

SYLLABUS: ENGLISH 317, LATE VICTORIAN FICTION IN CONTEXT

Spring 2004, meets MWF 11-11:50, King 339
Kathie Linehan, Rice 10, ext. 8578
Office hours Spring 2004: Mon. 4:30-5:30 and Thurs 3-4

This course studies major late Victorian fiction alongside selected poems and prose of the period as a basis for exploring the novel's responsiveness to late Victorian debate over such topics as feminism, aestheticism, and democratization. (Victoria reigned 1837-1901; this class considers novels published between 1872 and 1895.) The class will be taught by a combination of lecture and discussion. Your participation in the course requires engaged class attendance; more than three unexcused absences will affect your grade. It also requires on-time submission of a series of short Cr/NE prep papers (1-2 pages unless length is otherwise specified. Most preps are shown on this syllabus; a few others may be assigned along the way). Other requirements are: a 2-3 page Cr/NE "Victorian periodicals" assignment, a graded 6-7 page midterm paper, a graded 6-7 page final paper, and an in-class final exam. (For further information on course requirements, see p. 6 of this syllabus.)

TEXTS: The Victorian Age (abbreviated below as TVA): The Norton Anthology of English Literature, 7th ed.
George Eliot, Middlemarch, (Penguin)
Robert Louis Stevenson, Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (Norton Critical Edition)
George Gissing, The Odd Women (Norton)
Thomas Hardy, Jude the Obscure (Norton Critical Edition)

NB: WE WILL NOT BE READING Robert Louis Stevenson's The Beach of Falesa

SCHEDULE :

M Feb 9 Introduction (and check on prereq)
W Feb 11 Topic: "These later-born Therasas": the Woman Question in Dorothea's day (time of novel's action, 1829) and George Eliot's (time of Middlemarch publication, 1872)
First read in TVA, paying attention to DATES:
1) from Cassandra (Nightingale, wr. 1852), **pp.1734-3**: mid-century frustration of an ambitious nonconformist
2) from The Women of England (Ellis, 1839), **pp. 1721-23**: popular early-Victorian ideology of woman's role
3) from The Subjection of Women (Mill, 1869), **bottom of p. 1155 to middle of p. 1161**: later Victorian rallying cry to feminism
Then read Middlemarch, **Prelude and ch. 1**. In relation to the above excerpts, where do you position Dorothea? By what do you infer George Eliot's own position on any "greatness" in Dorothea, or any lacks in the social system? How is your take on these matters affected by Celia's role as foil to Dorothea?
F Feb 13 Topic: How is your reading of Dorothea and her society shaped by Dorothea's vision of Casaubon?
First read in TVA: "Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft" (Eliot, 1855), **pp. 1454-1461**
Then read Mmch, **ch. 2-5**. COME TO CLASS WITH A MINI-

PREP PAPER (1/2 to 1 page only). Pick a short passage (from a sentence to a paragraph long) in ch. 2-5 which you find especially revealing of Dorothea's psychology in caring for Casaubon or revealing of the underlying psychological or social dynamics of Dorothea's attraction to Casaubon. Quote the passage and briefly explicate its significance. Try to include some attention to the way style helps to deliver the message.

