**English 111: Victorian Literature and Culture**

A Research Seminar on the Victorian Novel

**Professor Rachel Buurma Spring 2013**

[**rbuurma1@swarthmore.edu**](mailto:rbuurma1@swarthmore.edu) **Mondays 1-5ish**

**Office: LPAC 302 LPAC 201**

**Office hours: W 1-3 and by appointment**

This research-intensive seminar focuses on the Victorian novel as both a genre and a material object, setting this approach 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. A wide range of novels and key critical texts will provide occasions for our discussions, which will range from topics like authorship, editing, reading, printing, and textual circulation to those of work and class, race and empire, gender and sexuality, individuality and collectivity, and critical distance and engagement. We will employ various methods (short papers, student-facilitated discussion, etc) as we collectively work through the questions and problems these texts raise; we will also learn how to create new knowledge in the field of Victorian literature and culture through a series of short research exercises culminating in a final original research paper.

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**Week I Introduction**

January 21 **Anthony Trollope,** *The Warden* (1855) and *Barchester Towers* (1857)

Syllabus discussion; introduction to seminar practices; first discussion of Trollope.

*Collectivity, co-operation, individualism, and the novel*

*Cultures of reviewing and anonymity*

**Week II Trollope, revisiting *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers; An Autobiography***

**(1882)*,* “The Panjandrum” from *An Editor’s Tales*, “On Anonymity"**

January 28 Michel Foucault, from *Discipline and Punish* (background to Miller)

D.A. Miller, Intro and *Barchester Towers* chapters from *Novel and the Police*

Karl Marx, “Co-operation” chapter of *Capital, Volume I*

reviews of *Barchester Towers* (E.S. Dallas, etc)

Research exercise #1: the DNB and the London *Times* online

Practical: make sure you can access Dropbox, Wordpress, look at Zotero and

create an account

*Realisms*

**Week III Margaret Oliphant, *Phoebe Junior* (1876), reviews of *Phoebe Junior***

February 4 Ian Watt, from *The Rise of the Novel*

Roland Barthes, “The Reality Effect”

Fredric Jameson, “The Realist Floor-plan”

Levine, from *The Realistic Imagination*

Research exercise 2: reviews of *Phoebe Junior* in Victorian periodicals

*Autobiography, reviewing*

**Week IV Oliphant, *Phoebe Junior, The Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant,* “The**

**Library Window”**

February 11 Wimsatt and Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy"

Selections on Victorian reviewing: Suzy Anger, from *Victorian Interpretation;* Nick

Dames, “On Not Close Reading”; Leah Price from *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*

*Narration, free indirect discourse*

**Week V****Charles Dickens**, ***Great Expectations* (first half, through page 244)**

February 18 Mikhail Bakhtin, from "Discourse in the Novel," 259-331

Dorrit Cohn, summary handout and selection from *Transparent Minds*

DJO essays on Dickens's magazine *All the Year Round* volumes 4 and 5

Research exercise 3: *Great Expectations* in *All the Year Round*

*Things and objects*

**Week VI Charles Dickens**, ***Great Expectations* (finish)**

February 25 Dorothy Van Ghent, from *The English Novel*

Elaine Freedgood, “Realism, Fetishism, and Genocide”

Andrew Miller, Intro and section on GE, *The Burdens of Perfection*

E.S. Dallas, *Times* review of *Great Expectations*

Research exercise 4: *Great Expectations’s* first page

*Post-critique reading*

**Week VII Charlotte Bronte, *Villette***

March 4Eve Sedgwick, “You’re So Paranoid….” from *Touching Feeling*

Bruno Latour, “Has Critique Run Out of Steam?” and “Compostionist

Manifesto” (skim)

Sharon Marcus, Intro and “Just Reading” from *Between Women*

Long paper proposal due now or just after break

Long paper meeting with me begin at your discretion

Research exercise 5: classroom archiving

**Week VIII spring break** (no rest for the weary - read *Hard Cash*)

March 11

**Week IX** *novel of research, aesthetics of research, note-taking*

**Charles Reade, *Hard Cash* (at Princeton’s Firestone library, will confirm)**

March 18 Mary Poovey, “Forgotten Writers, Neglected Histories” Ann Blair, selection from *Too Much to Know*

Roland Barthes, from *Preparaton for the Novel*

Andrew Piper, from *Book Was There: Reading in Electronic Times*

and *http://bookwasthere.org/*

Sianne Ngai, “Merely Interesting”

*gender*

**Week X George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss*, “The Lifted Veil”, “The Natural History**

March 25  **of German Life,” “Silly Novels by Lady Novelists”**

Poovey, “Writing about Finance in Victorian England”

reviews of *Mill*

Research exercise 7: epigraph, paratext, republishing

**Week XI Eliot, *Middlemarch***

April 1 Long paper rough draft (10 pages) due by Friday 5 pm

Long paper workshop – no seminar papers or critical summaries

Research exercise 8: “quarry”

