

Comprehensive Course Syllabus

Topics in World Literature: Victorian Fiction

Course Description:

This course will focus specifically on Victorian fiction (1837-1901), which represents the Golden Age of the novel in English. One of our objectives will be to acknowledge and explore the parallels between Britain of the nineteenth century and America of the new millennium. Much like our society today, Britain during this time was a nation facing unprecedented technological growth and social change. Through the study of the novel, the short story, poetry, and drama, this course will examine the social, political, and cultural ideology of Britain during an era in which it rose to dominance as both a nation and an empire. Some of the issues we will investigate include the effects of the industrial revolution and urbanization, the implications of advances in science and technology such as the railroad and the telegraph, and the ethics of imperialism.

Instructor:

- Name: Dr. Leah Kind
- Office: A117B
- Office hours: I am on campus and available every day. My class times are posted at my door, and you are free to drop in or make an appointment for a specific time.
- Phone: (630) 907-5491
- E-mail: lkind@imsa.edu (best and quickest way to get in touch with me.)

Texts/Materials:

Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

Charles Dickens, *Hard Times*; selected short fiction pieces

Arthur Conan Doyle, selections

George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil*

Assorted prose writing (Carlyle, Ruskin, Mill)

Rudyard Kipling, selected pieces

Assorted poetry (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Tennyson, Hardy)

Charles Darwin, selections

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, “The Importance of Being Earnest”

(we may add or subtract from this list as needed)

Essential Content/SSLs and Outcomes:

- Students will evaluate the influence of historical context on form, style, and point of view [English A.4; SSL II.A].
- Students will apply knowledge gained from fiction as a means of understanding contemporary and historical economic, social, and political issues and perspectives [English A.8; SSL III.B].

- Students will work collaboratively to come to an understanding of readings [English C.1-2, E.2, E.5; SSL I.A-B].
- Students will develop greater autonomy as readers by generating and responding to their own substantive questions about authors and literary works [English B.1, D.1; SSL I.B].
- Students will make and support informed judgments about issues of literary and aesthetic value [English B.1-5; SSL IV.A-D].
- Students will use critical thinking, close reading, and writing and revision to construct cogent arguments about literature [English A.1-8, B.1-5, C.3-5; SSL I.D, II.A-B, III.A-B, IV.A-C].

Instructional Design and Approach:

This course requires that students read, write about, analyze, and discuss, in large and small groups, formally and informally, selected works of British fiction published between the late 1830s and the end of the nineteenth century. We'll practice shared inquiry through student-led discussions based on students' own interpretive discussion questions. We'll also consider relevant historical, aesthetic, and cultural contexts as a framework for understanding the development of the novel as a literary form in nineteenth-century Britain and Victorian fiction as a product of its time and a vehicle for social change. Based on their knowledge and interests, students will collaborate on research-based presentations about historical topics related to our readings. Time permitting, adaptations of our readings will provide insight into how these works have been reinvented for modern audiences.

Student Expectations:

My hope is that you have entered into this class with at least a LITTLE genuine interest—or at least a desire to read more!! Don't know anything about the Victorians? Cool! Now you will! While I certainly don't expect you to LOVE each and every text we tackle, I DO expect that you will READ and THINK about all texts carefully, approach assignments with attention and focus, and bring a positive and engaged attitude to class. I expect you to be productive, cooperative, prepared, and HIGHLY involved—that makes for the best and most entertaining discussions.

Bring your reading each day as well as your questions and ideas from the readings. You should have something to take notes with.

Frequent absences and tardies, both excused and unexcused, may affect your grade adversely. See the *Student and Parent Handbook* for Academy attendance policies.

Revision

This course recognizes that writing is a process—and that the most effective writing is often the result of revision that reflects an ongoing, critical thought process. To that end, you will have the opportunity to revise your formal essays, with your final score being the average of the revised and original papers.

In order to be eligible to revise an essay:

-original paper must have been submitted on time

- received less than an A- on your original
- you must have the original with my comments
- submit the original and your revised essay a week after the original was returned (your new due date will be written on the top of your paper)

[Daily class work, homework, and reading quizzes are not revisable and can't be made up.]

If an essay does not meet the requirements of the assignment, I may **require** a revised draft be done. In that case, the paper will receive a (maximum) grade of 60, and you will have a week from the deadline to meet with me to discuss your essay. Once we have met, you will have one week to revise the essay. Failure to complete a required revision will result in a permanent grade of 60 (or lower) for the essay.