- M Feb 16 **Mmch, ch. 6-12.** We'll focus this class on the sociohistorical picture Eliot is constructing, with attention to issues of class, politics, religion. Come to discussion with questions about what feels foreign or hard to follow in the social picture, and what topical references you're having trouble with. As a warm-up, please make a point of checking Penguin footnotes 4, 9, 11, 12, 16, 17, 23, 26, and 55 (material from ch. 1-12). In this context, we'll also talk about what happens to our reading experience as the novel's social focus broadens.
- W Feb 18 **Mmch, ch. 13-21.** We'll spend part of the class talking about the novel's in-depth introduction of Lydgate, and part about how we re-connect with Dorothea through the description of her state in mind about Rome during her honeymoon. **COME TO CLASS WITH MAJOR PREP PAPER** (2-3 pages) on EITHER of the following two topics:
1) Looking at the function of epigraphs across chapters 1-21, PICK ONE that you think works especially richly to cue you into THAT ONE chapter and explain how the cuing in works, with specific reference to the content of the chapter. Lead into this prep paper with a tentative hypothesis about what functions the epigraphs are performing in the book thus far. (Does their function follow the same general principle in every chapter?)
2) Chapter 20 (Dorothea in Rome) is for many readers one of the most powerful chapters in the novel. If you find it especially effective or well written: where and why?
- F Feb 20 First read in **TVA**, Mill, "Of Individuality as One of the Elements of Well-Being, pp. 1146-55.
Then read **Mmch, ch 22-30**, considering for discussion how the force of custom plays out in the novel, particularly in the two major egoists, Rosamond and Casaubon.
- M Feb 23 **Mmch, ch. 31-38**
W Feb 25 **LIBRARY SESSION:** Victorian periodicals and publication practices. We'll meet on the second floor of **Mudd**, spend about ten minutes browsing Victorian journal locations in the stacks, and then go up to Special Collections. **READ IN ADVANCE: TVA**, "Literacy, Publication, and Reading," pp. 1057-58. Prior to this session I'll hand out the periodicals assignment due March 3rd.
- F Feb 27 **Mmch, ch. 39-45.** Part of the class will focus on a close reading of ch. 42.
- M Mar 1 **Mmch, ch. 46-54**
W Mar 3 **Mmch, ch. 55-62.** Victorian periodicals assignment due.
F Mar 5 **Mmch, ch. 63-70**

- M Mar 8 **Mmch, ch. 71-80**
- W Mar 10 **Mmch, ch. 81-Finale. Prep paper due.** Topic TBA.
- F Mar 12 “Markheim” and Victorian sensation fiction, **NCE Strange Case, pp. 105-123.** In class, I’ll also give you some background on George Eliot’s Gothic tale, “The Lifted Veil.”
- M Mar 15 **NCE Strange Case, pp. 1-47** (from title page to the beginning of “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case). Discussion will focus on what Stevenson is accomplishing through STYLE (point of view, atmosphere, imagery) in this long build-up to the tale’s famous denouement. In preparation for the March 19 and 22 classes (see below), please ALSO, AS YOU ARE DOING YOUR FIRST READING, WATCH for elements in the story of interest to you that might apply to any one of the four topic choices you’ll have for the Jekyll and Hyde group workshops and symposium (which may turn out to provide a basis for your mid-term paper). I’ll ask you in this class to sign up for one of the four interpretive groups listed below for March 19.
- W Mar 17 **NCE Strange Case, pp. 47-62** (final section of the tale). What effect does Jekyll’s account have on you? Do you find it in any way unclear or untrustworthy? Are the shifts between “he” and “I” consistent? What ideas do you have about the logic behind Stevenson’s creation of a plot in which Jekyll’s alter ego goes out of control (his take-over transformations, his turn towards “the monstrous”)? What interpretive hypotheses might work best for the story as a whole? As we take steps towards answering that last question, **please also read pp. 80-91** (RLS letters and account of composition), **pp. 124-26** (Miller, *The Modern Double*), **pp. 146-9** (Houghton, *Hypocrisy*), and **pp. 184-88** (Nabokov, *A Phenomenon of Style*).
- F Mar 19 **In-class group discussion workshops. Come having read and thought about the NCE readings listed below for whichever of the four groups you’ve signed up for.** Also remember that you may want to include attention to readings assigned for March 17.
- 1) J&H as a critique of Victorian society. What in the story connects effectively with reading the tale as a critique of late Victorian society—and a critique of WHAT in that society? Hypocrisy? Class privilege? Urban commercialism and anonymity? As background, read in NCE (and be prepared to defend your choice of what you find most valuable here): **p. 100** (Wedgwood, *The Individualizing Influence of Modern Democracy*), **pp. 141-44** (Walkowitz, *London in the 1880s*), and **pp. 197-204** (Brantlinger, *An Unconscious Allegory about the Masses and Mass Literacy*).
 - 2) J&H as Gothic fiction, revolving around horror and possibility of the supernatural. What’s the case for seeing this tale first and foremost as a “shocker” in the Gothic tradition of what critics have variously called “the return of the repressed,” or “fantasies and fears of releasing desire from social constraints”? Is it

possible to say (or does it matter) WHAT repressed element or desire is at the bottom of this? Hedonism? Sadism? Taboo sexuality, such as whoring, child prostitution, or homosexuality? The creative or dreaming powers of the subconscious? As background, read in NCE (and be prepared to defend your choice of what is most valuable here) **pp. 128-131** (Halberstam, An Introduction to Gothic Monstrosity), **pp. 138-140** (Symonds, This Aberrant Inclination in Myself), **pp. 189-197** (Garrett, Instabilities of Meaning, Morality, and Narration).

