewed journal. Please remember to upload your bibliography by the end of the day on which you give your presentation.
- See Canvas assignment page for a detailed rubric and construct your presentation accordingly.

## **Group Work**

You will participate in two group work projects, to be completed online via Google Docs by specific deadlines. The group work assignments will involve answering prompts and then engaging with your classmates' responses (two steps, both required). The group work exercises are opportunities for you to engage with one another in more complex ways than are generally available in the classroom. The links to all the group work assignments are available under "Pages" on Canvas.

## **Quizzes**

There will be a syllabus quiz plus weekly online quizzes, to be completed via Canvas before the start of each Monday class. The quiz will include questions on the reading for that Monday *and also* questions on the previous week's readings and class discussion. Each quiz is designed to be easy for those students who are keeping up with the reading and attending all class discussions. Once you start a quiz, it cannot be retaken, no matter what the circumstances (the technology doesn't allow for it). The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

## **Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this class, students will be able to:

- understand the key developments in British literature of the Victorian era;



- think critically about the intersection of British literature with historical and cultural phenomena of the nineteenth century;
- interpret literary texts using the skills of close reading; and
- communicate these ideas both orally and in writing.

**Final Exam**

The final exam will be a combination of multiple-choice questions and essays. You will be asked to identify passages from texts on the syllabus, and to put different texts in conversation with each other. We will discuss the exam, and strategies for doing well on it, on our last day of class.

**Course Related Policies**

I will adhere to University of Maryland policies with regard to excused absences, registered disabilities, incidents of plagiarism and academic dishonesty, and student conduct. [Please refer to this website](#) for more detailed information: *really, please do click over and review the university's guidelines*. Our course policies will rigorously follow those outlined on the linked page.

**Participation**

Your participation grade (20% of total course grade) will be determined according to the following table, wherein A = almost always; U = usually; S = sometimes; I = infrequently; and N = never. The Group Work assignments are part of your participation grade, but they are assessed individually (see Canvas assignment pages for individual rubrics). Your total out of 30 will be multiplied by 3.3 for a maximum of 99 points.

You additionally will earn 1 point for participation when you sign up for your Group Work assignments and Artwork presentation before the start of class on Monday, February 3rd.

	A	U	S	I	N
Participated actively and thoughtfully in class discussion	5	4	3	2	0
Came to class prepared (with books, notebook, pen, etc.)	5	4	3	2	0
Arrived on time for class	5	4	3	2	0
Was present for all class activities	5	4	3	2	0
Respected fellow students, instructor, and others involved with our class: listened while others spoke, responded constructively, did not try to dominate the conversation, <i>avoided cellphones and other technology in the classroom</i>	5	4	3	2	0
Actively showed interest and paid attention in class; did not regularly leave in the middle of class discussion	5	4	3	2	0

Total / 30

## **Etiquette and Expectations** (please read carefully)

- Readings for each class must be brought with you. Many of the course materials are in the course packet, so that will be especially important to have in class on most days.
- Laptop computers, iPhones, and other digital devices are not permitted in class unless you provide written documentation showing that they are necessary (e.g. for medical reasons).
- Cellphones must be turned off for class and placed out of sight. Use of cellphones during class will result in immediate downgrading for your participation grade. The same goes for Apple Watches and similar devices.
- You are expected to be *active listeners* in this class. Show your engagement with the course material by *looking interested, taking notes, and, when appropriate, asking questions and engaging in conversation*. Even if you are not completely interested in the material, it is never acceptable to show your disinterest.
- If you are ill, or if you cannot keep your eyes open due to exhaustion, please stay home.
- Please use the restroom before class to minimize disruptions to our discussion.
- Please use our ELMS/Canvas messaging to contact me (rather than email). Consider all communication directed to me – or any professor – as a *professional correspondence*. Compose them accordingly:
  - ▶▶ They should not look like text messages or informal emails to friends (substitute “Hey!” for a more professional greeting, and avoid abbreviations like “ttyl”).
  - ▶▶ Write in full sentences.
  - ▶▶ Proofread, checking both spelling and punctuation.
  - ▶▶ Remember that tone can be a real problem with emails. They almost always come across as brusquer than the writer intended. Adjust your writing to allow for this.

## **Diversity and Inclusion**

UMD English considers the diversity of its students, faculty, and staff to be critical to its educational mission and expects every member of the community to contribute to an inclusive and respectful culture in the classroom, work environment, and at campus events. It is my intent that students from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, and learning needs be well served by this course and that the diversity students bring to class be viewed as a resource and strength. Dimensions of diversity include intersections of sex, race, age, national origin, ethnicity, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, intellectual and physical ability, primary language, faith and non-faith perspectives, income, political affiliation, marital or family status, education, and any other legally protected class. I endeavor to present materials and activities that foster a positive learning environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. Please let me know of ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or other students or student groups.

If you experience issues related to diversity and inclusion in your English courses or as part of the English department community—or if you have suggestions for improving diversity, inclusion, equity, and access in the department—please contact our Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Committee at: [englishidea@umd.edu](mailto:englishidea@umd.edu).

## **Caveat Participes**

This course contains materials on sensitive subjects, including issues having to do with race, ethnicity, sex, sexuality, and gender.