In this course, we will read major works of literature from the English Victorian period. As we read, we will pay special attention to questions of social mobility, inclusion, and inequality in the history of Victorian literature. From the early nineteenth-century onward, Britain underwent massive social changes reflected in the literature of the period, including the end of colonial slavery, the rise of industrialism, the continuing growth of the middle class, early feminist movements, and the expansion of British imperialism. In response, Victorian culture experimented with giving voice to segments of society that had often been excluded from mainstream literature: workers, women, former slaves, and more. But can literature help create a more open society, or does it tend to reflect the status quo? As we read British novels, poetry, and essays, we will ask whose voices have been included and excluded in major works over time, and why, in order to develop our own sense of what Victorian literature might mean to us today.
Required Texts

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin Classics)
Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (Penguin Classics)
Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin Classics)
Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Penguin Classics)

Course Calendar

Note: dates and readings are subject to change, with advanced notice.

I. Victorian Literature and the Problem of Sympathy

Thursday, August 25th: Introductions

Brief selections from Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality* (1755) and Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) (in class)

Tuesday, August 30th: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818/1831)
Thursday, September 1st: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*  
Response #1 Due

Tuesday, September 6th: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
Thursday, September 8th: Robert Browning and Alfred Lord Tennyson, selected poems

II. Industry, Poverty, and the Victorian Working Classes

Tuesday, September 13th: Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (1848)  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Cry of the Children” (1843) and selected working-class Victorian writing

Thursday, September 15th: *Mary Barton*  
Response #2 Due

Tuesday, September 20th: *Mary Barton*
Thursday, September 22nd: *Mary Barton*

Tuesday, September 27th: *Mary Barton*
Thursday, September 29th: *Mary Barton*  
Response #3 Due

III. Marrying Up – The Victorian Marriage Plot from the Drawing Room to the Slavery Plantation

Tuesday, October 4th: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1848)  
Selection, Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction*

Thursday, October 6th: *Jane Eyre*  
Essay 1 Due

Tuesday, October 11th: *Jane Eyre*
Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup>: *Jane Eyre*

Response #4 Due

Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>: Selections, Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* (1831)
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” (1847)
Selections, Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon* (1859/1861)

Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup>: *Jane Eyre*

Tuesday, October 25<sup>th</sup>: *Jane Eyre*

Thursday, October 27<sup>th</sup>: *Jane Eyre*

Response #5 Due

IV. Great Expectations: The Upwardly Mobile Hero

Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>: Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1861)

Thursday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>: *Great Expectations*

Tuesday, November 8<sup>th</sup>: *Great Expectations*

Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>: *Great Expectations*

Short Writing Exercise Due

Tuesday, November 15<sup>th</sup>: *Great Expectations*

Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>: *Great Expectations*

Selection, Bruce Robbins, “How To Be a Benefactor Without Any Money,” *Upward Mobility*

Tuesday, November 22<sup>nd</sup>: Reading Day

Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>: Thanksgiving

V. Radical Responses to Inequality

Tuesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>: Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Christina Rossetti, selected poems

Response #6 Due

Thursday, December 1<sup>st</sup>: John Ruskin, “The Nature of the Gothic” (1853)

William Morris, “Useful Work vs. Useless Toil” (1888)
Selection from Morris, *News from Nowhere* (1890)

Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>: Conclusions; Essay 2 Due

Final Examination – Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016, 8:00-10:30AM

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation (10%)
Reading Responses (10%)
Short Writing Exercise (10%)
Essay 1 (20%)
Essay 2 (30%)
Final Examination (20%)
Attendance and Participation (10%): Attendance and regular participation in this course are required. You may miss two classes without penalty, but any absence after the second will result in a lower final grade in the course. Participation includes your contributions to our in-class discussions, group discussions, and your written responses to our texts (see below), which I may draw upon to guide our discussions. I expect all students to come to class prepared and to participate in our discussions! I also strongly recommend that you come to office hours to discuss your questions and ideas about the texts we are reading.

Quizzes: From time to time, I will give unannounced quizzes. The purpose of these quizzes is to ensure that you are coming to class prepared, and to reward you for doing so. These quizzes will not require any additional preparation beyond completing the readings for that day’s class. They will count towards your final attendance and participation grade in the course (see above).

Reading responses (10%): You will be required to write 6 brief (300-400 words or so) responses a text of your choice. You should think of this assignment as an ongoing journal or even a conversation with me about your reading. I may from time to time draw on these responses in our class discussions. Responses will not receive a letter grade, but will receive a √, √-, or √+ as well as written feedback.

Neo-Victorian Inequality and Social Justice Short Writing Exercise (10%): This is an imaginative assignment that will ask you to consider how contemporary debates about inequality and social justice have built upon or moved away from the concerns that the Victorian texts we discuss in this course raise, in order to consider how Victorian literary and social forms have helped shape the world we live in today.

Essay 1 (20%)  
Essay 2 (30%)  
I will provide essay questions and specific guidelines for each of these papers. We will also discuss these essays in class before each essay is due.

Final Examination (20%): This exam will provide you with an opportunity to synthesize major concepts, key terms, and themes from the course. We will discuss the format of the final examination in class.

Course Policies

Writing Assignments

All written assignments must be turned in at the start of class. Late assignments will receive a penalty for every class session that passes after the original deadline. Assignments will not be accepted one week (7 days) after the original deadline.

For written assignments, please use a standard 12-point font (such as Times New Roman), 1-inch margins, double spacing, and page numbers. You should include a single-spaced heading with your name, the assignment number (e.g. Essay 1), and the date at the top of the page. Please staple all hard copies; double-sided printing is fine.
Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable. Here are some examples of plagiarism: plagiarism can include copying writing that is not your own verbatim, copying phrases without citing the original text they were taken from, or paraphrasing a text without citing it. Other forms of unacceptable plagiarism can include presenting others’ ideas as your own without credit, submitting a paper you wrote for another class for this one, or submitting work written by someone else as your own work. Plagiarism will result in failure of the assignment and, in some cases, the course, and will be turned over to the appropriate disciplinary bodies.

To avoid plagiarism, you should cite any sources you consult when completing assignments for this course, including outside websites, articles, or books. If you have any questions about proper documentation and citation of sources, I recommend consulting the Purdue Online Writing Lab (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/). You can contact me at any time with questions about citation, acknowledgment, or academic integrity.

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information, please call 361-825-3466.

Disability Services

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, Room #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 at (361) 825-5816.

Grade Appeals Process

Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean's Office.