3) J&H as Science Fiction. With Jekyll is clearly interpretable as a mad scientist and this tale is published at a time when science is increasingly seen as a challenge to religion: what's the case for reading it as sci fi? What scientific reference points work best? Social Darwinist notions about atavism, i.e., that humans carry a potential for regression to a barbaric, purely animal nature? The bridging of frontiers between chemistry and biology involved the creations of new life forms? (Consider *Frankenstein*.) New medical understandings of the process of addiction? New psychological interest in phenomena of multiple states of personality or consciousness? As background, read in NCE (and be prepared to defend your choice of what is most valuable here) **pp. 96-98** (from The Times of London), **p. 99** (relevant portion of Symonds letter), and **133-38** (Gould, Post-Darwinian Theories of the Ape Within; Myers, Multiplex Personality; Kerr, Abject Slaves to the Narcotic). Also recommended: TVA, 1689-90 (conclusion of selection from Darwin's The Descent of Man, his 1871 follow-up to his landmark 1859 On the Origin of the Species).

4) J&H as a moral or theological allegory. What's the argument for reading this tale as an object lesson in morality? In what sense is Jekyll immoral? Is the ending best understood as a nemesis for wrongdoing? Do biblical references play into this, or associations of Hyde with Satan? As background, read in NCE (with no obligation to make use in the long run of my own essay!) **pp 102-4** (Rev. Nicholson on J&H), **126-28** (Calder, Stevenson's Scottish Devil Tales), **183-4** (Chesterton, The Real Stab of the Story), **204-13** (Linehan, Sex, Secrecy and Self-Alienation.)

NB: IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY MADE THE PUSH ON DRAFTING YOUR MID-TERM PAPER, HEY! THIS IS YOUR BIG WEEK-END!!

M Mar 22 Jekyll and Hyde symposium. Format? Maybe on 3/20 the discussion groups will work out one or two major lines of argument per group and designate symposium presenters; then on 3/22 we could have presentations for 30 min. followed by discussion.

W Mar 24 NO CLASS; I'll keep extra office hours for conferences on papers Tuesday and Wednesday of this week.

F Mar 26 Topic: female transformation through sensual temptation. TVA, pp. 1589-1601 (Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market"); also read **pp. 1583-84** (background on Christina Rossetti).

NB: 6-7 PAGE MIDTERM PAPER ON MIDDLEMARCH OR STRANGE

CASE OF DR J & MR H DUE BY 4:30 PM ON FRIDAY, MARCH 26

SPRING BREAK!! REJOICE!!!!!!

