

Undisciplining The Victorian Classroom

Peer-Reviewed Syllabus

Peer Reviewer: Jacob Romanow

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British Literature II: A Representative Survey (Undergraduate, intermediate survey course syllabus)

Instructor:	Dr. Riya Das
Email Address:	ridas@pvamu.edu
Access to Required Texts:	All course readings will be available to you on eCourses. You can also access most course readings free of charge online and/or from the university library.

Student Learning Outcomes:

Identifying primary characteristics of major periods in British literature from the neoclassical period to the present, studying British literature with critical frameworks beyond traditional canonicity, and making connections among a diverse range of authors from Britain and British colonies through these frameworks.

Conducting research on British literary, imperial, and cultural history to add to the knowledge base of the class through both discussion and critical writing. Employing effective interpersonal skills with emphasis on listening, responding, and fostering a positive learning environment. Identifying and citing credible sources according to the MLA citation style.

Major Course Requirements:

Assessment	Breakdown of Points	Total Points
Participation		100 points
Short Responses (5 out of 7)	50*5	250 points
British Literary Profile Project		250 points
Final Paper Proposal and Peer Review	Proposal (100) + Peer Review (50)	150 points
Final Paper		250 points
Total		1000 points

Grading Criteria and Conversion:

A = 90-100% (900 to 1000 points)

B = 80-89% (800 to 899 points)

C = 70-79% (700 to 799 points)

D = 60-69% (600 to 699 points)

F = 0-59% (0 to 599 points)

Note on Course Policies

You should carefully read the university policies about student success. In addition to those, here is a brief description of my own course policies. Express yourself confidently in class, but also be kind and considerate toward others. Do not, under any circumstances, plagiarize. If in doubt, ask. I try not to employ a one-size-fits-all attendance policy. Get in touch with me if you need to miss classes, and we can discuss your specific needs. Finally, let me know as soon as possible if you need an extension to complete an assignment. I am usually flexible with due dates that do not involve a grading deadline.

Further detailed instructions, if applicable, and grading rubrics will be available on eCourses.

Participation (100 points)

Punctually and regularly attend class and actively participate in class discussion. Inform me as soon as you can about necessary absences. This portion of the grade will be based on your contribution as a considerate and involved citizen in our classroom.

Short Responses (5 out of 7) (50*5=250 points)

Seven times during the semester, you will draft a brief written response (150-200 words) based on the course readings and bring it to class. Class discussions will be focused on your Short Response draft. Based on the feedback you receive from me and your peers, you will revise and submit your final Short Response.

Your top five out of seven Short Response scores will count toward your final grade. Writing and revising the Short Responses will also enable you to gauge how you feel about particular texts, and help you decide which texts you wish to write your final research paper about.

A sample Short Response prompt is as follows:

This Short Response may be based on either "No, Thank You, John" by Christina Rossetti or "The Lay of the Trilobite" by May Kendall. Respond to the poem of your choice in about 150 - 200 words. In your Short Response, explain why you selected this poem, discuss a major theme of the poem that attracted your attention, and contemplate the poem's significance to twenty-first century readers.

Bring your Short Response draft to class (laptop/other electronic device/print) on Tuesday for discussion and review. Revise based on the feedback you receive and submit your finalized Short Response on eCourses by Thursday.

British Literary Profile Project (250 points)

British literature does not simply include authors from England, but a wide array of voices that spoke from myriad British imperial socio-political landscapes. We will acknowledge and analyze the nuances of Britain's imperial history with this assignment, as a step toward [undisciplining](#) (external link) and widening the scope of British literature in our classroom.

Conduct research and select a writer (who lived sometime between the eighteenth century and the present day) from any part of the Britain or British colonial nation, and create a literary profile describing their life and works. Your literary profile essay should be 2-3 pages in length and formatted in the MLA style.¹

Final Paper Proposal (100 points) and Peer Review (50 points)

1. Select any two readings from the syllabus (e.g. two poems / one short story and one poem / an act from a play and a short story / excerpts from two novels), to base your final paper on and submit a Final Paper Proposal, in 1-2 double-spaced pages.

Your proposal should include the following:

- One brief paragraph introducing the two readings of your choice. Explain how the works belong together and the value of juxtaposing and comparing them.
- A longer paragraph describing your proposed topic. You may employ but are not restricted to the following topics:
 - Theme-based analysis – analyzing the selected works with close reference to a particular theme such as gender, race, genre/style, British culture and politics, imperial history, colonialism, translation, travel, transatlantic relations, and so on.
 - Close-reading – selecting specific sections from your chosen texts to analyze in detail, critically commenting on their context, language, style, and significance.
 - Contemporary criticism – discussing the relevance of the British texts of your choice to us as readers and viewers in the twenty-first century. Why do we find these works useful? What do we collectively learn from them?

