

---

Professor John Olmsted  
Rice 108  
Office Hours: TuTh 4:30-5:30 p.m.  
and by appt.  
Phone: 775-8582  
E-mail: [John.Olmsted@oberlin.edu](mailto:John.Olmsted@oberlin.edu)

---

Texts:

Emily Bronte, **Wuthering Heights**. 1847.  
Charlotte Bronte, **Jane Eyre**. 1847.  
W. M. Thackeray, **Vanity Fair**. 1847-48.  
Charles Dickens, **David Copperfield**. 1849-50.  
Carol Christ, ed. **The Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Victorian Age**.  
Eighth edition, volume E (page numbers in the 7<sup>th</sup> edition are also listed in  
parentheses in the class schedule)

---

**Aims of the Course:**

Our aim in this course is to become more alert and responsive readers of fiction and poetry written in mid-nineteenth-century England. We will place the works in their biographical, social and cultural context, giving considerable emphasis to the demands and opportunities of parts publication, the function of illustration in the novels, and the evolving debates about male and female authorship. Lectures will provide contextual information and tentative readings, but each participant will forge individual responses in the weekly journals and in class discussion. The ultimate aim of the course is to provide you with a reading list for the rest of your lives and the skills to be subtle and emotionally involved readers.

**Course policies and requirements:**

Since we meet only twice a week and have a good deal of material to cover, it is essential that you not miss classes. I don't believe in checking up on adults, but I do know from experience that people who miss classes write uninformed journals, receive poor grades and are generally, as the Victorians would say, bound for the gutter.

People who come late to class will earn my moral disapproval and lose the esteem of their colleagues. I will try desperately not to let my personal feelings on this issue intrude into my evaluation of your work, but so far I've been unable to do this.

Each Tuesday you will give me a two- to five-page journal, typed, proofread and elegantly expressed in full (in all senses of the word) sentences. Each journal will discuss the texts assigned for that week and reflect on the discussions of the previous week. The implication of these assignments is that you will have done all of the reading for that week before you come to the Tuesday class, and that you will have attended to and reflected on the discussions of the previous week. The discipline of the weekly paper is hard to get used to at first, but most participants in the course adapt quickly to the format and enjoy having a course where writing and reading are spread evenly over the entire semester. Late journals will be downgraded.

---

### **Class Schedule:**

#### **Week of**

September 3 "The Victorian Age 1830-1901," Norton, 979-1001 (1043-1065).  
Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott," "Locksley Hall" and  
"Ulysses," Norton. William Holman Hunt painting on the cover  
of the Norton anthology, paintings after pg. 1396 of 8<sup>th</sup> edition

September 10 Tennyson, "Ask Me No More" and "Now Sleeps the Crimson  
Petal," Norton.  
Tennyson, **In Memoriam**, poems number 1, 3, 5, 7, 34, 56, 82, 95,  
119, 130, and Epilogue

September 17 Browning, "Porphyria's Lover," "The Laboratory."  
Christina Rossetti, 1459-1481,(1583-1605)  
Emily Bronte, 1311-1317,(1418-1425)  
**Wuthering Heights**

September 24 **Wuthering Heights**

October 1 **Wuthering Heights**  
From Norton, George Eliot, 1334-1349, (1456-1469), "The  
Woman Question", 1719-1739, (1719-1739), John Stuart Mill,  
1060-1070, (1155-1165)

October 8 The madwoman on the main floor  
**Jane Eyre**

October 15 **Jane Eyre**

October 22           **FALL BREAK**

October 29           The world made from within  
Arnold, 1355-1358, (1479-1482), 1368-1374,(1492-1498)  
**Vanity Fair**

November 5           **Vanity Fair**

November 12**Vanity Fair**

November 19 “These pages must show”  
                          Masculine heroism in **David Copperfield**

November 26**David Copperfield**

December 3           **David Copperfield**  
                          Browning, “Andrea del Sarto”

December 10         Retrospect