

*Extraneous information has been excised from this version of the
Spring 2021 ENL6256 syllabus for public review.*

Victorian Literature and Science



Heath, William [alias Paul Pry] (engraver). "Monster Soup commonly called Thames Water." 1828.

While the long nineteenth-century saw the gradual solidification of disciplinary divides between the humanities and the sciences, Gillian Beer reminds us that it was still an era where there was a significant two-way traffic of ideas between literary and scientific thinkers. This course will explore the interchanges between literary and scientific writing of the nineteenth century on topics including (1) the work of natural history, (2) optics and technologies of vision, (3) geology and time, (4) natural selection and evolution, (5) religion and science, (6) scientific ethics, and (7) the laboratory. The class has been designed to increase your knowledge of Victorian literature and science studies and take into consideration some pedagogical approaches that may be of value to you in your future professional life.

Our class will meet **asynchronously from 12:50pm to 1:30pm** and **synchronously via Zoom from 1:30pm to 3:50pm**. During the asynchronous section of our class meeting from 12:50 to 1:30pm, you are expected to (1) watch the mini-lecture for the week, (2) read over the short reading

Rae X. Yan
University of Florida
ENL6256
Spring 2021

response assignments posted by your classmates and (3) free-write a reply to one of your classmate's posts. Synchronous classes will be divided between instruction (mini-lectures and mini-workshops) and class discussions on our primary readings, with heavy focus placed on seminar-style discussion as a way to promote your development as a thinker and educator.

Our Semester During the COVID-19 Global Pandemic

The way we would usually communicate, learn, teach, and just *be* have been dramatically impacted by COVID-19. With that in mind, I have tried to slow down aspects of what I usually teach to give us more time to breathe, dig more deeply into our readings, and recognize the limitations on our attentions and bodies during this time. I know some of you are experiencing situations that affect your ability to stay engaged with the class, you may be the caretaker for family members or friends during classtime, and/or you may need to care for your health or others.

You are encouraged to:

- ask me for clarity, to repeat myself, or to answer a question that may have been asked before
- request extensions on any assignment before their due dates
- take a day off from class during any point in the semester for your personal needs (but please email me to let me know you are safe)
- take a break during a synchronous class session and get air, stretch, get a drink of water, eat, use the restroom, etc.
- tend to a family member or friend in need of care as you participate in class

Let us try our best and make it a goal to be gracious and support each other.

Primary Materials

Primary Works

- Lyell, Charles. *Principles of Geology*. 1830-33. Edited by James A. Secord. Penguin, 1997.
- Robert Chambers' *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844)
- Alfred Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850)
- G.H. Lewes' *Sea-Side Studies* (1858)
- Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859)
- George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871/2)

Rae X. Yan
University of Florida
ENL6256
Spring 2021

- A. S. Byatt's *Possession: A Romance* (1990)
- Wilkie Collins *Heart and Science* (1882)
- H.G. Wells' *The Invisible Man* (1897)

Expect on average between 300 pages of primary text fiction/non-fiction reading and 20-30 pages of literary criticism per week. Literary critical readings for this course will be supplied to you as either a link or a PDF in Canvas Course Reserves and/or Files.

Assignments

I. Self-Evaluation Letters and Meetings (3 letters, 2 meetings)

You are required to write 3 letters of self-evaluation this term and schedule 2 meetings with Professor Yan this semester.

- **Letter 1** should (a) outline your concrete and specific research, teaching, and/or writing goals for the work you complete in this class and (b) include a set of self-made rubrics for each assignment this semester that shows how you want to be evaluated with your goals in mind.
- **Letter 2** should address (a) how you are meeting the goals that you outlined in your first letter, (b) a self-assessment of your work thus far that utilizes the rubrics you created from Letter 1, and (c) a clear and specific statement about what kind of final writing project you will complete for the Final Written Project due 4/21 this semester and a rubric for how the assignment should be graded.
- **Letter 3 / Final Self-Evaluation Letter** should address (a) whether you feel you have met all the goals that you outlined earlier this semester, (b) a plan for how you will utilize the assignments you have completed for future projects (teaching/writing) in the next year, and (c) a letter grade you would assign for yourself based on a self-evaluation using the rubrics you created from Letter 1.

You are required to schedule office hour meetings with Professor Yan within 2 weeks of submitting both Letters 1 and 2 to discuss and clarify your self-assessments.

Self-evaluation letters should be submitted as Word documents and are due to my email address (raeyan@ufl.edu) by midnight on 2/19, 3/19, and 4/21. The final self-evaluation letter should be included alongside your final paper submission.