You are welcome to select one of these suggestions for your final paper. I also encourage you to think beyond these suggestions and explore original avenues that interest you. If you have an original topic idea, remember to run it by me before you begin working on the proposal.

2. I will assign you to a Peer Group consisting of 3-5 students. You will read your peers' proposals and provide comments and suggestions to sharpen their project ideas, and they will do the same for you. I will also read your proposal and offer feedback.

The peer-review process will be conducted online, and not in person during a single class day, to facilitate participation from all students. You will be graded individually for sharing your work with your peer group and providing feedback on peers' proposals. You will not be penalized for a peer who does not share their work and/or does not fully participate in the review process.

¹ A methodological essay about this assessment and the detailed assessment prompt are forthcoming in *Undisciplining Victorian Studies*

Final Paper (250 points)

Your Final Paper should consist of 5 to 7 double-spaced pages of writing and a Works Cited page.

A Final Paper that is not based on the peer-reviewed topic in your Final Paper Proposal will not be accepted. Your peers and instructor offered their time and care to help you sharpen your idea. Utilize their feedback. I encourage you to seek help from me multiple times during the writing process as you translate your proposal and the feedback you received into a complete research paper. You should use between two and five secondary scholarly sources to bolster your argument. However, your paper should reflect your original ideas rather than be crowded with critical commentary by other writers. When you do borrow from others, do not forget to give credit. Cite every primary and secondary source you use in your paper.

You should format your final paper in the MLA style. Standard formatting includes 1-inch margins on all sides and 12-point, double-spaced, Times New Roman font. You can review the MLA formatting guidelines online at the [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#) (external link).

Semester Calendar:

Come prepared to make the most of the course content. Read/view the course content before class to be able to properly follow lectures and actively participate in discussion and other activities.

Week 1		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	<p>Introductions</p> <p>Course Overview: Questions to begin with</p> <p>What is British literature?</p> <p>What is the literary “canon”? How is a literary work included in the canon?</p> <p>What does an imperial history entail for British literature?</p>	<p>Individual introductions from instructor and students.</p> <p>Introductory lecture and discussion.</p>
Day 2	Detailed Syllabus Overview	<p>Group reading of course syllabus, with discussion of assignments, readings, and weekly schedule.</p> <p>Q&A and preliminary doubt-clearing.</p>

Week 2		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	<p>The Romantic C18</p> <p>“Neoclassicism,” <i>British Library</i></p> <p>“Neoclassicism: An Introduction,” <i>The Victorian Web</i></p>	<p>Lecture and discussion on assigned readings.</p> <p>In-class research on neoclassical British literature and discussion.</p>
Day 2	<p>“Frost at Midnight” by Samuel Taylor Coleridge</p> <p>“On Being Brought from Africa to America,” by Phillis Wheatley</p> <p>Introduction to the Short Response Assignment: Responding to “old” literary texts</p>	<p>Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Contrasting Neoclassicism with Romanticism. Contemplating Neoclassicism in transatlantic contexts.</p> <p>Practice session on crafting concise written responses to literary works.</p>

Week 3		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	The Imperial C19: Condition of England “What happened during the Victorian era?” <i>Royal Museums Greenwich</i> “Condition-of-England Novels,” <i>The Victorian Web</i>	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Short Response 1 draft due for discussion
Day 2	<i>Bleak House</i> by Charles Dickens (excerpt)	Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Reading the excerpted novel with contextual/historical essays. Short Response 1 due

Week 4		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	British Literary Profiles: Empire, Colonization, Translation Translated poems: From <i>A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields</i> by Toru Dutt “The Young Girl” by Charles Nodier “To My Mother” by Henri Heine	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Short Response 2 draft due for discussion
Day 2	“Dream Life and Re Life: A Little African Story” by Olive Schreiner Introduction to the British Literary Profile Project	Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Contemplating British literature in relation to gender, empire, and genre. Q&A and preliminary doubt-clearing. Short Response 2 due

Week 5		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	British Literary Profiles: Poets Laureate “Where the mind is without fear” by Rabindranath Tagore From <i>In Memoriam</i> , “Ring out, wild bells” by Alfred, Lord Tennyson	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Juxtaposing the poets and contemplating the ideas of faith, hope, and nation in the poems. Short Response 3 draft due for discussion

Day 2	Brainstorming: British Literary Profile Project	In-class student research and discussion on authors of Britain and British colonies. Short Response 3 due
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Week 6		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	The Victorian Woman Question: A long poem and a short story “The Angel in the House” by Coventry Patmore (excerpt) “The Son’s Veto” by Thomas Hardy	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Juxtaposing disparate views on gender and society in the two texts by male Victorian writers. Short Response 4 draft due for discussion
Day 2	The Victorian Woman Question: Two funny poems “No, Thank You, John” by Christina Rossetti “The Lay of the Trilobite” by May Kendall	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Analyzing humorous poetic responses to serious issues such as gender, consent, and scientific advancement. Short Response 4 due

