

ENGLISH 4365 and 5325: Victorian Women Writers and Their World

Details and links to assignments and documents are all on our Canvas site.

What we're going to do

Hi there, we are going to study works by and about women writers of the Victorian Period and their world. Below you will find the books you will need and a general description of the course along with an account of the typical weekly assignments

You will also see a list of the skills you will use and the learning outcomes I have planned for you. Added to this I have included details about assessment and information about the Term Project.

When: Fall, 2023, August 24 until December 8

Where: Online Canvas course, asynchronous, occasional zoom meetings (only the first is required)

Course Description:

In this course you will read works in prose and verse written by women living in the Victorian Period and see how history and culture prompted and constrained their creative and intellectual endeavours. You will create a critical, digital, or creative term project based on a novel of your choice by one of these women, and you will reflect on what these writers and their work have to teach us in 2023. You will be guided in your reading and provided with opportunities to attend zoom lessons and discussions, to view video lectures, to practice writing, discussion, and research. Along with many small-stakes activities submitted on canvas, your learning will be assessed by you at the beginning, middle, and end of the course and by me after two oral exams at the midterm and during finals week.

Books and Required Readings:

1. Harriet Devine Jump, Ed. *Women's Writing of the Victorian Period 1837-1901*. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999). There is an ebook available on Canvas
2. Canvas links for Handout: bios of and poems by selected Victorian women writers
3. A novel of your choice selected from the list below to be used for the term project (description follows). All of these novels—and more by some of these writers—are available on Amazon. You are welcome to go outside of this list, but please consult me before you make a final decision. I will provide brief notes about each of these writers and her novel(s) to help you choose.

- Mary Elizabeth Braddon - *Lady Audley's Secret*
- Ann Brontë - *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

- Charlotte Brontë - *Jane Eyre; Shirley; Villetta*
- Emily Brontë - *Wuthering Heights*
- Rhoda Broughton - *Cometh up as a Flower; Not Wisely, but Too Well*
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning - *Aurora Leigh* (a novel in verse)
- Frances Hodgson Burnett - *The Secret Garden* (this is a children's book)
- Marie Corelli - *The Sorrows of Satan, Thelma.*
- Dinah Maria Craik - *John Halifax, Gentleman; Mistress and Maid, a Household Story*
- Mary Cholmondeley - *Red Pottage*
- George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans) - *Middlemarch; Mill on the Floss; Adam Bede*
- Elizabeth Gaskell - *Cranford; Wives and Daughters; North and South*
- Sarah Grand - *The Heavenly Twins*
- Harriet Martineau - *Dearbrook*
- Margaret Oliphant - *Miss Marjoribanks*
- Ouida (Louise de la Ramée) - *Strathmore*
- Mary Shelley - *Lodore, Falkner*
- Charlotte Mary Yonge - *The Heir of Redclyffe; Heartsease*
- Ellen Wood (Mrs. Henry Wood) - *East Lynne*

Course Structure and Rhythm

Course Structure/Rhythm. This class is organized around **weekly Canvas modules**. For our purposes the week begins on Thursday and the last day to turn in any assignments for the week will be the next Wednesday. Here is what to expect:

Your **assigned readings** during the first half of the term will be from the anthology focusing on six themes that referred to or defined women's lives and writing in the Victorian Period: "Women Writers and Women as Writers," "The Position of Women," "Marriage," "Love," "Education and Employment," and "Women's Challenges and Sorrows." During the second half of the term we will read poems by writers such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and Michael Field (Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper). Each week will have other planned activities or due dates; here's an overview:

Graded class activities:

1. Zoom meetings--two required, five optional but recommended, accruing extra credit
2. Video lectures/Skeletal Outlines
3. Assigned readings with Reading Guides
4. Weekly Wrap-Ups
5. Oral Midterm and Final Exams
6. Term Project with numerous deliverables:
 - Meetings with Research Librarian and Dr. Ross
 - Initial Research Report with bibliography
 - Preliminary and Revised Plan and Outline

