

Madeleine A. Vala, Ph.D.
Full Professor of English
English 4095—The Victorian Period

MW 2:30-3:50pm
Spring 2021

Office hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12-3 via Zoom. Please let me know in advance if you wish to set up a time to meet in office hours.

Email: madeleine.vala@upr.edu

Course website is available on Moodle.

FROM MAYFAIR TO THE MOOR: CLASS CONFLICT IN VICTORIAN LITERATURE

The Victorian period likely conjures images of ladies in fluffy dresses and gentlemen in top hats, full of polite ceremony and conservative sexual mores. In reality, the literature of this period reflects a century far more diverse than the stereotypes associated with it. Rapid industrialization brought increased poverty and crime to cities, and orphans, prostitutes, and thieves wandered the streets. Meanwhile, the landed gentry were not immune to threats of blackmail, domestic violence, and financial ruin. The narratives of this period thus offer a prism through which to read social reality. Although we will focus on many aspects of the readings, our overarching theme of inquiry will be class conflict, as manifested both in rural and urban settings. How do the challenges facing a factory worker compare to those facing a milkmaid? In what ways do gender, race, and nationality determine and complicate class position? How successful are outsiders in their quests to obtain hegemonic power? While we will focus primarily on the novel—which many argue reached its zenith in the Victorian period—we will also examine plays, prose, poetry, and art from the period. Through the close analysis of these texts, you will learn about the social, political, philosophical, and aesthetic concerns of the nineteenth century.

Given that the novels from this period were often generated in serial form for periodicals, their compiled versions are lengthy. Indeed, the reading selections below are among the most manageable from the century, while maintaining an illustrative range. ***You should not take this course if you are not committed to reading approximately 200 pages a week.*** I have purposely lightened the reading load in the weeks when you have writing assignments and at the end of semester. I have also balanced long stretches of reading with film adaptations; that said, keeping up with the reading is a fundamental requirement of this class.

This semester, this course will be offered remotely assisted by technology, using Zoom, GoogleMeets, and Moodle platforms.

Guidelines for Online Classes

- This course is being offered online using Zoom, GoogleMeets, Moodle, and email. **We will meet synchronously online at least once a week, generally on Wednesdays.** Sometimes, I will meet with half of the class on Monday and the other half on Wednesday; this is noted in the schedule. This may change.
- You will receive a Zoom invite before each class. You do not need to confirm your attendance via email, just show up for the class. I do not plan to record our sessions, though I may sometimes (ie, to help me grade presentations). Please let me know now if you disagree to being recorded so we can strategize a way for you to attend classes anonymously.
- Appropriate attire for our sessions is the same as a physical classroom: semiformal, relaxed, but fully attired.
- You are required to have a functional camera, audio, and internet connection. You are expected to have your camera on during the entire class, and you must turn on your camera before speaking. Please attempt to join the online class with limited background noise and your primary source of lighting in front of you (not behind).
- You should be in a room where you can focus adequately on class; under no circumstances should you be attending class while in your car, in a waiting room for an appointment, or at work. When you are not speaking, turn your audio off to reduce background noise.
- Only you should be attending class (no boyfriends, parents, siblings). Cats and dogs are welcome to make their appearances, as long as they aren't distracting.
- Be prepared to join with audio and camera each class. If you have been experiencing connection problems with your internet or hotspot, or power outages, make sure you have a backup plan. All UPR-RP students can make appointments to go on campus to use computers, access reliable internet services, and visit available libraries. For appointments, please contact the Dean of Student Affairs or Decanato de Estudiantes (decanatoestudiantes.rp@upr.edu). Also, there are technological services provided by different municipalities, "Acceso a la tecnología cerca de tí" ([Iniciativas-de-Apoyo-en-Municipios.pdf \(uprrp.edu\)](#)). If you encounter technical problems with MIUPI, NEXT portal, or Microsoft Office, please contact the Help Desk (help.desk@upr.edu). If you have problems with Moodle, please contact: ayuda.moodle@upr.edu

Required Texts:

Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*, 1847

Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, 1838

Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, 1891

Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 1895

I recommend that you purchase physical, hard copy versions of the texts. These are long novels and you will have a hard time retaining content if you're trying to read on your computer or phone. All of these titles are readily available through online bookstores and may also be found at local bookstores.

You are required to have an Amazon Prime membership. Most of the novels we are reading have film adaptations on Prime. You can get a student membership at a monthly cost of \$6.49/ month.