II. Short Reading Responses w/ 2 Discussion Questions (7 per semester, 400-600 words each)

To stay engaged with each week's readings and develop ideas for future projects, you will be required to write 7 out of 12 possible short reading responses this semester. Each reading

Rae X. Yan
University of Florida
ENL6256
Spring 2021

response should total between 400-600 words, include 2 open-ended discussion questions that we could possibly explore during class, and be posted before our class sessions by 12:50pm. Your short reading response can take the form of a close-reading, a reflection on a particular theme/concept, a research-based contextualization—the goal is that your short reading response should be of use to you for a future work, i.e. as the basis for a mini-lecture for teaching or as a section of a larger writing project. Include the page numbers of passages that you reference or quote in your writing.

Your 2 open-ended discussions questions should be related to your reading response and help open up seminar discussion either by provoking debate, inviting reflection on other sections of our reading, or suggesting specific passages or sections of the novel classmates should reevaluate.

Post completed short reading responses to the appropriate thread in Canvas Discussions by 12:50pm.

III. Free-writes to Short Reading Responses (by 1:30pm of every class with readings, no word limit)

As an asynchronous assignment, you are required to read over your colleague's posts and pick 1 post to reply to with a free-written response that will help start off a conversation about your colleague's idea. Free-writing encourages embracing imperfect and incomplete writing. The sole purpose of such an assignment is to encourage you to *begin* thinking about a way to address a classmate's ideas, without particular need to produce a complete, well-composed thought.

There are no limitations to what you could do in the free-writing. For example, you could answer one of the questions in complete sentences; you could write a string of bullet-point words that help you remember what to say during class; you could choose to “reply” with just a list of copy-pasted quotations from our primary text that you think would challenge or promote the ideas of the reading response; you could make a list of other secondary readings that you think would jive well with the ideas from the post.

Post your completed free-writes as replies to a post in the appropriate Canvas Discussion thread by 1:30pm on the day of class.

IV. Recorded Contextual Mini-Lectures (2 per semester, 5-10 minutes each)

Sign-up to create two recorded mini-lectures this semester of 5-10 minutes each to be posted on YouTube. The mini-lectures should be aimed at undergraduate audiences and cover a contextual topic related to either the primary or secondary reading for the week. For example, you may want to consider creating mini-lectures that address biographical, historical, or formal contexts.

The recorded mini-lectures should use appropriate forms of visual rhetoric and take accessibility needs seriously. You must not exceed 3-4 hours in the production of each mini-lecture—the goal

Rae X. Yan
University of Florida
ENL6256
Spring 2021

with this assignment is to develop an efficient system to create such lectures for your future teaching or professional needs.

Post your Contextual Mini-Lecture as Youtube Videos to the appropriate Discussion Thread by 12:50pm on your assigned day.

V. Undergraduate Syllabus

Create a “dream syllabus” for an undergraduate course at the 300/3000-level on Victorian literature. “Dream syllabi” are syllabi of how you, ideally, would construct a course assuming no limitations on the content material you teach. This assignment is meant as an opportunity for you to produce some material for your future teaching portfolios and should be constructed with the goal of presenting yourself professionally on the job market in mind.

The only requirements are as follows:

- The course must have an original title, theme, and course description
- Your syllabus must have a reading list
- You must include a list of your assignments with assignment descriptions
- You must include a Tuesday/Thursday-based Course Schedule
- This course cannot be one you have designed or taught before

Submit your syllabus to Assignments in Canvas by 3:50pm on Friday, 3/19.

VI. Final Written Project

Your end-of-semester final written project is a writing project of your own design and should be constructed in consultation with Dr. Yan and outlined fully in Letter 2 of the self-assessment letters. The project may look different for MFA students than for PhD Students according to the individual students’ specific goals.

The only limitations for this project:

- the project must be directly related to an aspect of our course this semester
- the project must be equivalent in effort and intellectual experimentation to a seminar-length paper of 5000-6000 words

Submit your final written project via email to raeyan@ufl.edu along with your Final Letter of Self-Assessment by Wednesday, April 21st, 11:59pm.

Course Schedule

The schedule for this course is subject to change according to necessity. You will be updated of such changes as soon as they are made. If there is an unexpected class cancellation, you should look for my direct communications.

Week 1: Introductions

Friday, 1/15

- Syllabus review, assignment reviews, planning semester

Week 2: Geology and Time

Friday, 1/22

- Lyell, *Principles of Geology*
 - o in the Penguin read pp. 5-102, 183-333, 436-438
- Zimmerman, Victoria. "The Victorian Geologist: Reading Remains and Writing Time." *Excavating Victorians*. SUNY, 2008, pp. 27-64.

Week 3: Geology and time

Friday, 1/29:

- Tennyson, *In Memoriam*
 - o <https://archive.org/details/inmemoriam00tenrich/page/n11/mode/2up>
- Tomko, Michael. "Varieties of Geological Experience: Religion, Body, and Spirit in Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and Lyell's *Principles of Geology*." *Victorian Poetry*, Vol. 42, No. 2, Summer 2004, pp. 113-134.