- Check-in meeting with Dr. Ross
- Final Draft
- Commentary on one classmate's project

Here are the details:

1. Two required and five optional class meetings via Zoom: On the first Thursday of the semester, August 24th, there will be a required Zoom sessions starting at 6:30 PM during which we talk about the course expectations and get to know each other. During the rest of the semester, I will open my zoom room every other Thursday--Weeks 3, 5, 7, (*not* Week 9, because of the Career Conference), Week 10, Week 12-- at 5 PM during which time we talk about the readings, and you will receive new instruction. "Skeletal Outlines" will be provided. Attendance at the optional meetings counts as extra credit and can help not only your learning, but your final course average.

2. During the off weeks without zoom meetings, you will find **instructional videos** posted on Canvas. These will include **Skeletal Outlines** to help you keep track of the important information in the lectures.

3. As noted above, your **assigned readings** during the first half of the term will be from the anthology focusing on themes that referred to or defined women's lives and writing in the Victorian Period: "Women Writers and Women as Writers," "The Position of Women," "Marriage," "Love," "Education and Employment," and "Women's Challenges, Women's Sorrows." During the second half of the term we will read poems by writers such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina Rossetti, and Michael Field (Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper).

All readings will be accompanied by **Reading Guides** (formerly "Class Preparation Assignments" or CPAs), which offer guiding comments or questions to help you get the most out of the assigned readings. You are expected to respond to at least 75% of the reading guides and will receive a grade of "Complete" or "Incomplete" on each. Your grade for this part of the course will depend on the number you complete (e.g.: If you complete 85% of them, you will receive a B for this part of the course).

4. Weekly work and Wrap-Ups. Whether we meet via zoom or not, most weeks will end with brief required assignments on Canvas designed to help you wrap up the week's work, deepen your knowledge, and/or practice relevant skills. These might include writing a short, focused reflection; posing one or two "burning questions;" taking a brief spot quiz; or posting a short video. The grades for each of these activities will be a letter grade (A for insightful and explicit, B for competent, C for acceptable, and D for slapdash or incomplete--I will explain the criteria for these assessment in greater detail each week). There are 14 weeks; you are expected to complete as many of these as possible, however, everyone is allowed to drop one week or the equivalent without penalty.

5. Oral Midterm and Final Exams--via zoom, arranged at mutually convenient times in Week 7, October 2-8, lasting approximately 20 minutes and in Exam Week, December 4-8, lasting approximately 20 minutes)-. You will be given some of the questions ahead of time; they will cover the themes and genres we have studied over the semester. I suggest you create Study Teams to practice doing oral question and answer sessions prior to the scheduled exams.

6. Term Project. See this [Page:](#) for details and due dates for deliverables. Mrs. Dubre and I will work closely with you along the way and have set up a schedule of due dates ("deliverables") to help you keep on track. Because the three options are a critical paper, an educational digital project, or a creative piece, you are encouraged to meet with other specialists--in education, digital design, podcasting, and creative work.

Assessment and Weights for each part of the course

Skills Self-Assessments: day one, midterm, end of term (complete/incomplete) 5%

Reading Guides (complete/incomplete, grade based on % completed) 15%

Weekly Canvas assignments (graded: A (thoughtful and explicit); B (competent); C (acceptable); D (slapdash or incomplete): 15%

Oral Midterm examination (graded) 15%

Term Project (intermediate deliverables and the final product (30%)

Oral Final examination (graded, 20%)

Skills and Learning Objectives

During this course you will be asked to gain, review, improve, and/or practice the following skills:

- The ability to take useful notes on lectures and readings and to develop the habit of revising and reviewing them often. [Notes on taking notes.](#)
- The ability to recognize, interpret, and evaluate the important themes or messages of texts in verse and prose. This includes those in course lectures.
- The ability to recognize the organizational structures writers use to manage different genres (in poetry,[\[1\]](#) non-fiction,[\[2\]](#) novels[\[3\]](#)) and be able to use them to organize their critical appraisal texts.
- The ability to recognize how artistry or craft employed in poetry (word choice, images, sounds, meter), prose non-fiction (organization, transitions, word choice,

argument, appeals), and novels (settings in time and place, plot, characterization, organization, etc.) adds meaning and force to those texts.