Other texts will be posted on Moodle.

Course Requirements:**

Test	15%
Short Paper	23%
Long Paper	27%
Presentation	10%
Participation	10%
Moodle Responses	15%

Grading Scale:

A	100-90%
B	89-80%
C	79-70%
D	69-60%
F	59-0%

*Please note that percentages may be adjusted to reflect the actual work accomplished in the course; ie, if I cut the presentation, other elements will be weighted more. Similarly, if I add an assignment, other components of your grade will be weighted less.

Papers (50%) In this class, you will write two papers—one short essay (5-7 pages), and a longer research paper (8-10 pages) at the end of the course. All papers should be typed, doublespaced, and written in 12-point Times with 1-inch margins top and bottom, and 1.25 inch margins left and right. I do not need a title page. Do not double space between paragraphs. Please include page numbers and staple your essay. I strongly discourage you from turning in papers late. Final papers will be marked down three points for each day late, including weekend days. Thus an otherwise 95 essay due on Thursday becomes a 92 on Friday and an 83 on Monday. I will not accept a paper more than ten days late and you will earn a zero instead. I do not accept papers via e-mail, nor will I peruse a draft over e-mail. That said, I will be happy to help you with a draft in my office hours.

Test (15%) Rather self-explanatory. You will have a midterm exam on the material covered in class. Keeping up with the reading and taking notes will help prepare you. Not reading will ensure that you do poorly on the exam.

Presentation (10%) Once during the semester, you will work with three other classmates to research either a specific historical or critical context for the novel and present your findings to the class in a 20-minute Powerpoint presentation that you will upload to the Moodle course platform.

Moodle Close Reading Responses (15%) Read this carefully. To ensure that you are keeping up with the reading and processing it before class, you will submit **two sizable paragraphs** of at least five sentences each to the Moodle Discussion Forum site in each unit. You will have to do this **once** per unit, though for some units, I will require you to post twice (*Oliver Twist*, *Tess*). This amounts to **eight** posts over the course of the semester.

This is your forum for *analysis*, so you should not summarize plot. I will evaluate responses based on your level of engagement with the text. Ensure that you use textual evidence to illustrate your point. Note that you need not cover the entire amount of the reading or a survey of the novel, but rather an aspect—illness, the workhouse, Heathcliff’s otherness—that you find interesting. Responses must be posted by **Sunday at 10pm**. **You may only post one response per week. You may not post retroactively on texts already discussed.** I expect you to have completed half of the assigned reading for the week before you write the response. Note that I may alter the standard written response and ask you to upload a video or audio comment in the Moodle forum, but unless I specify otherwise, the “default” response is two written paragraphs. If you plagiarize any of the content of your responses, you will earn a zero for the whole 15% of your grade.

Eight times during the semester, you must respond with a one-paragraph reply to one of your classmates’ threads. You will do this once per unit in the forum (except in the two units where I’m requiring two posts; in those, you will write two replies). You may only post one reply per week, but it does not have to be on the same week where you initiated a thread. If you choose to write a reaction to a thread posted during the week, you must do so by **Tuesday at 6pm** of that same week. In your reply, you should expand on, disagree with, or connect your classmate’s comment to an issue from another text read earlier. These responses need to be a sizable paragraph 4-5 sentences. All of your replies require detailed evidence. You need to be much more rigorous than simply writing, “I like your point; I hadn’t thought of it that way.”

Participation (10%) I expect active, informed participation in class discussions. That means coming to class having read and thought about the readings. Treat everyone respectfully during discussions, even if they disagree with you, and be aware of the overall classroom dynamic. If you’ve already contributed several times to discussion, give someone else a chance to speak before contributing again. You will be divided into groups for the term that correspond to discussion questions you should be prepared to answer in our synchronic meetings. This will be factored into your participation grade.

Attendance

Attendance is not directly factored into your grade, as it is expected of everyone. It is not synonymous with your participation grade. It is essential that you participate in all class activities. If you know that you are going to be unavailable for a class activity, you must contact me with a valid explanation in advance. Exceptions to this policy are cases of serious illness or emergency, documented by a letter from the appropriate office. Six contact hours of unexcused absences may lower your average in the

course to be lowered an entire letter grade (for example, from an A to a B). Late arrivals to scheduled Zoom activities will affect your participation grade in this class, as will early departures.

