

*Extraneous information has been excised from this version of the  
Fall 2021 ENL3251 syllabus for public review.*

## ENL3251: Victorian Literature “Victorian Bodies”



*William Powell Frith, “The Railway Station” (1862)*

### Course Description

The Victorian artist William Powell Frith’s 1862 painting “The Railway Station” depicts a variety of bodies meeting and mixing in London’s Paddington Station: railway workers awkwardly shuffle baggage, dogs look around anxiously, a mother kisses her boy as he clutches a cricket bat, a man in a fur coat (assumed to be a Venetian refugee) looks around in confusion, a bridal party prepares their tickets, and several detectives detain a suspect just at the moment he prepares to board a steam locomotive that will transport the travelers hither and thither across Great Britain. The tableau is evocative for the ways in which Frith anticipates the movement of Victorian bodies up and down the class structure, through the countryside and city streets, around the world and back again. Like many Britons who lived during the reign of Queen Victoria from 1837 to 1901, the painter was deeply interested in the proliferation and movement of bodies during this new age and had marked ideas about how he was going to represent the Victorian era. Indeed, the Victorian texts we will read this semester are filled with bodies like those in “The Railway Station”—not to mention many Victorian bodies that Frith leaves out!—alongside anxieties about the kind of *crowdedness* depicted. In the texts we will read this semester, there

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Fall 2021

are bodies old, young, classed, gendered, racialized, pathologized meeting and mixing as chaotically as the passengers in Frith's painting. What did Victorians make of these bodies? Their movements? Their attributes? Their gathering? Their scattering? How did Victorians construct those bodies in their literary works and what are we supposed to make of these bodies as they hustle and bustle into our own imaginations?

## Course Goals

*At the end of the semester, students will have...*

- investigated a diverse selection of Victorian literary fiction, travel writing, essays, political tracts, and scientific treatises
- learned significant aspects of Victorian cultural and social histories of empire, abolition, Darwinism, and more to contextualize the subjects discussed in our readings
- shaped arguments about the array of discourses surrounding Victorian bodies as biologically, culturally, politically, and socially constructed
- formed a foundation of research practices including biographical, historical, and textual analysis
- analyzed a range of relevant literary criticism to help establish a model for research and contextualize the topical matter of our readings

## Content Notice

As you will find, Victorian literature often explores deeply complicated and disturbing subject matter. As a class we will be reading works that feature topics such as child abuse, animal cruelty/death, classism, colorism, homophobia, misogyny, racism and racial slurs, sexual assault, and many other forms of violence. Please prepare yourself knowing that this content will be part of our semester.

## Primary Texts

**You are required to purchase (1) the Norton Critical edition (ISBN number 0393978893 or 978-0393978896) of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*; (2) the Broadview edition (ISBN number 9781554813391 or 1554813395) of Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*.** I have provided you all with links to appropriate digital versions of the other novels and PDFs of additional readings and handouts for our course will also be posted to our Canvas site. I have also put many of these books on reserve for you at Library West. Students should plan to use a laptop or tablet to view materials in class sessions. Ensure your laptops/tablets are charged. If you would like to purchase physical print copies of the other books for this class to read and use in class sessions, I would suggest purchasing either the Penguin Classic or Oxford World Classic editions our readings.

### Primary Victorian Readings

- Alfred Tennyson, “Locksley Hall” (1842), “Break, Break, Break” (1842), “Ulysses” (1842), and “Locksley Hall Sixty Years After” (1886) \*\*\*
- Emily Brontë, [must use *Norton Critical edition* of] *Wuthering Heights* (1847/1850)
- John Ruskin, “The Nature of Gothic” from *Stones of Venice* (1850) \*\*\*
- Henry Mayhew, [we will use *Broadview edition*] *London Labour and the London Poor: Selections* (1851)
- Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Cry of the Children” (1843), “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point” (1848), “Hiram Powers’ Greek Slave” (1850), “A Curse for a Nation” (1854), “A Reed” (1846) and “A Musical Instrument” (1860)
- Elizabeth Gaskell, *Cranford* (1853)
- Lin Zexu, “A Letter of Advice to Queen Victoria” (1839)
- Dinabandhu Mitra, *Nil-Darpan, or, The Indigo Planting Mirror: A Drama* (1861), digital Archive.org edition
  - <https://archive.org/details/nildarpanorindig00mitriala/page/n5>
- Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (1857)
- Charles Darwin, selections from *On the Origin of Species* (1859) \*\*\*
- Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1861)
- Christina Rossetti, “Goblin Market” (1862) \*\*\*