- The ability to become aware of and familiar with the historical and cultural contexts that energize or constrain writers, but particularly women writers in the Victorian Period
- The ability to compare certain Victorian cultural norms and beliefs apparent in the works we study to those in our own time
- The ability to ask questions, answer questions, or express your ideas or beliefs orally or in the digital environment
- The ability to plan and present a critical, educational, or creative [term project](#) about a selected novel by a woman writer of the period that demonstrates your learning and skills. This will be done in regular consultation with your professor and will require the following tasks:
 1. To wisely/carefully/strategically select a novel written in the Victorian Period by a woman for this project
 2. To apply critical skills to a reading of that text.
 3. To find, understand, and cite biographical and scholarly articles about your chosen writer and her novel.
 4. To produce a concise biographical sketch of the writer of your chosen novel that includes references to the world in which she lived and wrote.
 5. To produce a work of literary criticism, digital pedagogy, or creative communication appropriate for its intended audience (academia, age group of students, literary market) based upon your reading of your chosen novel
 6. To explain how this work comments upon cultural or behavioural norms for women in the Victorian Period
 7. To state the value of this work product for its intended audience.

[1] These include but are not limited to line length, stanzas and other structures such as octaves and sestets in sonnets.

[2] These include but are not limited to paragraphs, transitions, and repetitions.

[3] These include but are not limited to epigraphs, chapters and chapter titles, books and book titles, plotting (rising action, crisis, denouement, subplots).

THE TERM PROJECT

Term Project: By the 13th week of the semester, students will turn in either a **critical essay**, **educational digital project**, or **creative work based on a novel written by one of the Victorian women writers on the list provided below**. Use this list of writers and their novels. See also [Novel Notes](#) [Download Novel Notes](#). link needed

A novel of your choice selected from the list below to be used for the term project (description follows). All of these novels—and more by some of these writers—are available on Amazon. You are welcome to go outside of this list, but please consult me before you make a final decision. I will provide brief notes about each of these writers and her novel(s) to help you choose.

- Mary Elizabeth Braddon - *Lady Audley's Secret*
- Ann Brontë - *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*
- Charlotte Brontë - *Jane Eyre; Shirley; Vilette*
- Emily Brontë - *Wuthering Heights*
- Rhoda Broughton - *Cometh up as a Flower; Not Wisely, but Too Well*
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning - *Aurora Leigh (a novel in verse)*
- Frances Hodgson Burnett - *The Secret Garden (this is a children's book)*
- Marie Corelli - *popular novels The Sorrows of Satan, Thelma.*
- Dinah Maria Craik - *John Halifax, Gentleman; Mistress and Maid, a Household Story*
- Mary Cholmondeley - *Red Pottage*
- George Eliot (*Mary Anne Evans*) - *Middlemarch; Mill on the Floss; Adam Bede*
- Elizabeth Gaskell - *Cranford; Wives and Daughters; North and South*
- Sarah Grand - *The Heavenly Twins*
- Harriet Martineau, *Dearbrook*
- Margaret Oliphant - *Miss Marjoribanks*
- Ouida (Louise de la Ramée) - *Strathmore*
- Mary Shelley - *Lodore, Falkner*
- Charlotte Mary Yonge - *The Heir of Redclyffe; Heartsease*
- Ellen Wood (Mrs. Henry Wood) - *East Lynne*

Once you choose your writer and her novel, please research her life and career and the novel's critical reception. Ms. Dubre has posted research tutorials for you, and she will meet with each of you individually to help you with this part of the project. Start reading the novel before you decide which of the three options—a critical paper, an educational digital product, or a creative work. Here are some things to consider in making your choice:

If you choose to write a critical essay, your **audience** will be literary scholars, particularly those interested in historical and/or cultural approaches. The following pieces should be included:

- a) an introductory paragraph stating an argument about some aspect of the novel,
- b) a brief sketch of the life and career of your chosen novelist,

- c) a survey of critical reception of your chosen novel,
- d) a well-reasoned, organized, and supported argument,
- e) a concluding statement about the value of this writer or novel to literary studies and/or the modern student.

