ENG 5344.001: Studies in Victorian Literature and Culture:

Change and the Victorian Body

Spring 2012: Mon 7 – 9:30, BH 223

Professor Molly Engelhardt
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“It is only in the present that we can know the future; it is only through the present that it is in our power to influence that which is to come.” John Stuart Mill (1831)

Course Description:
When you think of a country on the move it’s hard to not think Victorian England. Population growth, immigration/migration, industrialization, revolutions raging at every border, colonial expansion, new discoveries in science and technology, so much change occurring so fast that John Stuart Mill advises his readers in the above epigraph to get busy knowing the present world in order to manage it and direct its future. In this course we will read novels juxtaposed to non-fictional prose and theory to study the Victorians’ preoccupation with the body in its many manifestations---physiological, psychological, social, and imperial. By knowing the body Victorians hoped to control change. As we read we will consider this assumption, but we will also challenge it. Can a body---literal or metaphoric— even be known? Did the Victorians want to control change, really, or were they up to something else?

Student Learning Outcomes: After completion of the course students will be able to:

- Analyze literature and cultural/theoretical texts at a graduate level;
- Facilitate class discussion at a graduate level;
- Make connections between social forces contributing to the production and reception of Victorian literature;
- Produce a scholarly paper that builds on research skills and contributes to the study of Victorian literature and culture.
**Required texts** (please purchase the designated editions so that we are all on the same page, literally):

Novels and Short Fiction
Bronte, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)
Byatt, A.S. *Angels and Insects*
Haggard, J. Rider. *King Solomon’s Mines* (Penguin)
Hardy, Thomas. *Tess of D’Urbervilles* (Oxford)

Non-Fiction Prose (* designates readings are retrievable from my wiki page)
* Burton, Richard. Excerpt from *Personal Narration of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Mecca*
* Carlyle, Thomas. “Signs of the Times”
* Darwin, Charles. *The Origins of the Species*
* Mayhew, Henry. *London Labour London Poor*
* Ruskin, John. *Sesame and Lilies*

Cultural, Theoretical Texts
* Allen, Michelle. “The London Sewer” (*Cleansing the City*)
* Boone, Joseph. “Rubbing Aladdin’s Lamp”
* Flanders, Judith. From *Inside the Victorian Home*
* Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*
* Levine, George. From *Darwin the Writer*
* Poovey, Mary. “The Anathematized Race: The Governess in *Jane Eyre*”
* Stott, Rebecca. “The Dark Continent: Africa as Female Body in Haggard’s Adventure Fiction”

**Grade Break-down:**

**Class Participation:**
* One class facilitation 10%
* Contributions to class discussion 10%

**Writing Projects:**
* 7 reading responses 20%
* Two short analyses 20%
  * 12-15 page research paper 40%

A = 90-100 points; B = 80-89 points; C = 70-79 points; D = 60-69 points; F = below 60 points
Overview of Student Responsibilities:

Class Participation: The format of the course will consist of both teacher and student-facilitated discussion. In addition, students will work in small groups throughout the semester and discuss the readings. Consistent and informed participation in class discussion is essential, and attendance is required. Each student will facilitate one class discussion and present his or her work-in-progress. You may only miss one class without your grade being affected (5 points deducted from final grade for each class missed).

Writing Assignments:

- Weekly responses to course readings (7 of these, typed, about 500 words each)
- 2 Short Studies: Thesis-driven, close reading of scene or moment in primary text, making connections to theoretical/historical/cultural forces (3 - 4 pages).
- Research paper: A polished paper that identifies a problem in Victorian literature and/or culture and uses primary and secondary sources to first complicate, then resolve the problem (12 – 15 pages). The idea here is to join the scholarly conversations in the field of Victorian studies.

Late Papers: I will not accept late writing assignments unless you have made previous arrangements (“previous” means at least 48 hours before the due date).

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism, “the presentation of work of another as one’s own work,” is only one form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism also includes falsification (the intentional alteration of information), fabrication (the intentional invention of information), multiple submission (using the same material for two separate assignments or courses without permission from the instructors), and abuse of academic materials (the intentional destruction of resource materials.) Plagiarism is a serious offense, particularly at this advanced level, and will result in expulsion from the class and the program.

Notice to Students with Disabilities: Texas A&M University—Corpus Christi complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act in making reasonable accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. If you suspect that you may have a disability (physical impairment, learning disability, psychiatric disability, etc.) please contact the Services for Student with Disabilities Office, located in CCH 116, 119, at 825-5816. If you need disability accommodations in this class, please see me as soon as possible.