## Assignments

### I. Perusall Annotations (15 complete Perusall assignments by end of semester)

We will use Perusall as a way to develop better close-reading skills for short readings including poems, short stories, and articles. Use the annotation tools to highlight phrases or sentences that interest, bemuse, confuse, anger, or excite you and write notes/comments that make arguments about how to closely-read the textual material. You can also keep track of patterns and themes in the text by creating hashtags (#) in your comments. If you want to ask a question about how to understand something in the text, posit what you think is a possible answer to the question based on your reading of the text’s content/contexts to get in the habit of making interpretive arguments. The 3 major goals for these Perusall annotations are (1) to help you prepare for class discussion, (2) to help you practice close-reading skills, and (3) to develop ideas for your papers. Feel free to engage and write responses to others' annotations by "mentioning" a fellow classmate using the @ symbol with their name. These responses will count towards the number of annotations you need to post for credit if they reflect the kind of careful close-reading and argumentation expected of a regular post.

Each assignment will tell you how many annotations you should expect to include per assignment. You will want to focus on *both* (a) annotating fully (annotating multiple parts of the reading, not just a couple sentences at the beginning of the reading) and (b) providing deeply engaged, well-argued thoughts of 3 sentences or more.

Rae X. Yan  
University of Florida  
ENL3251  
Fall 2021

I will take the scores from the top 15 (out of a total 20) Perusall annotation assignments to determine your final grade for this semester.

Due: submitted by time class starts at 10:40am

Deliverable: 15 Perusall annotation assignments that show deep engagement and thoughtful analysis of the readings

## **II. Interpretive Reading Responses (5 posts of 250-500 words by end of semester)**

For each week where we focus on a longer reading during the semester, you will write a reading response of 250-500 words that makes an original argument about how we should interpret the text based on a close-reading of the textual material. Your argument can either (a) address and cite a single long passage of no more than a page from that week's reading or (b) address and cite many short passages from that week's reading. Make sure you include page number and/or chapter citations for the passages to which you respond. You will need to submit 5 out of a total 8 possible reading responses for credit to this assignment. There are 6 of these longer readings in total for the following texts: *Wuthering Heights*, *London Labour and the London Poor*, *Cranford*, *Nil-Darpan*, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*, *Great Expectations*.

Due: usually on the Thursday of each week we have a longer reading assignment with the exception of Week 14 (Thanksgiving week, response will be due on Tuesday) (Weeks 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14) by 10:40am

Deliverable: five totally 250-500 word discussion posts in the appropriate Canvas Discussion threads

## **III. Argumentative Close-Reading Paper 1 (complete a 3-page paper)**

Submit a short 3-page argumentative close-reading paper. A handout on our Canvas site provides a guide on how to write close-reading papers. You will need to submit a complete draft of your work for peer review. We will peer-review the draft in class, and then you will have until the end of that week by midnight to submit a revised draft. Use proper MLA formatting for your [parenthetical in-text citations](#) and [Works Cited section](#) at the end of your paper.

Draft Close-Reading Paper 1 Due: Wednesday, September 29, 11:59pm.

Final Close-Reading Paper 1 Due: Sunday, October 3, 11:59pm.

Deliverable: Word document, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman or Cambria, 3 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, uploaded to Assignments in Canvas

## **IV. Argumentative Close-Reading Paper 2 (complete a 5-page paper)**

Submit a 5-page close-reading paper on a text you did not discuss in Close-Reading Paper 1. A handout on our Canvas site provides a guide on how to write these close-reading papers. You will need to submit a complete draft of your work for peer review. We will peer-review the draft in class, and then you will have until the end of that week by midnight to submit a revised draft.

Rae X. Yan  
University of Florida  
ENL3251  
Fall 2021

Use proper MLA formatting for your [parenthetical in-text citations](#) and [Works Cited section](#) at the end of your paper.

Draft Close-Reading Paper 2 Due: Monday, October 25, 11:59pm

Final Close-Reading Paper 2 Due: Sunday, October 31, 11:59pm.