Length: The length of this paper will depend on your research, the amount of work that has been done on this writer/novel, and the nature of your argument. It should be no less than 12 pages. The **bibliography** should include all texts you used, not just the works cited.

If you choose to do an educational digital project, your **audience** will be the learners you want to target: K-5 students, high school students, lower division college students, upper division majors, etc. This project should include a **bibliography** that lists all works or individuals you consulted. Depending upon your interests, course work in digital media and technology, and your skills or interest in developing skills in technical matters, you might choose to create

- a) an educational podcast
- b) a website about the author, the novel, and women writers
- c) a digital game based on the novel

You are encouraged to consult with professors and others who specialize in digital media or technology. See also the attached documents that provide general guidelines for podcast, website, and game design. **Length:** The length of podcasts should range between 20 and 40 minutes. The website should cover the material—and be substantial, visually appealing with engaging links, visuals and/or audio. When we meet to talk about your progress, we can determine how “long” it should be. You should be sure to cite all digital materials properly and please include a **bibliography** that lists all works or individuals you consulted, not just those cited

If you choose to do a creative project, you also have various choices. Your **audience** will be the contemporary reading public. These might include

- a) revising the plot of the novel for a different outcome
- b) imagining scenes in your novel that are referenced but not included,
- c) inventing or reinventing a character,
- d) imagining a children’s or adolescents’ book based on the novel,
- e) writing a treatment of the novel for a film,
- f) imagining a prequel or sequel.
- g) a sonnet sequence based on the relationship between characters.

Please consult with me and, if possible, with one of our creative writing instructors such as Dr. Jessup or Professor Blake. **Length:** Impossible to predict, but “Substantial.” We can decide upon what is “enough” when we have our conferences.

Term Project Deliverables and Due Dates:

1. **Evidence** of meeting with Ms. Dubre (post on Canvas Week 3, by 9/13)
2. **Brief written report** of research on the life and career of your chosen writer and survey of the critical reception of the novel you have chosen (post on Canvas Week 5, by 9/27) with Working Bibliography or consultations report (if you confer with education, digital media, or creative writing specialists)
3. **Evidence** of Week 5/6 consult with Dr. Ross (post on Canvas Week 5/6, no later than October 4)
4. **Extra credit: Evidence** of consults or research on digital or creative projects (post on Canvas Week 8, no later than October 18)
5. **Preliminary project plan w/ outline** (post on Canvas Week 8 or 9, not later than October 25)
6. **Evidence** of Week 10 or 11 project check-in w/ Dr. Ross (post on Canvas, by November 8)
7. **Revised project plan w/ outline** (post on Canvas Week 11, by November 8)
8. **Final draft of critical paper, digital product, or creative product** (post on Canvas Week 13), November 27
9. **Commentary** on at least one of your classmates’ projects (post on Canvas Week 14, no later than December 3)

Satisfactory answers to questions about your project on the Oral Exam (Week 15, dates arranged according to

Schedule of Readings, Reading Guides, and other deliverables

ALL Details about text assignments and links to the Reading Guides and Weekly Wrap-Ups are in the weekly modules on our CANVAS site

Before class starts: Getting to know each other: A Questionnaire due by Thu Aug. 17, 11:59 pm

Week 1, Aug. 24-30

Thu Aug 24, 2023: Attend Required Zoom Class: August 24, 5-6 PM

Due by or before Weds, Aug. 30 at 11:59 PM:

Skills Self Assessment #1

Week 1 Skeletal Outline Lecture 1: Romantic to Victorian

Week 1. Assigned Reading and Reading Guide: Women Writers and Women as Writers.

