

HIST 5399 Graduate Independent Studies: Victorian Gothic

Spring 2026 Jordan Wells

Dr. Mandy Link

Virtual Office Hours: Noon-2pm via Zoom (link in Canvas modules) or by appointment

Email: mlink@uttyler.edu or via Canvas

Course Description:

This course is designed to provide graduate students with the ability to formulate a graduate level reading list based on their field of interest that will be approved by Dr. Link.

The student will produce a semester long research paper that will be graduate level research (a thoughtful synthesis of secondary and primary sources). The topic of the research project is to be determined by the student in consultation with Dr. Link at the start of the course.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the course, students should be able to do the following:

- analyze significant issues, trends and developments in the field of reading they have selected
- analyze significant shifts in historiography
- make a clearly-written and clearly-presented argument, including a thesis and sufficient and well-used supporting detail
- to demonstrate a heightened ability to synthesize and analyze class material, readings, and external research

Required Readings:

The reading list of primary and secondary sources will be determined by the student and Dr. Link.

Requirements and Grades:

Participation (weekly Zoom meetings to discuss readings)	100 points
Book reviews (12 @ 20 points each)	240 points
Bibliography for research/historiography project	100 points
Research or Historiography Paper	200 points

Total:

640 points

Grade breakdown by points:

640-576 = A
575-512 = B
511-448 = C
447-384 = D
383 and below = F

Grade breakdown by percentage:

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

Explanation of Assignments:

Participation 100 points: These points are earned through communication (via email and Zoom meetings) with Dr. Link throughout the spring term. Weekly meeting time/day will be agreed upon between Dr. Link and the student. Graduate courses are discussion based by design and thus are only as successful as the preparation and dialogue that you put in. Your participation grade will depend on your attendance as well as your input. **Two unexcused absences will result in a failing grade.** To help you prepare for our discussion you will turn in a book review (instructions below) prior to our class meeting time. Being prepared and discussing each week's books are how you earn these points.

Graduate courses are rigorous by nature and while it is tempting to only read book reviews of the assigned readings, that is insufficient. Reading book reviews can be helpful, but I recommend reading them *after* you have read the week's book. You need to read the books/articles yourself to ascertain *your* understanding of the book rather than seeing it only through the lens of someone else.

Book Reviews 240 points (20 points each for 12 books): Writing is at the center of the historian's craft and to help improve this skill you will write book reviews. Historians write book reviews constantly and practicing this skill will better prepare you for further graduate level work and the job market. While journals will vary a bit on the length of book reviews, for our purposes they should be no more than 1000 words. This word limit is strictly enforced to help you practice concise writing. Book reviews must address the author's argument, where their work fits within the historiography, strengths, and weaknesses.

A book review example will be provided in Canvas to give you guidance.

These book reviews not only help prepare you for the work of being a historian but will also prepare you for our weekly discussions. They will be due prior to student's weekly meeting with Dr. Link.

Final Project Options

You have two final project options: a research project or a historiographical essay. Once you have chosen you cannot switch. The final project will be due finals week.

Option 1 Research project: This option allows you to explore an aspect of theme of this course: crime & murder in Victorian Britain that you would like to investigate further. This is a good option for those with a deeper interest in the subject or for those who are writing/going to write a thesis that relates to the war in some way.

The research paper must be *at least* 4000 words in length (cover page and bibliography are not applicable toward the word count).

- **Bibliography 100 points:** Topic and preliminary bibliography must be submitted by week 5.
- The bibliography must show that you have located both primary sources (those written during the time period being researched) and academic secondary sources (those written by historians). You will need to compile a minimum of 5 primary sources and 10 secondary sources.
 - For the secondary sources, you will need to find books and/or articles written by historians and published by reputable, academic presses.
 - **Research Project Essay 200 points:** This essay will be due during finals week and uploaded to Canvas. It must be a minimum of 4000 words, use at least 5 primary sources and 10 secondary sources. If a book from class is helpful, please include it.
 - Chicago Manual of Style must be used for formatting and footnotes.
 - Further instructions will be posted on Canvas.
 - Must include a cover page and bibliography.
- Dr. Link reserves the right to veto or edit topics.
- This essay will be due during finals week and uploaded to Canvas.

Further instructions posted on Canvas.

Option 2 Historiographical Essay 200 points: Over the course of the semester, you have read several books about crime & murder in Victorian Britain. To effectively demonstrate the knowledge you have gained, you will write a 4000-word historiographical essay. To successfully discuss the trajectory of this historiography you will need to use *at least* 7 of the readings from class and well as find and read an additional 5.

- **Bibliography 100 points:** For these additional five works they can be either theoretical works or case studies, but they must all pertain to crime & murder in Victorian Britain. They must be academic works (written by a PhD in history and published by an academic press). This is a great opportunity not only to work on essay writing and analyzing historiography, but also to hone your abilities to assess how an academic work fits into the historiography you've learned. Your bibliography of the 7 course books and 5 additional books must be submitted by Week 5 and is subject to the approval of Dr. Link.

This essay will be due during finals week and uploaded to Canvas for 200 points. Further instructions posted on Canvas.

THERE WILL BE NO INCOMPLETES for failure to complete an assignment. Assignments not turned in will result in a 0 for that assignment.