Plagiarism

I will not tolerate academic dishonesty. Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's words as your own. It is a serious offence and a cowardly act. You must give proper credit to any ideas or words that are not your own. Turning in a paper that has been written for another class is also a form of plagiarism. **If you are caught plagiarizing, punishment varies from earning a zero on the assignment (ie, not simply an F) at the minimum to university expulsion at the maximum. I will refer cases of plagiarism to the disciplinary board.** Please ask me if you have any questions about how to cite information.

Article 6.2 of the UPR Students General Bylaws (Board of Trustees Certification 13, 2009-2010) states that academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to: fraudulent actions; obtaining grades or academic degrees by false or fraudulent simulations; copying the whole or part of the academic work of another person; plagiarizing totally or partially the work of another person; copying all or part of another person answers to the questions of an oral or written exam by taking or getting someone else to take the exam on his/her behalf; as well as enabling and facilitating another person to perform the aforementioned behavior. Any of these behaviors will be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary procedure laid down in the UPR Students General Bylaws.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Puerto Rico complies with all state and federal laws and regulations related to discrimination including "The American Disabilities Act" (ADA) and Law #51 from the Puerto Rico Commonwealth (Estado Libre Asociado de Puerto Rico). Every student has the right to request and receive reasonable accommodation and Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS). Those students with special needs that require some type of particular assistance or accommodation shall explicitly communicate it directly to the professor. Students who are receiving VRS services shall communicate that to the professor at the beginning of the semester to facilitate appropriate planning and the necessary equipment according to La Oficina de Servicios a Estudiantes con Impedimento (OSEI), administered by the Dean of Students Office. Any other student requiring assistance or special accommodation shall also communicate directly with the professor. Reasonable accommodations requests or services DO NOT exempt the student from complying and fulfilling academic and course related requirements and responsibilities.

Gender and Sexual Identity Discrimination Policy

The University of Puerto Rico prohibits discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity in any of its forms, including that of sexual harassment. According to the Institutional Policy Against Sexual Harassment at the University of Puerto Rico, Certification Num. 130, 2014-2015 from the Board of Governors, any student subjected to acts constituting sexual harassment, must turn the

Office of the Student Ombudsperson, the Office of the Dean of Students, and/or the Coordinator of the Office of Compliance with Title IX for an orientation and/or a formal complaint.

CLASS SCHEDULE

(subject to changes)

Industrial Labor and Urban Poverty

- 1/20 Introduction and syllabus
- 1/25-27 Watch Percival's film, *North and South* (2004), available on Amazon Prime video; Friedrich Engels, from *The Condition of the Working Class in England*
- 2/1-2/3 Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, chapters 1-25
- 2/8-2/10 Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, chapters 26-40; Henry Mayhew, from *London Labour and London Poor*; discussion with Group A on 2/8 and Group B on 2/10
- 2/15-2/17 No class President's Day, 2/15. Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, to end.

Marriage and Property: Revenge on the Moors

- 2/22-2/24 *Wuthering Heights*, volume 1
- 3/1-3/3 *Wuthering Heights*, volume 2
- 3/8 Discussion of film adaptations of Bronte.
- 3/10 Bronte and Dickens test**

The "Fallen" Woman

- 3/15-17 Thomas Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, chapters 1-24
- 3/22-24 No Class Abolition of Slavery, 3/22. *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, chapters 25-38
- 3/29-3/31 *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*, chapters 39-44
Watch Blair's film, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (2008), available on Amazon Prime video;
Discussions with Group A on 3/29 and Group B on 3/31

Pre-Raphaelite Visions of Gender

- 4/5-4/7 In-class office hours. **Paper #1 due 4/7 by 11:50pm**
- 4/12-4/14 Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market*, "In an Artist's Studio"; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "Jenny"; Alfred Tennyson, "The Lady of Shallott"; Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess"; Pre-Raphaelite art slideshow.

Social Climbers and the Victorian 1%

- 4/19-4/21 Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*
- 4/26-4/28 Watch Oliver Parker's *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2002) and

David Yates' *The Way We Live Now* (2001), both available on Amazon Prime video

English Hauntings and Imperial Dreams

5/3-5/5 Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," "Gunga Din";
Alice Perrin, "The Sistrum"; Katharine Macquoid, "A Night at Ouseley Manor";
Oscar Wilde, "The Canterville Ghost"

5/10 **Paper #2 due by 11:50pm**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR HARD WORK.
I HOPE TO MEET YOU IN PERSON SOMETIME NEXT SEMESTER!**