

## English 111: Victorian Novel Research Seminar

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se	me	ster: Spring 2016
cl	as	s meeting time: W 1-5 (occasionally ending at 4:30)
lo	ca	tion: LPAC 201
la	b	time: M 1-4, McCabe Computer Classroom
in	st	ructor: Rachel Sagner Buurma
em	ai	l: rburma1@swarthmore.edu
of	fi	ce: LPAC 302
of	fi	ce hours: T 1-3 and by appointment

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Replacing “How something is made, with a view to finding out what it is” with “How something is made, with a view to making it again” – the Essence with the Preparation – is linked to an option that’s completely antiscientific: in reality, the starting point of the Fantasy [of the critic’s writing a novel] isn’t the Novel (in general, as a genre), but one or two novels out of thousands.

-Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*, Session of December 9, 1978, 13.

This research-intensive honors seminar centers around two simple central questions: *How are Victorian novels made?* and *How is scholarship about Victorian novels made?* We will focus on the Victorian novel as both a genre and a material object, examining it within the context of the broader world of Victorian literature and culture in order to examine the ways in which the Victorian novel was both product and producer of its historical moment. We will explore the possibilities for rethinking canonical twentieth-century theories representational theories of novelistic realism, following a recent flourishing in Victorianist criticism on referentiality in order to ask how Victorian novels may be said to refer to the real worlds their authors and readers inhabited. In order to study this theoretical question, we will turn to the set of practices and processes through which Victorian novelists gathered the things of the world into their novels: research. Reading several major and minor Victorian novels, we will trace different forms of evidence of the ways their authors searched sets of documents, took notes, and organized information to perform research of all kinds in the library and on the streets. We will examine the published and unpublished commonplace books, notecards, papers, files, and marginalia of Victorian novelists both canonical and forgotten along with published descriptions of these novelists’ research practices and their representations of research in the novels they wrote. We will engage with criticism and theory from a number of fields, including book history, theories of materiality, historicisms old and new, theories of narrative and realism, genetic and textual criticisms, bibliometrics, media history, and digital humanities.

This class will help you develop our skills in research in print, digital, and manuscript or typescript sources; how to use and evaluate a range of databases and digital tools; how to think about citation practices as substantive and central to our work as scholars of literature. It will ask to examine your own implicit and explicit research practices and habits, and (in some cases) to experiment with modifying them or developing new ones. This class will collaborate with Nabil Kashyap, McCabe's Librarian for Digital Initiatives and Scholarship, as we learn to incorporate various computational elements into our work, from the basics of plain-text authoring, citation management, and keeping an open research notebook to using digital tools to help us analyze individual novels and groups of novels. We will also collaborate with English Department Digital Fellow in Data Visualization to conceptualize and realize a series of visualizations of data drawn from individual novels and a larger corpus.

## Schedule

**January 20: no class**

**January 27: introduction** some topics: canon and archive; roman fleuve; Trollope biography; mid-Victorian publishing, politics, religion; liberals and conservatives;

- Anthony Trollope, *The Warden*
- Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers*
- what is a novel? what do we already know about novels?
- workshop: close reading the novel
- syllabus review
- canonicity and representativeness: why THESE novels? [T.S. Eliot Victorian Literature syllabus](#), [Leah Price Victorian Novel syllabus](#), [The Open Syllabus Project](#), [Metacanon](#)
- discussion: planning our class archiving practices see [the 2013 seminar's archive](#) if you like; discuss Reclaim possibilities
- in class workshop: 3:45 pm meet PJ Trainor, our English Department Digital Fellow in Data Visualization
- in class workshop: 4-4:30 pm, introduction to concepts of plain-text authoring with Nabil Kashyap

**February 1: optional but recommended plain-text authoring open lab, McCabe Computer Classroom, 1-4 pm**

**February 3: canonical realisms 1** some topics: realism overview; social networks; city and country; news and newspapers

- Anthony Trollope, *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers*, continued
- Georg Lukacs, “Narrate or Describe”\*
- Ian Watt, from *The Rise of the Novel*
- Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect”\*
- Fredric Jameson, “The Realist Floor-plan”\*
- George Levine, from “The Realistic Imagination”
- Mary Poovey on the Barsetshire series
- Franco Moretti, “Operationalizing”
- complete before class: [Dennis Tenen and Grant Wythoff’s plain-text authoring tutorial](#)
- complete before class: brief post to our Known about plain-text authoring
- create a [Github](#) account
- in class workshop: close reading criticism
- in class workshop: concepts of version control (git, Github)
- in class workshop: data viz discussion with PJ: visualizing the Barsetshire Series

discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ; break:

**February 8: optional but recommended version control open lab, LPAC 201, 1-4 pm**

**February 10: canonical realisms 2** some topics: serials and series (what happens when we try to imagine all six Barsetshire novels as part of a single world?); roman fleuve; religion and the clergy; marriage; travel

- Trollope, *An Autobiography*
- E. S. Dallas review of *Barchester Towers*
- Michel Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish* (background to Miller)
- D.A. Miller, Barchester Towers chapter from *The Novel and the Police*
- Ramsay, from *Reading Machines*
- workshop: not reading The Chronicles of Barsetshire (inspired by Paul Fyfe’s How To Not Read a Victorian Novel)
- complete before class: brief post to our Known about version control
- -in class workshop: source management, and bibliometrics with Zotero and Paper Machines

**February 15: optional but recommended Zotero and Paper Machines open lab, McCabe Computer Classroom, 1-4 pm**

**February 17: narrative and novelists' note-taking** some topics: bildungsroman, Dickens's life and work, Victorian childhoods, literacy, education, emigration

- Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (1864-5), first third
- Mikhail Bakhtin, from "Discourse in the Novel," 259-331
- Dorrit Cohn, summary handout and selection from *Transparent Minds*
- [Dickens Journals Online](#) essays on Dickens's magazine *All the Year Round* volumes
- selections from Sylvère Monod's *Charles Dickens, Novelist* (1953)
- selections from John Butt and Kathleen Tillottson, *Dickens at Work*
- selections from Harry Stone ed., *Dickens's Working Notes for His Novels*
- Simon Reader, "[Victorian Notebooks: Source and Method](#)"
- Elson, Dames, McKeown, [Extracting Social Networks from Literary Fiction](#)
- complete before class: install Zotero and Paper Machines
- complete before class: brief post to our Known about citation management
- in-class workshop: note-taking systems (Evernote, NVol, etc); tagging, aggregating, sharing
- in-class workshop: data viz discussion with PJ: visualizing OMF (notes and numbers?)

discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ; break:

**February 22: optional but recommended open lab, McCabe Computer Classroom, 1-4 pm**

**February 24: reference**

- Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, second third
- Skype visit from Anna Gibson, director of the [Dickens Notes Project]([Dickens Working Notes Project](#) and the [Versioning Machine](#))
- OMF critical reading 1
- OMF critical reading 2
- text analysis reading from *A New Companion to Digital Humanities*
- workshop: Novel into Notes - indexing *Our Mutual Friend*
- in-class workshop: breaking down an article using NVol discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ; break:
- complete before class: brief post to our Known about note-taking

**February 28: optional but recommended open lab, NVol, McCabe Computer Classroom, 1-4 pm**

## March 2: corpus

- Charles Dickens, Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, third third
- OMF critical reading 1
- OMF critical reading 2
- Algee-Hewitt and Piper, “The Werther Effect”
- explore Dickens’s corpus with [CLiC](#)
- before class: post to Known about indexing *Our Mutual Friend*
- data viz discussion with PJ: follow up

## March 7: spring break (read *Hard Cash*)

## March 14: optional but recommended open lab, McCabe Computer Classroom, 1-4 pm

**March 16: indexing** some topics: indexing, cataloging, classifying, social problem novel, prison, asylum, investigative journalism; index, database vs [personal knowledge base](#); Charles Reade’s open research notebook; returning to canon questions + Charles Reade, *Hard Cash*, first half + Ann Blair, “Note-taking as Information Management” from *Too Much to Know* + Mary Poovey, “Forgotten Writers, Neglected Histories” + Henry Wheatley, from What is an Index? + Michel Foucault, “Classifying,” from The Order of Things + Ronald Day, from *Indexing It All* + Charles Reade’s notecards + look at some literature indexes: Pickwick, In Memoriam, etc + description of fictional novelist-researcher Rolfe from *A Terrible Temptation* + in-class workshop preparation: open notebooks

discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ; break:

## March 21: optional but recommended open lab, McCabe Computer Classroom, 1-4 pm

## March 23: the preparation of the novel

 some topics: encyclopedia,

- Flaubert, selections from Bouvard et Pécuchet, The Dictionary of Received Ideas
- Explore [http://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/bouvard\\_et\\_pecuchet/](http://flaubert.univ-rouen.fr/bouvard_et_pecuchet/) and <http://gallica.bnf.fr/to nb>: You will find you need surprisingly little (or no) French to learn something about Flaubert’s research practices from his digitized notes and manuscript pages, but give yourself time.
- return to Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect”

- selections from Roland Barthes, *The Preparation of the Novel*
- Stanford Lit Lab Pamphlet 11
- question: canon, archive, corpus: how do we think about all the novels?
- background: recovery projects and Guillory; Sutherland and encyclopedias; library catalogs; Moretti, etc on Victorian Bestsellers
- final paper plan due to dropbox
- in class workshop: data viz discussion with PJ: visualizing a corpus (novels or criticism)

discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ;  
break:

March 24, 2016: [Claire Jarvis on “Almost Trollope” at Temple University](#)(optional)

March 28, 2-4 pm, optional but recommended telegraph workshop with Andrew Ruether, McCabe Computer Classroom, 1-4 pm or Media Center

**March 30: search and research** some topics: sensation novel, gender and sexuality

- Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley’s Secret*
- article on gender and insanity in Lady Audley\*
- Ted Underwood, “Theorizing Research Practices We Forgot to Theorize Twenty Years Ago”\*
- Daniel Rosenberg, “Stop, Words”\*
- Lisa Rhody, poetics of topic modeling short DH2014 paper
- Patrick Leary, (“Googling the Victorians”)[<http://www.victorianresearch.org/googling.pdf>]
- Darnton, “Literary Surveillance in the British Raj”
- before class: post to Known about telegraphy
- take a look at [Word Frequencies in English-Language Literature, 1700-1922](#)
- in-class workshop: topic modeling a large corpus
- post- workshop discussion: telegraphy and critical making
- in-class workshop with PJ: follow-up on visualizing a corpus

discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ;  
break:

**April 4: optional but recommended paper-drafting open lab, LPAC 201, 1-4 pm**

**April 6: noticing everyday life** some topics:

- final paper draft due for workshop
- George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, first half
- in-class workshop with PJ: follow-up on visualizing a corpus; thinking about related final projects

**April 11: optional but recommended paper-drafting open lab, LPAC 201, 1-4 pm**

**April 13: noticing everyday life 2** some topics:

- George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, second half
- George Eliot, “The Natural History of German Life”
- Pre-printed forms (examples of Lett’s Extract Book, Todd’s Index Rerum, etc)
- Daniel Hack, *Transatlantic Eliot: African American Connections,* in *The Blackwell Companion to George Eliot\** (2013)
- Introduction to “Denotative, Technically, Literally” special issue, ed. Elaine Freedgood and Cannon Schmitt, *Representations* 125 (Winter 2014)

discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ; break:

**April 18: optional but recommended paper-drafting open lab, LPAC 201, 1-4 pm**

**April 20: social totalities and literary values** some topics

- George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, first half
- Leah Price, from *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel* \*
- David Kurnick, “An Erotics of Detachment: Middlemarch and Novel-Reading as Critical Practice”\*
- selections from GE notebooks

**April 25: optional but recommended paper-drafting open lab, LPAC 201, 1-4 pm**

**April 28: the research effect?** some topics:

- *Middlemarch*, second half
- examine [Quarry for Middlemarch](#)
- may be replaced - Amy Levy, “The Recent Telepathic Occurrence at the British Museum” and “Readers at the British Museum”
- Susan David Bernstein, “Researching Romola” from *Roomscapes* \*
- mind maps, concept maps, etc

discussion and outline: ; close reading: ; criticism summary: ; seminar paper: ;  
break:

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*seminar dinner to be scheduled*

*April 28th SHS papers due*

**final meeting and seminar dinner**

**May 21-23 honors weekend**

### **Assignments**

**Outline and discussion facilitation** Four times during semester you will be responsible – in pairs - for facilitating discussion of the week’s material, including (but not at all limited to) all readings, seminar papers, close readings, critical summaries, and research exercises. Please plan to read the week’s materials, come up with a draft of the outline (in informal consultation with other seminar members if you like), and post your draft outline by Tuesday at 5 pm to our outline site (more on which in class). On by Tuesday evening, the rest of the seminar members will access the outline and may add their own suggestions. Then on Wednesday at 10 am the discussion leaders will meet with me briefly in order strategize and finalize the outline. I will then provide copies for use in class. We can certainly diverge from this outline, but it is useful for us to have a general map of how you imagine the shape of the discussion might unfold. The outline is an interesting genre in and of itself; we’ll talk about its limitations and possibilities, its uses as a preparation for class, as a map during class, and as an enduring artifact after class is over. And I can provide examples from past seminars if you wish. The outline is also (unlike your seminar papers, close readings, and criticism summaries) a public document, which we will likely share in some form. We will format all outlines in Markdown.