Course Etiquette:

1. Weekly meetings held virtually, through Zoom. The Zoom link will be listed on Canvas. Attendance is mandatory. You will need to have your camera and microphone on.
 - a. If pets or family make their way in, that is absolutely fine. You can always mute your microphone if there are loud noises on your end.
 - b. These are not recorded and thus, not uploaded to Canvas. Since graduate courses are not lecture based and instead are entirely based on discussion, attending class is the only way to actively engage with the material.
2. Submitting assignments early will not result in them being graded earlier than the deadline nor will they be edited by Dr. Link for the student to revise.
3. Make sure to have your Canvas notifications sent to your email. You are responsible for staying up to date on deadlines, announcements, etc.
 - a. You are responsible for all class lectures, readings, and any other videos assigned.
4. The classroom is a place for intellectual growth and to achieve that we must all be respectful and courteous to each other. Respect is a must! We will not always all agree (that is the heart of academics!) but it is crucial that we express our ideas in a respectful way. Students who do not adhere to this will be asked to leave the class and will receive 0 points in the course (to be determined at Dr. Link's discretion).
 - a. Be human: Remain patient, ask/wait for clarification, avoid assumptions and rushed judgement. Forgive mistakes and apologize for errors.
 - b. Be a good colleague: Remember your role as a student in the course. Make sure you're following directions. Be authentic and collaborative with colleagues. Be aware of your behavior and how others interpret your communication.
 - c. Be professional: Proofread your own writing for spelling, grammar, and punctuation to prevent miscommunication. Avoid slang, sarcasm, or emotionally charged writing. Profanity and offensive language will not be tolerated.
 - d. Be a responsible citizen: Graduate classes are, in part, about professionalization as a historian. This means conducting yourself in a professional manner in your in class conduct as well as in your interactions with classmates and professors.
5. Late assignments not accepted.
6. **Use technology responsibly and considerately.** It is tempting to surf the internet, check your phone, etc. while in a Zoom classroom but please refrain. We will have breaks where you can check your texts, get a snack, etc. When in class be present. It is quite obvious when you are on your phone or surfing websites.

7. When you email me, I will respond within 24 hours on weekdays. On weekends, it may take longer but I will definitely get back to you within 48 hours at the latest.
 - a. When you email me, address your email to: Professor/Dr. Link and sign it with your name.
 - b. If you have a procedural question –about due dates, what the assignment requirements are, etc. –check the syllabus and the materials on Canvas, as your answer may be there, and you can know immediately, rather than awaiting an email reply.
 - c. I will always address you directly and respectfully in my emails to each of you; I ask the same courtesy in return. If students continue to refuse to address the faculty by name, I reserve the right to not reply to the email.

University Policies

Student Accessibility and Resources (SAR):

University of Texas at Tyler is committed to creating a learning environment that meets the needs of its diverse student body. Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a documented disability. If you should need accommodations, please let me know and contact Student Accessibility and Resources to discuss a range of options. They are located in UC 3150 and can be reached at (903) 566-7079 or saroffice@uttyler.edu. Once you have made arrangements with SAR, they will contact your professors and we can work with you from there.

Student Standards of Academic Integrity and AI Statement:

As adults and college students I expect the work you turn in to be your work and your work alone. I do not tolerate plagiarism, cheating, or collusion (see definitions below) and if you do any of these you will receive a 0 on that assignment with no option of resubmitting. You may also receive a 0 in the class depending on the egregiousness of the scholastic dishonesty and be reported to Judicial Affairs. Dr. Link reserves the right to adjudicate punishment for each individual case.

UT Tyler Statement on AI:

UT Tyler is committed to exploring and using artificial intelligence (AI) tools as appropriate for the discipline and task undertaken. We encourage discussing AI tools' ethical, societal, philosophical, and disciplinary implications. All uses of AI should be acknowledged as this aligns with our commitment to honor and integrity, as noted in UT Tyler's Honor Code. Faculty and students must not use protected information, data, or copyrighted materials when using any AI tool. Additionally, users should be aware that AI tools rely on predictive models to generate content that may appear correct but is sometimes shown to be incomplete, inaccurate, taken without attribution from other sources, and/or biased. Consequently, an AI tool should not be considered a substitute for traditional approaches to research. You are ultimately responsible for the quality and content of the information you submit. Misusing AI tools that violate the guidelines specified for this course is considered a breach of academic integrity. The student will be subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in UT Tyler's Academic Integrity Policy

AI/Chat GPT is not permitted in this course. To best support your learning, you must complete all graded assignments by yourself to assist in your learning. This exclusion of other resources to help complete assignments includes artificial intelligence (AI). Refrain from using AI tools to generate any course context (e.g., text, video, audio, images, code, etc.) for an assignment or classroom assignment. Assignment showing **any** use of AI will receive an automatic zero and are not eligible for resubmission.

- **This means NO USE OF AI IN ANY MANNER FOR ANY REASON. This includes but isn't limited to Grammarly and ChatGPT.**

Conduct Disciplinary proceedings may be initiated against any student who engages in scholastic dishonesty, including, but not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts.

i. "Cheating" includes, but is not limited to:

- copying from another student's test paper;
- using, during a test, materials not authorized by the person giving the test;
- failure to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test;
- possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes". The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test;
- using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program;
- collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority;
- discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination;
- divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructors has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned or to be kept by the student;
- substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself to take a course, a test, or any course-related assignment;

- paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program or information about an unadministered test, test key, home solution or computer program;
 - falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit;
 - taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of The University of Texas at Tyler, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct; and
 - misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially.
- ii. "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.
- iii. "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
- iv. All written work that is submitted will be subject to review by plagiarism software.

Further university policies available on Canvas