Week 4: Religion and Science

Friday, 2/5:

- Chambers, *Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), pp. 1-26, 44-115, 125-323
- Secord, James A. "A Great Sensation." *Victorian Sensation: The Extraordinary Publication, Reception, and Secret Authorship of Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation*. University of Chicago, 2000, pp. 9-40.

Week 5: The Work of Natural History

Friday, 2/12:

- Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Book I (Chapters 1-12)
- Eliot, George. *Quarry for Middlemarch*, edited by Anna Theresa Kitchel, University of California Press, 1950.
 - o <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.39015046379049&view=1up&seq=5>
 - o note: skim the whole text and find 1-3 significant page(s) to discuss during class

Week 6: The Work of Natural History

Friday, 2/19:

- Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Books II, III, and IV (Chapters 13-42)
- Logan, Peter M. "Conceiving the Body: Realism and Medicine in *Middlemarch*." *History of the Human Sciences*, Vol 4., No. 2, 1991, pp. 197-222.
- ***Self-Evaluation Letter 1 Due by Midnight, 2/19***

Week 7: The Work of Natural History

Friday, 2/26

- Eliot, *Middlemarch*, Book V, VI, VII, VIII and Finale (Chapters 43-Finale)
- Beer, Gillian. "George Eliot: *Middlemarch*." *Darwin's Plots: Evolutionary Narrative in Darwin, George Eliot and Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 2nd Edition, Cambridge, 2000, pp. 139-168.

Week 8: Natural Selection and Evolution

Friday, 3/5:

- Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Introduction and Chapters 1-4)
- Griffiths, Devin. "The Origin of Charles Darwin's Orchids." *The Age of Analogy: Science and Literature Between the Darwins*, Johns Hopkins, 2016, pp. 211-257

Week 9: Optics and Technologies of Vision

Friday, 3/12:

- Lewes, *Sea-Side Studies*, Parts I, II, and IV (pp. 1-174, 265-397)
 - o <https://archive.org/details/seasidestudiesat00leweuoft/page/n9>
- Armstrong, Isobel. "The Microscope: Mediations of the Sub-Visible World." *Transactions and Encounters: Science and Culture in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Roger Luckhurst and Josephine McDonagh, Palgrave, 2002, pp. 30-54.
- Coriale, Danielle. "When Zoophytes Speak: Polyps and Naturalist Fantasy in the Age of Liberalism." *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, Vol. 34, No. 1, 2012, pp. 19-36.

Week 10:

Friday, 3/19: asynchronous class day

- ***Undergraduate Syllabus due by 3:50pm on Friday***
- ***Self-Evaluation Letter 2 Due by Midnight, 3/19***

Week 11: Re-Imagining Victorian Literature and Science

Tuesday, 3/26:

- Byatt, *Possession*

Rae X. Yan
University of Florida
ENL6256
Spring 2021

- Shuttleworth, Sally. "Natural History: The Retro-Victorian Novel." *The Third Culture: Literature and Science*, edited by Elinor S. Schaffer, W. de Gruyter, 1997, pp. 253-268.

Week 12: Scientific Ethics

Tuesday, 4/2:

- Collins, *Heart and Science*, Ch I through Ch XXXII (pp. 45-191)
- Broadview sections: Parts II and III from the "Introduction", "Appendix B: The Vivisection Debate of the 1870s and 1880s", "Appendix C: Frances Power Cobbe's Account of the Ferrier Trial" & letter to Frances Power Cobbe from "Appendix D: Letters by Collins Concerning or Mentioning *Heart and Science*" (pp. 13-19, 339-370)

Week 13: Scientific Ethics

Tuesday, 4/9:

- Collins, *Heart and Science* Ch XXXII to Ch LXIII (pp. 191-327)
- Straley, Jessica. "Love and Vivisection: Wilkie Collins's Experiment in *Heart and Science*," *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 65, No. 3, December 2010, pp. 348-373.

Week 14: The Laboratory

Friday, 4/16:

- *Guest Speaker: Dr. Nicole Lobdell, Editor of the Broadview Critical Edition of The Invisible Man*
- Wells, *The Invisible Man*
- Broadview sections on "Invisibility in Nineteenth-Century Fiction" and "Röntgen Rays and Radio Waves" from the Introduction; "Appendix B: Invisibility in Nineteenth-Century Fiction"; & "Appendix F: Technological Contexts: Röntgen Rays and Radio Waves" (pp. 16-20, 175-188, 205-213)

**** Final Project and Final Self-Evaluation Letter Due Wednesday, 4/21 by Midnight****