Deliverable: Word document, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman or Cambria, 5 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, uploaded to Assignments in Canvas

### **V. Final Paper (7-9 pages)**

Submit a final paper that provides a substantive argumentative close-reading that focuses on 1 or 2 of the texts we have read this semester on which you have **not** written for Close-Reading Papers 1 or 2. For this paper, you must synthesize your close-reading with at least 3 additional resources of relevant scholarship that engage 1 or 2 of the following: genre criticism, biographical analysis, or historical contextualization. The sources you use for this paper may, of course, be from our readings over the semester. You may also use outside secondary sources that you find, but these other secondary sources must be scholarly (peer-reviewed articles, books, or book chapters from reputable academic sources). I would suggest meeting in office hours at the end of October or beginning of November to start discussing ideas for this paper. Use proper MLA formatting for your [parenthetical in-text citations](#) and [Works Cited section](#) at the end of your paper. Your Works Cited information will not count toward your final page count.

Draft of Final Paper Due: Tuesday, December 9, 11:59pm

Final of Final Paper Due: Sunday, December 13, 11:59pm

Deliverable: Word document, 12 pt. font, Times New Roman or Cambria, 7-9 pages, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, uploaded to Assignments in Canvas.

## **Course Schedule**

The amount of reading listed as assigned per day is based on the amount of material we can cover during that class session's time block/s. You may notice that Thursday readings are slightly heavier than Tuesday readings given that we have more time to speak during the longer Thursday sessions. Make sure to plan your readings ahead accordingly—you may want to begin Thursday readings slightly early and plan to read the whole week's assigned readings a little bit every day, not just the night or morning before the reading assignments are due.

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: Introduction to the Victorian Era and Bodily Obsessions**

Tuesday, 8/24: First Day

- Introductions!

Rae X. Yan  
University of Florida  
ENL3251  
Fall 2021

Thursday, 8/26

- Tennyson, "Break, Break, Break" (1842)\*\*
- Tennyson, "Ulysses" (1842)\*\*
- Tennyson, "Locksley Hall" (1842)\*\*

## **Week 2: Authorial Bodies (Practicing Biographical Analysis I and Thinking with Theory)**

Tuesday, 8/31

- W. K. Wimsatt and M. C. Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy" (458-488) from *The Sewanee Review*, Vol 54, No. 3 (1946), pp. 468-488\*\*
- Roland Barthes, "Death of the Author / La mort de l'auteur" (pp. 142-148) from *Image/Music/Text* (1967)\*\*
- Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" (pp. 101-108) from *The Foucault Reader* (original essay given in 1969)\*\*

Thursday, 9/2

- Charlotte Brontë, "Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell (1850)" AND "Editor's Preface to the New Edition of *Wuthering Heights* (1850)" (either pp. 300-310 or 307-316 in the Norton edition of *Wuthering Heights*, check for correct sections)
- Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Vol I Ch I through Vol I Ch. 12)

## **Week 3: Haunting Bodies (Practicing Close-Reading Analysis)**

Tuesday, 9/7

- Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Vol I Ch 13 through Vol II Ch 6)

Thursday, 9/9

- Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Vol II Ch 7 through Vol II Ch 20)

## **Week 4: Gothic Bodies at Work (Practicing Genre Analysis)**

Tuesday, 9/14

- John Ruskin, "The Nature of Gothic" from *Stones of Venice* (1853)\*\*

Thursday, 9/16 (*Library Day, class meets in Smathers Library's 2nd floor Judaica Suite*)

- Mayhew, selections from *London Labour and the London Poor*, Vols 1 & 2
  - o from the Broadview edition, pp. 47-86, 153-207

## **Week 5: Othered Bodies (Practicing Historicist Analysis Part I, Visual Analysis, & Using Literary Criticism)**

Tuesday, 9/21

- EBB, "The Cry of the Children" (1843)

Thursday, 9/23

- EBB, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (1848)
- EBB, "Hiram Powers' Greek Slave" (1850)
- EBB, "A Curse for a Nation" (1854)

Rae X. Yan  
University of Florida  
ENL3251  
Fall 2021

- Selection from "Introduction" (29-32) and "Appendix C: Trans-Atlantic Abolitionism and Responses to EBB's Anti-Slavery Poems" (pp. 331-343) from the Broadview Press *Elizabeth Barrett Browning Selected Poems* (2009)
- Linda Hyman, "The Greek Slave by Hiram Powers: High Art as Popular Culture" (pp. 216-223) from *Art Journal* Vol. 35, No. 3 (1976)

### **Week 6: Writing the Body (First Papers)**

Tuesday, 9/28

- EBB, "A Reed" (1846) and "A Musical Instrument" (1860)\*\*

Thursday, 9/30

- **Draft of First Close-Reading Paper due Wednesday, 9/29, 11:59pm**
- No readings. Paper Workshopping.
- **Final Version of First Close-Reading Paper due Sunday, 10/3, 11:59pm**

### **Week 7: Old Bodies (Practicing Historicist Analysis Part III, Using Primary and Contemporary Historical Documents)**

Tuesday, 10/5

- Gaskell, *Cranford* (Ch. 1 through Ch. 7)

Thursday, 10/7

- Gaskell, *Cranford* (Ch. 8 through Ch. 16/end)
- Jeffrey Cass, "'The Scraps, Patches, and Rags of Daily Life': Gaskell's Oriental Other and the Conservation of *Cranford*." *Papers on Language & Literature* 35.4 (Fall 1999), pp 417-433.

