Victorian Secrets and Scandals
Spring 2013

“The basis of every scandal is an immoral certainty.”
(Oscar Wilde)

Course Description:
In this class we will read novels, poetry, plays, and prose written during the long reign of Queen Victoria (1837 - 1901). We will look at literary works that reinforce our own stereotypes of the Victorians—verbose, buttoned-down, and serious—before quickly moving to the “other” side of Victorian life, the dark, mysterious side that fueled much of the imaginative energy of the nineteenth century and continues to preoccupy us today. Using the theme of secrets and scandals as our guide, we will study the complexities of Victorian life and the power of not knowing in a culture obsessed with knowledge.

Required Books:
Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. Lady Audley's Secret (Oxford)
Bronte, Charlotte. Jane Eyre (Penguin)
Dickens, Charles. Hard Times
Rhys, Jean. Wide Sargasso Sea
Stoker, Bram. Dracula
Wilde, Oscar. Salome (Dover)
Selected readings on Blackboard
Learning Outcomes: Students will

- understand the social, political context of the Victorian period and make links between social forces and literature;
- build proficiency in analyzing literature in both oral and written forms;
- demonstrate proficiency in finding and evaluating secondary sources and using them to build a researched argument.

Course Requirements:

- Attendance: Obviously, you must come to class. After three absences, your final grade will be lowered two points for each additional absence. The seminar will be discussion-based, which means that your active participation is essential for your own success as well as for that of the class.
- Class work: Besides your contributions to class discussion, you will be evaluated on the quality of your in-class and outside-of-class writings (impromptu quizzes, mini-analyses, blackboard postings), and group work. If you must miss class, please contact another student to catch up on what you missed and to find out about any work that has been assigned for the next class period. It is your responsibility to stay abreast of all assignments, even those that are impromptu.
- Late work: I do not accept late work unless you have contacted me at least two days before the due date. More than one occurrence will result in a grade penalty.
- Paired Presentation: Working in pairs, each of you will make a presentation to the class that enhances and/or complicates our understanding of the Victorians. As you research your topic (I will give you a range of choices) you will keep an eye out for links between this past culture and our own. In what ways are we Victorian?
- Formal Writing: You will write two critical essays (3 - 5 pages each) and a longer research essay (8 - 10 pages), in which you make connections between course content and your identified area of study. This will be due on the day scheduled for our final exam.
- Creative project: In addition to formal writing, you will produce a project that adapts your own impressions and understandings of the Victorians into creative form. These will be due the last day of class.

Important Information and Miscellany:

- Prerequisites: You must have successfully completed English 1301 and 1302 to be eligible for this class.
- Keep copies of your work: It is your responsibility to keep backup copies of all of your work in the case of an error or misplacement on my part.
- Notice to Students with Disabilities: The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe
you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.

- **Academic Advising**: The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

- **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 at 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.

- **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.) Sometimes students commit unintentional plagiarism (by not citing sources properly, for example) because they are unaware of the standards that apply. Because plagiarism is such a dirty word on college campuses, please see me if you have a question about violations, however minor.

- **Cell Phones, Laptops**: You must turn off your cell phones before class begins. Failing to abide by this classroom protocol can affect your grade. Laptops should only be used for taking notes—enough said. If you choose to leave class to answer a phone call, do not return—coming and going is very distracting.

- **The Writing Center**: The writing center is a free service for students at TAMUCC to improve their writing skills. Writing consultants work one-on-one with writers at all stages of the writing process to help them find ideas, organize their thoughts, and formulate a thesis. You can get help with grammar and general mechanical problems too. The Writing Center is located in the Center for Academic Student Achievement (CASA) in the Glasscock Building. Both drop ins and scheduled appointments are welcome.

http://critical.tamucc.edu/wiki/WC/Home/
**Grade Break-down:**

Class work: 30
- Participation 10
- Presentation 10
- Quizzes, prompted writing 10

Short essays 30
Research essay 25
Creative project 15

**Reading Schedule:** (Always subject to change. Works with asterisks (*) can be accessed from my blackboard page. Please print out, read, and bring to class).

Thur. 1/24  Introductions and course overview

Tues. 1/29:  “The Victorian Age” (Blackboard)
Carlyle’s “Signs of the Times” (Blackboard)

**Industrialism and its Blights: Poverty, Thievery and “Fallen Women”**

Thur. 1/31:  Hard Times (ch 1 – 11)

Tues. 2/5:  Hard Times (chap 12 – book 2, chap 5)

Thur. 2/7:  Hard Times (to end of book 2)
Group Presentation: The fallen woman trope

Tues. 2/12:  Hard Times (to end)

Thur. 2/14:  “Jenny” (Rossetti), “Ruined Maid” (Hardy), “Angel in the House” (Patmore)
Group Presentation: PreRaphaelite Brotherhood

**Secret Desires/Scandalous Acts**

Tues. 2/19:  The Brownings’ love letters and poems (Blackboard)

Thur. 2/21  Fairy Tales (Blackboard)
Freud’s “Creative Writers and Daydreaming” (blackboard)
Group Presentation: Victorian Fairy Tales

Fri. 2/22:  Essay 1 due, noon my office

Tues. 2/26  Jane Eyre
Thur. 2/28  Jane Eyre  
**Group Presentation:** The Victorian Governess

Tues. 3/5  Jane Eyre  
**Group Presentation:** Victorian Lunacy and Marriage Laws

Thur. 3/7:  Jane Eyre

Tues. 3/12 – Thur. 3/14  SPRING BREAK

Tues. 3/19:  Excerpt, Hannah Cullwick: The Diaries of a Maid servant (Blackboard)  
**Group Presentation:** Victorian Servants

Thurs. 3/21:  Lady Audley’s Secret

Fri. 3/22:  Essay #2 due

Tues. 3/26:  Lady Audrey’s Secret  
**Group Presentation:** Sensation Fiction

Thur. 3/28:  Lady Audrey’s Secret

Tues. 4/2:  Lady Audrey’s Secret  
**Group Presentation:** Murderers/Murdresses/Madwomen  
**Research Proposal Due**

Thur. 4/4:  The Importance of Being Earnest

Tues. 4/9:  Salome  
**Group Presentation:** Wilde’s Obscenity Trials  
**Annotated Bibliography due**

**Leaving the Mainland**

Thur. 4/11:  Dracula

Tues. 4/16:  Dracula  
**Group Presentation:** Vampires in popular culture  
**Research draft due**

Thur. 4/18:  Dracula  
**Group Presentation:** “The New Woman”

Tues. 4/23:  Paired conferencing—NO FORMAL CLASS

Thur. 4/25:  Nietzsche’s “Birth of Tragedy” (Blackboard)
Tues. 4/30:  Wide Sargasso Sea
            Group Presentation: British Empire--in the Caribbean

Thur. 5/2:  Wide Sargasso Sea
            Group Presentation: Neo-Victorianism (revising the Victorians)

Tues. 5/7:  Wide Sargasso Sea
            Creative Projects due
            Show and Tell

Thur. 5/9:  Research Project due