Week 7		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	The Victorian Woman Question: Unconventional Women Writing “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists” by George Eliot <i>The Romance of a Shop</i> by Amy Levy (excerpt)	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Analyzing mid-century gender roles and the fin-de-siècle New Woman movement.
Day 2	The Victorian Woman Question: Marriage Plots and Working Women <i>Aurora Leigh</i> by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (excerpt)	Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Contemplating the work of British women writers with Eliot, Levy, and Barrett Browning.

Week 8		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	Gender and Empire: “Sultana’s Dream” by Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain Refresher: British Literary Profile Project	Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Q&A and final doubt-clearing.
Day 2	Gender and Empire: “Marshlands” by Emily Pauline Johnson (Tekahionwake) “With Pure Virtue’s Hand” by Aisha Taymur Finalizing the British Literary Profile Project: Informal peer-review and polishing of draft	Contemplating the broad significance of Victorian literature, gender, and empire with Sakhawat Hossain, Tekahionwake, and Taymur. British Literary Profile Project due

Week 9		
Spring Break		

Week 10		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	Adventure, Crime, Sensation: The Empire’s Burden “The Man Who Would be King” by Rudyard Kipling	Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Short Response 5 draft due for discussion
Day 2	Kipling cont. Adventure, Crime, Sensation: Reading and Detecting “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” by Arthur Conan Doyle	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Contemplating the broad significance of British imperial masculinities. Short Response 5 due

Week 11		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	Fin-de-siècle “Sexual Anarchy”: Drama <i>Lady Windermere’s Fan</i> by Oscar Wilde	Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Short Response 6 draft due for discussion

Day 2	<p>Oscar Wilde cont.</p> <p>Introduction to the Final Paper Proposal: Questions to begin with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What is a written proposal? Who will read the proposal? What are they looking for? How to be simultaneously brief and persuasive? 	<p>Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Contemplating tradition, sexuality, and marriage plots at the turn of the century.</p> <p>In-class research and brainstorming final paper topics.</p> <p>Short Response 6 due</p>
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Week 12		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	<p>The Modern and Postmodern C20: Space, Freedom, England, Colony, Postcolony</p> <p><i>A Room of One's Own</i> by Virginia Woolf (excerpt) "The Garden-Party" by Katherine Mansfield</p>	<p>Lecture and discussion on assigned readings.</p> <p>Short Response 7 draft due for discussion</p>
Day 2	<p>"Dead Men's Path" by Chinua Achebe</p>	<p>Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Contemplating empire, British literary genres, and otherness beyond the Victorian era.</p> <p>Short Response 7 due</p>

Week 13		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	<p>Introduction to the Peer Review Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academic integrity and the role of review/revision How to seek advice from peers? How to be a thoughtful peer reviewer? Reviewing content: Do I need to fix a peer's grammatical errors? How to put my feedback in writing? How to progress from proposal to argumentative paper based on multiple peers' feedback? 	<p>Q&A and final doubt-clearing.</p>
Day 2	<p>Refresher: Research and Citation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Why, when, and how we cite MLA Style Guide Fact Checking: How to identify a scholarly source? How to test the credibility of online sources? Revision Process: Content, Organization, and Style 	<p>Final Paper Proposal due for peer review</p>

Week 14		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	The Modern and Postmodern C20: Imperialism and Globalism, Inside and Outside <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> by Jean Rhys (excerpt) <i>The Remains of the Day</i> by Kazuo Ishiguro (excerpt)	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings.
Day 2	Jean Rhys cont. Kazuo Ishiguro cont.	Lecture and discussion on assigned readings. Contemplating the relation of the British with the global. Written Peer Reviews due

Week 15		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	C20 and C21: The New Fin-de-siècle Kazuo Ishiguro Video Interviews, accessed on YouTube With Clive Sinclair, 1986 With Piya Chattopadhyay, 2015	Discussion on assigned viewings. Contemplating interviewers' and British/global readers' responses to Ishiguro and his works through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.
Day 2	<i>All-Star Superman</i> by Grant Morrison (Issue 1)	Lecture and discussion on assigned reading. Contemplating diversity of form and content. How may we define British literature today?

Week 16		
	Readings and Other Course Content	Activities and Assignments
Day 1	Refresher: Final Paper Revision inspiration: "Shitty First Drafts" by Anne Lamott	Q&A and final doubt-clearing.
Day 2	Final reflections and farewell	Final Paper due