- M Apr 5 Topic: the turn towards aestheticism, Hellenism, sensuality.
TVA, “The Late Period” and “The Nineties,” pp. 1052-55
Introduction to Swinburne, ‘Choruses’ from Atalanta in Calydon” and “Hymn to Proserpine” (1865-66). pp. 1621-28, Focus on “Hymn to Proserpine.” Also, read background on the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and skim D.G. Rossetti’s poetry, pp. 1573-82.
- W Apr 7 Topic: Pater and Hopkins: style as sensation
TVA, “Walter Pater” and “from The Renaissance (Pater, 1873), pp. 1636-1644
“Gerard Manley Hopkins” plus poems and journal (wr. 1866-89), pp. 1649-61.
PREP PAPER: apply “style as sensation” to text of choice
- F Apr 9 Topic: Aestheticism against a background of harsh realities
TVA, “The Nineties,” 1740-41
Oscar Wilde: intro, poetry, Preface, De Profundis, pp. 1747-51, 1760-61, 1805-08
“If You’re Anxious for to Shine” pp. 1676-77
“Struggle for Existence” (Darwin, 1859), pp. 1679-81
“White Slavery” and “Living Wage” (Besant, 1888 and Chew, 1894), 1715-1719
Kipling poems, pp. 1888-94 plus “Rudyard Kipling” pp. 1863-64
“How I Became a Socialist” (Morris, 1894), pp. 1618-21 plus “William Morris,” pp. 1605-6
- M Apr 12 Topic: Gissing & the Woman Question 20 years after Middlemarch
TVA, 1719-1721, “The Woman Question”
TVA, 1738-39, Walter Besant, from The Queen’s Reign
The Odd Women (Gissing, 1893), ch. 1-4
- Apr 14, 16, 19, 21 Remainder of The Odd Women in four installments (ch. 5-10, 11-17, 18-24, 25-end); one prep paper along the way
- F Apr 23 Jude the Obscure (Hardy, 1895), pp. 9-61 (Pt I At Marygreen)
- M Apr 26 Jude, pp. 62-116 (II-1 through III-3)
- W Apr 28 Jude, pp. 116-164 (III-4 through IV-1)
- F Apr 30 Jude, pp. 164-212 (IV-2 through V-2)
- M May 3 Jude, pp. 212-279 (V-3 through VI-3)
- W May 5 Jude, pp. 279-322 (VI-4 through end); for this class, **also**
Read NCE 329-37 (Slack, Hardy’s Revisions), 340-42 (autobiographical angle on composition and reception), 346-51 (from Hardy’s letters and relevant essays), 358 (“The Recalcitrants”), 359 (“Midnight on the Great Western)
- F May 7 **NCE 377-392**, contemporary reception. What do you find to agree or disagree with in these essays? How do you read the readers; i.e., what picture do you get of the 1895-96 audience for

the serious social realist or naturalist novel?

M May 10 Playreading session: TVA, 1761-1777, The Importance of Being Earnest, Act One. For end-of-semester parlor games, imagine bringing into Algernon's morning room Dorothea Brooke, Henry Jekyll, Rhoda Nunn, or Jude Fawley.

W May 12 NO CLASS; I'll be available for CONFERENCES ON DRAFTS

F May 14 Review session and course evaluations

**NB SECOND 7 PAGE PAPER DUE MAY 15, OR MAY 18 AT LATEST
(NO EXTENSIONS POSSIBLE WITHOUT AUTHORIZED INCOMPLETE)**

THURSDAY, MAY 20, 7 P.M.: TWO HOUR IN-CLASS FINAL EXAM

FURTHER INFORMATION ON COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1) Graded papers: you can work on a topic of your choosing in relation to any of the novels read in the course. The content of the paper SHOULD NOT HEAVILY OVERLAP what we've covered in lecture or discussion. (You're responsible for knowing what class coverage consists in.)

To make paper-writing easier, especially on the longer works (Middlemarch or Jude), TRACK YOUR READING INTERESTS AS YOU READ FOR CLASS. Underline, talk to yourself in the margin, write down page numbers under topic headings, and all like that there.

You could do purely formal criticism (e.g. examine the craft and point of a particular chapter in a novel as a functional part within the whole; study the purpose of a minor character; analyze interactions of style and meaning in Hopkins' poetry, etc.). You could work from a thematic interest (e.g., compromised feminism in Jude or The Odd Women, the role of murder in the sensation tale). You could respond to a critic after working out your own thesis. Huge range of possibilities. I'll try to make some suggestions as we go.

2) Credit/No Entry assignments (actually Cr+/Cr/Cr-/NE). **Prep papers** are very brief bits of writing (one page, informal) meant to serve as warm-ups to discussion on the day that they're due. So I don't accept them after due date. Missing more than one will affect your grade. The **Victorian periodicals assignment** asks that you either compare two different periodicals for roughly the same date or the same periodical at widely different dates, focussing on tell-tale features of content or format or apparent implied readership.

3) Final exam. Approximately one-fourth short-answer questions, one-fourth best-guess quote identifications (points for good reasons even if inaccurate), and one-half essay questions (you'll choose one of three questions geared to large-scale comparisons). Not so bad as you think! Really!