**Seminar papers** You will write two 3-4 page single-spaced seminar papers over the course of the semester; they are due to our seminar Dropbox (more on which in class) by midnight the Monday before seminar. The seminar paper should usually (although this is a guideline not a requirement) engage with at least one novel – making sure to include at least some close reading of the novel - and one piece of criticism. I also encourage you to bring in outside reading that seems relevant (though make sure that you do this in a way that is attentive to the fact that the rest of us will likely not have read your additional text(s)).

**Close readings** You will write three 1-2-page single-spaced close readings of a few sentences or a paragraph of one of our fictional texts over the course of the semester; they are due to our seminar Dropbox (more on which in class) by midnight the Monday before seminar. See handout on “close reading the novel” for guidance if you like.

**Criticism summaries** You will write three 1-2 page (single-spaced) summaries of critical readings; like the seminar papers and close readings, they are due as Word attachments to our seminar Dropbox (more on which in class) by midnight the Monday before seminar. These should usually include a brief paragraph on the main claim and stakes of the reading, a more detailed overview of the argument, a note if relevant on the writer’s style, feeling, and tone, and particular mention (with page numbers) of points/passages you think are especially important for our purposes and/or require our critique. See handout on “reading criticism” for guidance if you like.

**Research notes** This is a research intensive seminar. By “research intensive,” I mean that in addition to reading and responding to the texts included on the syllabus according to the terms and questions I put forward, you will be learning to both ask and answer your own questions about the Victorian novel. We’ll also attempt to reflect on the research process, looking at our own assumptions about what research is and does as compared with the research practices of Victorian novelists (among others).

**Seminar archive and site** Together we will think about elements of our work we may want to make public.

### **Visualization collaboration**

**Labs and open workshops** Occasionally we will open our class’s labs and workshops to interested outside parties. Feel free to invite friends, family, teammates, lab mates, housecats, that guy who is always hanging out in the periodicals reading room. More on this in class.

**Tools** To start exploring and thinking about your individual and collective process of exploratory research, knowledge organization, and note-taking, we will use a range of technologies, and we have significant support for installing them, using them, and thinking critically about them from Nabil Kashyap. Our goal is to both use digital tools to do humanities work and to use our finely-honed humanities tools to both *critique* and *use* digital technologies.

**Long/Senior Honors Study paper** I want us to think about the long paper as a piece that draws together some of the various shorter writing pieces, research skills, and projects you will work on over the course of the semester. The long paper may draw on any aspect of the work you have done in the seminar; it should include an original argument about one of our novels, respond to the existing criticism of that novel, and incorporate original research. A substantial 4-5 page proposal, including a research organization and technology plan, and perhaps the beginning of the paper, is due before March break, with a rough draft due soon after in early April. If you are in Honors, this will become your SHS paper. I would like – but will not require because different students’ interests and needs will vary – for this paper to incorporate some significant original research.

**Final written and oral exam** During finals period you will take a three-hour written exam; you may use your notes and books. You will then take an oral exam during finals period based on this exam, your long paper, and the entire semester’s readings. This is separate from and in addition to Honors examinations.

**Seminar break** Each of you will bring break a few times during the semester. Consult with one another, and be creative! If this will be a financial hardship, please consult me.

**Reading and note-taking, technology** We will use various technologies we will use to facilitate various forms of individual and collective note-taking, writing, archiving, and computational text analysis. In addition, we will use laptops intentionally and strategically during some parts of class but not others; more on this during our first meeting. Group leaders will be responsible for thinking about if, how, and when to use technologies like this in class. (If you do not own a laptop, no worries; we can work around this.)

**Extra meetings and other specific seminar-related times** In addition to our regular Monday afternoon meetings, we will take one or two trips to a special collections library. We will discuss the scheduling of these in class. In addition, please reserve Wednesday at 10 am to meet with me during the weeks you are in charge of discussion and outline.