Remember to use all the resources this school makes available to help you do the best job when you first begin writing: See me, visit The Writing Center @ IMSA to seek one-on-one or email-based tutoring sessions, and/or seek help from the hall peer tutors on weekends.

Late Work

Learning to effectively balance your time and all your deadlines is part of being a committed member of the learning community. Your assignments are due at the START of class. **Printer issues are no excuse**, I advise you to print your papers the night before, don't try to find a working printer at 8:55am. If you know of an absence on the day work is due, make arrangements to get it to me at the start of class, or it will be considered late. **Late essays will lose a full letter grade per class day late; essays not turned in a week from the due date will be given a zero.**

If you miss a reading quiz due to an unexcused absence, you will receive a zero for it. If your absence was excused, the quiz does not count for/against your overall class grade—you will be exempt for it. Missed homework will be given a zero. Any homework is factored into your Participation grade.

Participation and Attendance

Although I will lecture occasionally, this class revolves around our large and small group discussions of these readings and our reactions and ideas. Discussion not only helps us better understand what we've read, but it's the best method for learning more about these texts and the rhetorical contexts they inhabit.

If you are unprepared, are disruptive or rude to the class or myself, or are unwilling to participate when called upon, I do not consider you as a productive member of the class.

Laptop Policy:

The default position for your laptop in this class is closed. This means, from the moment class starts, unless I ask you to use it, I don't expect to see it open. We will use the laptops frequently for in-class work and research and even for online readings, but to the greatest extent possible, this will be a laptop-free class. Here's why:

Researchers have repeatedly found that students who use laptops in class learn less than their

“disconnected” peers (see Cornell’s 2003 study “The Laptop and the Lecture”). Studies at Princeton and the University of California have found students who take notes on laptops performed worse on evaluations such as quizzes than those who took notes by hand “even when laptops are used solely to take notes, they may still be impairing learning because their use results in shallower processing” (“The Pen is Mightier than the Keyboard,” 2014).

But laptop use in class harms more than just the user – it also negatively impacts students seated nearby. Sana, Weston, et al (2013) found that: participants who multitasked on a laptop during a lecture scored lower on a test compared to those who did not multitask, and participants who were in direct view of a multitasking peer scored lower on a test compared to those who were not. The results demonstrate that multitasking on a laptop poses a significant distraction to both users and fellow students and can be detrimental to comprehension of lecture content.

Therefore, I require that you please keep your laptop closed during class unless you have been specifically asked to use it, and I would encourage you to keep it closed in other classes, as well. If you have a special need that requires accommodation in this area, please see me.

Academic Honesty Policy

Plagiarism or cheating of any kind—even “just one time”—will be punished. All work that you turn in to me must be your own. When in doubt, cite your source. The academic honesty standards for all IMSA students apply in this class. Plagiarism will result in disciplinary actions as specified in the Student Handbook. A second incident may result in failure of the class. All academic dishonesty will be reported to the administration and your parents/guardian(s). Most cases of plagiarism occur when a student either does not understand an assignment, or does not allot adequate time to complete it properly. Make sure you talk to me if you have concerns about an assignment, and always give yourself the necessary time to complete your work. Take pride in your OWN accomplishments!

Assessment Practices, Procedures, and Processes:

Your progress will be marked by performance on essays, presentations, participation, homework, and reading quizzes. Semester grades will be weighted as follows:

Essays-60%

Presentations-20%

Participation-10%

Reading Quizzes-10%

It is the policy of the English Department not to round quarter or semester grades.

Q1 Sequence of Topics and Activities (subject to change):

Week 1: Introduction to course, syllabus, introductions; the wonderful world of the Victorians

Week 2/3: What the Dickens??? **Charles Dickens**, selected short stories
Paper #1 Assigned

Week 4/5: Don't call me Heathy: **Emily Brontë** *Wuthering Heights*

Week 6: Industrial Life and Labor—Selections from Dickens, Friedrich Engels, Henry Mayhew, and others

Week 7/8: Take the Drama to your Llama: Victorian Drama
Paper #2 assigned

Week 9: Oh my Brontë!! **Charlotte Brontë** Begin *Jane Eyre* (continue reading during spring break with reading questions)

Week 10: Selected Poetry—Hardy, Tennyson, Browning