Week 1 Wrap-Up August 30

Week 2, Aug 31, to Sept. 6

Thu Aug 31, 2023:

Video Lecture 1: The Position of Women due by 11:59 pm

Due by or before Weds, Sept. 6 at 11:59 PM:

Report author/novel choice to Dr. Ross

Week 2 Skeletal Outline for Module 2, Lecture 1: The Position of Women

Week 2. Assigned Reading and Reading Guide: The Position of Women

Week 2 Wrap-Up Sept 6

Week 3, Sept. 7 to 13

Thu Sep 7, 2023: Recommendation: Attend Zoom class Week 3, September 7, 5- 6 PM, Theme 3: Marriage

Due by or before Wed Sep 13, 2023, 11:59 PM

Ms. Dubre Consult

Week 3 Skeletal Outline of Class Lecture/Discussion of Theme 3: Marriage

Week 3. Assigned Reading and Reading Guide: Marriage

Week 3 Wrap-Up Sept. 13

Week 4, Sept. 14 to 20

Thu Sep 14, 2023:

Video Lecture 1: Education

Week 4 Spot Quiz

Week 4 Skeletal Outline Module 4, Lecture 1: Education and work of women

Week 4. Assigned Reading and Reading Guide: Education and Employment

Week 4 Wrap-Up Sept. 20

Week 5, Sept. 21 to 27

Thu Sep 21, 2023: Recommendation: Attend Zoom class, Week 5, September 21, Theme 5:
Family and Daily Life due by 5 pm

Due by or before Wed Sep 27, 2023, 11:59 PM

Research on life & critical reception of your writer/novel d

Week 5. Assigned Reading and Reading Guide: The Family and Daily Life of Women

Week 5 Wrap-Up Sept. 27

Week 6, Sept. 28 to Oct. 4

Thursday, Sept 28:

Video Lecture on Prosody and Victorian Love Poems

By or before: Wed Oct 4, 2023, 11:59 PM

Skeletal Outline for Lecture on Prosody and Love poems

Project Consult w/ Dr. Ross

Week 6. Assigned Reading and Reading Guide: Poetry on Love

Week 6 Wrap-Up Oct 4

Week 7, Oct. 5 to 9: Thu Oct 5, 2023: Attend Required Zoom Class October 5, 5-6 PM, more on Prosody and Poems about Marriage.

Due by or before: Mon Oct 9, 2023, 11: 59 PM

Skeletal Outline of Lecture on Prosody and Poems about Marriage

Midterm Exam with Skills Self-Assessment

Week 7 Wrap-Up Oct. 9

Week 8, October 12-18:

Video Lecture on Poetry about Family

Assigned reading and Reading Guide for Poems about Family

Extra credit: digital or creative consult for project

Week 8 Checklist and Wrap-Up Oct. 18

Week 9, October 19-25

Week 9 Reading and Reading Guide on Women's Challenges, Women's Sorrows

Lecture on Poems about Women's Challenges and Sorrows

Preliminary Project Plan and Outline due

Week 9 Checklist and Wrap-Up Oct. 25

Week 10, October 26-November 1: Recommendation to attend Zoom discussion about Elizabeth Barrett Browning and her poetry

Assigned reading and Reading Guide for Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Follow-up consult with Dr. Ross about your project

Week 10 Checklist and Wrap-Up Nov. 1

Week 11, November 2-8

Assigned Reading of poetry of Christina Rossetti and Reading Guide

Check in with Dr. Ross about project, if you didn't do so last week

Turn in your Revised Project Plan and Outline

Week 11 Checklist and Wrap-Up Nov. 8

Week 12 November 9-15

Lecture about the poetry of Michael Field (Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper)

Reading and Reading Guide of Michael Field's writings

Week 12 Checklist and Wrap-Up Nov. 15

Week 13, November 16-26, includes Thanksgiving Holiday

Final Draft of Research Project due Nov. 27

Week 13 Checklist and Wrap-Up Nov. 27

Week 14, November 27-Dec. 3: Recommended to attend Zoom class Nov. 30 at 6 PM

Commentaries on classmate's projects due Dec. 4

Week 14 Checklist and Wrap-Up Nov. 30

EXAM WEEK: Thursday, December 7 Final Self-Assessment and Exam Questions