This double-credit Honors seminar is a major commitment, and requires a lot of work. I realize this, and look forward to working with you all so that we can mutually make sure that we have the time and space we need to do a good job while also fulfilling our other semester commitments and attempting to be relatively happy people (or as happy as we're disposed to be).

## **Policies and Advice**

**Books** The main books you will need to buy are: Anthony Trollope, Barchester Towers. Penguin ISBN-13: 978-0140432039 Anthony Trollope, The Warden. Broadview Press ISBN-13: 978-1551111384 Anthony Trollope, An Autobiography. Penguin ISBN-13: 978-0199537648 Charles Reade, Hard Cash. Acquire your own copy - no current modern edition. Charles Dickens, Our Mutual Friend. ISBN-13: 978-0199536252 Gustav Flaubert, Bouvard and Pecuchet. Dalkey Archive. ISBN-13: 978-1564783936 Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Lady Audley's Secret. Oxford World's Classics. 978-0199577033 George Eliot, The Mill on the Floss. Penguin. 0141439629 George Eliot, Middlemarch. Penguin ISBN-13: 978-0141439549

The books are available at the bookstore (or will be soon). You are also welcome to buy the books online or at a different store. Be aware that you need to have your own copy of the specific edition of each of the books listed above. All other texts will be available on Dropbox unless otherwise specified. Please print out, read, mark up, and bring to class ALL of the texts assigned as required reading for each week (this subject to modification in class).

**Grading** 30% class participation, discussion direction, completion of short informal writing and research projects 20% seminar papers (10% each) 10% close reading papers 10% criticism summaries 20% long paper (for Honors students, this will be your SHS paper) 10% written and oral exam

**Accommodations for disability** I want to work to make sure that everyone in this class has the access to the materials, resources, and support they need in order to learn most effectively. You are always free to talk to me about your own situation. A key Swarthmore resource in this area is the Office of Student Disability Services. Their accommodations policy is here: If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Leslie Hempling in the Office of Student Disability Services (Parrish 113) or email [lhempli1@swarthmore.edu](mailto:lhempli1@swarthmore.edu) to arrange an appointment to discuss your needs. As appropriate, she will issue students with documented disabilities a formal Accommodations Letter. Since accommodations require early planning and are not retroactive, please contact her as soon as possible. For details about the accommodations process, visit the Student Disability Service Website at <http://www.swarthmore.edu/academic-advising-support/welcome-to-student-disability-service>. You are also welcome

to contact me [the faculty member] privately to discuss your academic needs. However, all disability-related accommodations must be arranged through the Office of Student Disability Services.

**Plagiarism** Plagiarism is a very serious offense. It includes both the direct copying of the words of another person without crediting him or her and paraphrasing the ideas of another person without giving credit. If you have any questions about how to properly cite another person's work, please do not hesitate to ask me.

**Attendance and due dates** Because this is a seminar, attendance is essential. Missing seminar (except for cases of illness or true emergencies) is inadvisable. However, if you are really ill, try to contact me ahead of time, but do plan to miss class! Again, because this is a seminar, deadlines for seminar papers, critical summaries, and outlines are (again, outside of serious emergency situations) firm, firm. Plan ahead.

**Your Own Devices Policy** Because our class is intensively collaborative, I will expect that you will be focused on the texts and on your classmates. If it is your experience that having a screen in front of you can distract you from the work of being in class, please take measures to prevent such self-distraction. (I like [StayFocused](#); you may like other programs or strategies.)

**Acknowledgements [UPDATE]** Here is a partial, in-progress list of writing I drew on to create this syllabus, including Nathan Hensley's [Victorian Literature and Globalization](#), Georgetown Spring 2013; Laura Heffernan's [Victorian Literature and Objectivity](#) (English 4251, University of North Florida, Spring 2012); Leah Price's [Victorian Novel class](#), Anna Kornbluth's [Novel Worlds](#) Mark Algee-Hewitt' 2015 HILT curriculum

This syllabus is necessarily an incomplete document; we will revise and save versions of it as the class progresses. The most up-to-date copy will be available on our vic-sem-2014 organization page on github: [https://github.com/vic-sem-2015/syllabus/blob/master/vic\\_sem\\_2016.md](https://github.com/vic-sem-2015/syllabus/blob/master/vic_sem_2016.md)

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