### **Week 8: Rebellious Bodies (Using Postcolonial Frameworks Part I)**

Tuesday, 10/12

- Lin Zexu, "Letter of Advice to Queen Victoria" (1839)
- Erika Rappaport, "Packaging China: Advertising Food Safety in a Global Marketplace." *A Thirst for Empire: How Tea Shaped the Modern World*. Princeton, 2017, pp. 120-143.

Thursday, 10/14

- Jenny Balfour-Paul, selections from "Indigo's Heyday, the Downfall of Woad and Salvation by Denim." *Indigo*. British Museum Press, 1998, pp. 41-48, 59-77.
- Mitra, *Nil-Darpan, or, The Indigo Planting Mirror: A Drama*
  - o <https://archive.org/details/nildarpanorindig00mitriala/page/n5>

### **Week 9: Traveling Bodies (Using Postcolonial Frameworks Part II)**

Tuesday, 10/19

- Seacole, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (Ch 1 through Ch 10)

Thursday, 10/21

- Seacole, *The Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (Ch 11 through Conclusion)

Rae X. Yan  
University of Florida  
ENL3251  
Fall 2021

- Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, "Mrs. Seacole's *Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands* and the Consciousness of Transit." *Black Victorians / Black Victoriana*. Rutgers University Press, 2003, pp. 71-87.

### **Week 10: Scientific Bodies (Practicing Historical Analysis Part IV, Using Contemporary Literary Documents)**

Tuesday, 10/26

- **Draft of Second Close-Reading Paper Due Monday, 10/25, 11:59pm**
- No readings. Paper Workshopping.
- **Final Version of Second Close-Reading Paper Due Sunday, 10/31, 11:59pm**

Thursday, 10/28 (*Library Day, class meets in Smathers Library's 2nd floor Judaica Suite*)

- Adrian Desmond, "Evolution Before Darwin" (pp. 1-8) from "Chapter 1: Evolution and Society: Setting the Scene" of *Politics of Evolution* (1989)
- First issue of *The Lancet* from October 5, 1823 (pp. 1-3)
- First issue of *Nature* from November 6, 1869 (pp. 1-2)

### **Week 11: Evolving Bodies (Practicing Historicist Analysis Part V)**

Tuesday, 11/2

- Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Intro through Ch. 1)

Thursday, 11/4

- Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Ch. 2 and 3)

### **Week 12: Disappearing Bodies (Returning to What we Know)**

Tuesday, 11/9

- Darwin, *On the Origin of Species* (Ch. 4)

Thursday, 11/11, No Class, Veterans Day

### **Week 13: Modernizing Bodies (Practicing and Revisiting Close-Reading)**

Tuesday, 11/16

- Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Ch 1 [Vol 1 Ch I] through Ch 11 [Vol 1 Ch XI])

Thursday, 11/18

- Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Ch 12 [Vol 1 Ch XII] through Ch 32 [Vol 2 Ch XIII])

### **Week 14: Criminal Bodies (Practicing and Revisiting Close-Reading)**

Tuesday, 11/23

- Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Ch 33 [Vol 2 Ch XIV] through Ch 59 [Vol 3 Ch XX] and Appendix A/Alternate Ending)

Thursday, 11/25 No Class, Thanksgiving Break

Rae X. Yan  
University of Florida  
ENL3251  
Fall 2021

**Week 15: Transformative Bodies (Practicing Biographical Analysis II, Using Author Essays)**

Tuesday, 11/30

- Rosetti, "Goblin Market" (1862)

Thursday, 12/2

- Tennyson, "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" (1886)

**Week 16: The Body's Disintegration**

Tuesday, 12/7

- **Draft of Final Paper Due Monday, 12/6, 11:59pm**
- No readings. Paper Workshopping.

**\*\*\*\*\* Final version of Final Paper due Sunday, 12/12, at 11:59 \*\*\*\*\***