Grade Appeal Process: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student
Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site [http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html](http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html). For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

**Reading Schedule:** (reading are to be completed on the days indicated. * texts are retrievable from wiki page)

January 16:  MLK day, no class

January 23:  * Introduction to The Victorian Period (Gilmour)
             * “Signs of the Times” (Carlyle)
             * *Sesame and Lilies* (Ruskin)

*Defining/Regulating the Social Body*

January 30  THE HOME BODY
             * *Jane Eyre*
             * “The Governess and Jane Eyre” (Poovey)

February 6  THE URBAN BODY
             London Labour, London Poor (Mayhew)
             * “The London Sewer” (Allen)
             * “The Street” (Flanders)

February 13  THE LEGAL BODY
              * *Bleak House*

February 20:  *Bleak House*
              **Short Study 1 due**

*Victorian Science: Knowing the body*

February 27:  THE SEXUAL BODY
              * *History of Sexuality* (Foucault)
              * Sexual science writings

March 5:  THE BODY OF NATURE
           * *Mill on the Floss*

March 12  Spring Break

March 19  *Origin of the Species*
* “Darwin the Writer” (Levine)

**Short Study 2 due**

March 26  
“Morpho Eugenia” from *Angels and Insects*  
* “Gendered Incongruities in the Silenced Voice of Pre-Raphaelite Paintings” (Andres)

April 2:  
Reading day  
**Proposal & biblio for research project due by 7pm**

**The Imperial Body**

April 9  
THE AFRICAN BODY  
Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines*  
* “The Dark Continent: Africa as Female Body” (Stott)

April 16  
ORIENTALISM AND EMPIRE  
From *Arabian Nights* (Burton)  
From *Personal Narration of a Pilgrimage to Al-Madinah and Meccah* (Burton)  
* “Rubbing Aladdin’s Lamp” (Boone)  
**Draft of research paper due**

**Human Futility**

April 23:  
*Tess of D’Urbervilles*

April 30:  
Presentations

May 7:  
Final research paper due
Description of Assignments:

Class Facilitation: (10%) Each of you will sign up for one class—based on convenience of date or interest in topic—and prepare a mini lecture (or demonstration) followed by Q&A. Rather than summarize the readings, your task is to work on a local level, narrowing in on a particular idea, scene, moment, “problem” in the text[a] that you complicate and then attempt to resolve. You can be formal and straightforward in your presentation or more playful, informal. For example you can bring in outside materials such as pictures, films, other literary texts to illustrate the idea or problem you’re addressing; if time allows, you can set up a class debate or a class activity such as a close reading of a particular passage. This will be presented at the beginning of your class day and last approximately 30 minutes. You will turn in your notes to me after your presentation.

Class Participation: (10%) Rubric for Scoring
9-10 points. A student receiving 9 or 10 comes to class prepared, contributes readily to the conversation but doesn’t dominate it, makes thoughtful contributions that advance the conversation, shows interest in and respect for others’ views, and participates actively in small groups.
7-8 points. Comes to class prepared and makes thoughtful comments when called upon, contributes occasionally without prompting, shows interest in and respect for others’ views, participates actively in small groups.
5-6 points. A student receiving 5-6 points participates in discussion, but in a problematic way. Such students may talk too much, make rambling or tangential contributions, continually interrupt the instructor with digressive questions, bluff their way when unprepared, or otherwise dominate discussions, not acknowledging cues of annoyance from instructor or students. Students in this category often profit from a conference with the instructor.
3-4 points. A student receiving 3-4 points comes to class prepared, but does not voluntarily contribute to discussions and gives only minimal answers when called upon. Nevertheless these students show interest in the discussion, listen attentively, and take notes. Students in this category may be shy or introverted. The instructor may choose to give such students a 5 if they participate fully in small group discussions or if they make progress in overcoming shyness as the course progresses.

Reading Responses: (20%) The purpose of these responses is to help you synthesize the readings and identify a few areas of interest that you work with more deeply and fully. You will write seven of these, each about 500 words. Considering that there are twelve classes—taking out the first class, presentations at end of semester, reading day—you can choose the seven classes you want to write responses for. You may only turn in one response at a time and I will not accept responses for non-discussion class days. I would be smart and do these early in the semester to allow you more time to identify a topic of interest and save the later weeks for your own research.

Short Studies: (20%) You will identify a passage or scene from one of our primary works—prose or fiction—and write a 3 – 4 page analysis that works closely with the language of the text to make
explicit some idea, theme, insight that would otherwise go unnoticed by the lay reader. While text-based—meaning that the text is where you will find your substance—feel free to use theory and/or historical/cultural scholarship to help you complicate your reading. These studies are designed to help you identify topics for further research. You may use one or both as springboards for your final research project.

**Research Paper: (40%)**
From the first day of class, you should be thinking about topics, texts, authors, concepts you would like to work with for your research paper. By narrowing early on, you can work more efficiently during the semester to produce a quality paper containing readings and ideas that you’ve worked through in earlier assignments. Feel free to work with any aspect of Victorian literature and culture that interests you: the laboring poor, Victorian medicine, religion, Dickens and fairy tales, Eliot and psychology, influence of the railroads, theatre, demi-monde, crime, pollution, prostitution, empire, well, the list just goes on and on. You may want to work with a particular writer or text and that’s fine too. Look over the Victorian web on my wiki page and the list of topics and books I’ve included as well to help get you started. You will turn in a detailed proposal, a bibliography, a draft, and a polished essay, which is due on May 7.