



Course Description

What is “Victorian” about the Victorian novel? What does the novel tell us about the way “Victorians” perceived themselves and their place in Britain, the British Empire, and the world? Is there a difference between the nineteenth-century “English” novel and its Scottish and Irish contemporaries? Among many other things, the Victorian novel concerned itself with questions of identity: national and imperial, economic and social, religious and gender. People accustomed to finding their predetermined place in the social order began to see themselves as part of larger groups with common interests: owners and workers, landlords and tenants, men and women, Whigs and Tories. In this class we will test Disraeli’s famous characterization of Victorian Britain as “Two Nations,” one wealthy and complacent, the other dispossessed and menacing, will be a starting point for examining the Victorian novel’s quest to find a stable basis for personal and social identity in the midst of bewildering change.

Course Prerequisites: Nine hours of coursework in English or Rhetoric and Writing

Unique Number: 35070

Meeting Time: MWF 9-10

Meeting Place: Parlin 304

George S. Christian

Office: Calhoun 6

Office Hours: MWF 8-9 or by appointment

Email: gschristian@mail.utexas.edu

- **Weekly reading.** Reading assignments for each class are given in the detailed syllabus below. Please come to class prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that class period.
- **Weekly Response Essays and Regular participation in class discussions.** Although there may be a few short lectures to provide relevant historical or cultural contexts for the reading, class discussion is the primary method of instruction and will be emphasized and encouraged. To help facilitate the discussion, weekly response papers will be due on each Friday during the course of the semester, exclusive of the first week of class.
- **Oral presentation.** Each student will give one brief (5-10 minute) oral presentation during the semester. One biographical presentation will be given for each of the authors we will be studying. The remaining presentations will involve selecting one critical reading of the novel we are reading (e.g., a journal article) and explaining it to the class.
- **Exams.** There will be two take-home exams during the semester. The exams will consist of two or three short essays.
- **Paper proposal.** Each student will develop a brief paper proposal (250-500 words) on a topic of interest for the final paper. You are free to select your own topics, or you are welcome to discuss potential topics with me. Once you have selected a topic and I have approved it, each student will briefly outline his or her topic for the class.

- **Final paper.** The final paper will be due on the date indicated on the syllabus. The final paper should be no longer than 1,500-2,000 words.
- **Mandatory attendance.** Attendance is mandatory. If you must miss a class, please let me know in advance, if possible. You will still be responsible for the reading and getting notes from another student on what you missed.

Books:

Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*; William Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*; Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*; Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*; Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*; George Eliot, *Middlemarch*; Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (available at the Co-op or on-line)

Grading

- Class attendance and weekly response essays 20%
- Oral presentation 15%
- Take-home exams 30% (15% each)
- Paper proposal (250-500 words) 5%
- Final paper (7-8 pages) 30%

***Plus/minus grades will not be submitted for this course.**

Accommodations

Students who require special accommodations should notify me at the beginning of the semester (or as soon as possible), and such accommodations will be made. Students requesting special accommodations should obtain a letter from the Services of Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office. To ensure that the most appropriate accommodations can be provided, students should contact the SSD office at 471-6259 or 471-4641.

Course Schedule:

August 26: Introduction

August 28: Sir Walter Scott, *Guy Mannering*, Introduction-Chapter 6

August 31: Scott, Chapters 7-17

September 2: Scott, Chapters 17-27

September 4: Scott, Chapters 28-38

September 7: Labor Day (No Class)

September 9: Scott, Chapters 39-49

September 11: Scott, Chapters 50-58

September 14: Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, Chapters 1-10

September 16: Dickens, Chapters 10-25

September 18: Dickens, Chapters 26-36

September 21: Dickens, Chapters 37-47

September 23: Dickens, Chapters 48-59

September 25: William Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*, Before the Curtain-Chapter 7

September 28: Thackeray, Chapters 8-18

September 30: Thackeray, Chapters 19-28

October 2: NO CLASS

October 5: Thackeray, Chapters 29-48

October 7: Thackeray, Chapters 49-59 (Take-home exam distributed)

October 9: Thackeray, Chapters 60-67

October 12: Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*, Vol. 1, Chapters 1-8 (EXAM DUE)

October 14: Gaskell, Vol. 1, Chapters 9-15

October 16: Gaskell, Vol. I, Chapters 16-25

October 19: Gaskell, Vol. II, Chapters 1-8

October 21: Gaskell, Vol. II, Chapters 9-15

October 23: Gaskell, Vol. II, Chapters 15-end (Take-home exam distributed)

October 26: Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, Chapters 1-6

October 28: Brontë, Chapters 7-13

October 30: Brontë, Chapters 13-19 (EXAM DUE)

November 2: Brontë, Chapters 20-27

November 4: Brontë, Chapters 28-34

November 6: George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Book I

November 9: NO CLASS

November 11: Eliot, Books II-III
November 13: Eliot, Book IV
November 16: Eliot, Book V
November 18: Eliot, Book VI
November 20: Eliot, Book VII
November 23: Eliot, Book VIII (**Paper Proposal Due**)
November 25: Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*, Book 1
November 27: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
November 30: Hardy, Books 2-3
December 2: Hardy, Books 3-4
December 4: Hardy, Books 5-6
December 9: PAPER DUE

The University of Texas Honor Code:

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

University Electronic Mail Notification Policy:
(Use of E-mail for Official Correspondence to Students)

All students should become familiar with the University's official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at: <http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html>.

In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and assignments. Note: if you are an employee of the University, your e-mail address in Blackboard is your employee address.

Use of Blackboard in Classes:

This course uses Blackboard, a Web-based course management system in which a password-protected site is created for each course. (Student enrollments in each course are updated each evening.)

Blackboard can be used to distribute course materials, to communicate and collaborate online, to post grades, to submit assignments, and to take online quizzes and surveys.

You will be responsible for checking the Blackboard course site regularly for class work and announcements. As with all computer systems, there are occasional scheduled downtimes as well as unanticipated disruptions. Notification of these disruptions will be posted on the Blackboard login page. Scheduled downtimes are not an excuse for late work. However, if there is an unscheduled downtime for a significant period of time, I will make an adjustment if it occurs close to the due date.

Blackboard is available at <http://course.utexas.edu>. Support is provided by the ITS Help Desk at 475-9400 Monday through Friday 8 am to 6 pm, so plan accordingly.