**Week XII Eliot, *Middlemarch***

April 8  J. Hillis Miller, “Optic and Semiotic in *Middlemarch”*

Leah Price, from *The Anthology and the Rise of the Novel*

Research exercise 9: novels with keys

*colonial/post-colonial*

**Week XIII Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*; Trollope, “The Banks of the Jordan”, return**

**to *Hard Cash***

April 15 Said, from Orientalism

Cohen, Intro and “Skin” from Embodied

Making the field: list of postcolonial secondary readings developed by seminar

**Week XIV** **Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*** *big data?*

April 22 Seminar develops updated readings; for reference, spring 2011 readings:

Franco Moretti, “Style, Inc” or “Graphs”

Stephen Ramsay, “Algorithmic Criticism”

David Hoover, “Quantitative Analysis and Literary Studies”

“The End of Theory”:

http://www.wired.com/science/discoveries/magazine/16-07/pb\_theory

*Science* Google Ngrams article

Research exercise 10: visualizing *Aurora Leigh* with Voyant

*revisiting realism and others*

**Week XV Oscar Wilde, *Picture of Dorian Gray,***

April 29 **Henry James, “The Figure in the Carpet,” “The Art of Fiction”**

The supernatural short story:"The Lifted Veil" and "The Library Window" again

Retrospective overview:Audrey Jaffe, “Modern and Postmodern Novel Theory”

Retrospective overview: Joseph Childers, “Victorian Novel Theory”

Kucich, “The Unfinished Historicist Project: In Praise of Suspicion”

**Practice oral exams and seminar dinner, dates tba**

**Assignments**

**Seminar papers**

You will write **two 4-5 page (single-spaced) seminar papers** over the course of the semester; they are due as Word attachments to our seminar Dropbox (more on which in class) by **midnight the Saturday 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 **two 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 as Word attachments to our seminar Dropbox (more on which in class) by **midnight the Saturday 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 Saturday 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.

**Outline and discussion facilitation**

Three 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 Sunday at 5 pm** to our outline site (more on which in class). **On Sunday evening, the rest of the seminar members will access the outline and may add their own suggestions**. Then on **Monday morning around 9:30 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 on our seminar’s public Wordpress site: <http://courses.swarthmore.edu/spring2013/engl111/>

**Research exercises, research objects, research imagination**

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). Practically, this means that six or seven times over the course of the semester we will complete a short research exercise designed at first to acquaint you with specific research tools and skills and later to put those skills to use by doing some research on objects (novels with keys, "quarry") that pick up on the thematic of research that is one of our class threads. These exercises are designed to complement and build on one other and should help you to frame, research, and write your final paper. They are graded pass/fail; if you complete the exercise, you pass! If you don’t, you fail. You may miss one. Because these exercises will be discussed in class on their due date, they may not be handed in late. You are free to talk to one another about the exercises, but make sure that you actually go through all of the steps of the exercise yourself.

**Research exercise roundup**

We will build into each seminar, via the class outline, a short discussion on our current research exercise and our thinking about research. All you need to do to prepare is to pay a little meta-attention to the exercises as you do it and to think a little about questions and problems the exercise provokes. For example, how using this particular tool might influence the shape of your research (more on this in class)? How might what you discover in researching a given object point to aspects that are un-researchable? I am in the planning stages of a project on teaching research in the humanities called (tentatively) "The Research Imagination," and I invite you to contribute and receive credit for insights into this work.

**Project: *How to Treat a Victorian Novel***

*How to Treat a Victorian Novel,* which we will complete before break, will involve our reading of Tom Philips’s *Humument: A Treated Victorian Novel,* our own creation of a treated novel(s), and the location of these novels in the McCabe library stacks. I have some ideas about how to structure this project, but I want yours as well. So during the first two weeks of class, we will discuss and finalize this assignment, in consultation with McCabe’s outstanding humanities reference librarian, Anne Garrison.

**Project: *Preparation for the Victorian Novel***

Our second project, which we will begin after spring break and complete by the end of the semester, will involve our work with the Charles Reade archive at Princeton University. In this project, you will work to create a Charles Reade-like notecard for a chapter (or some other component) of one of our syllabus’s novels, ideally one that will feature in your long/SHS paper. Drawing on the experience and skills you have developed, try to work backwards from the finished novel to imagine how its author prepared to write it.

So while the *How to Treat a Victorian Novel* assignment takes a printed novel and goes forward to think about reception and reading as very embodied material practices, *Preparation for the Victorian Novel* reaches back to reimagine how one Victorian novel came into being.

**Long 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 around March break**, with a rough draft due soon after. 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 part of break three times during the semester. Consult with one another, and be creative!

**Reading and note-taking, technology**

During the first week of class you will receive an email from me containing links to a few different technologies we will use to facilitate various forms of individual and collective note-taking, writing, and archiving. 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 may have two or three additional multi-hour “lab” or “workshop” meetings over the course of the semester. We will discuss the scheduling of these in class; I expect that some of us at some times will need to come late or depart early; this is fine. In addition, please reserve Monday at 9:30 am to meet with me during the weeks you are in charge of discussion and outline.

**This 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**

**Grading**

30% class participation, discussion direction, completion of research exercises and group projects

20% seminar papers (10% each)

10% close reading papers (5% each)

10% criticism summaries

20% long paper (for Honors students, this will be your SHS paper)

10% written and oral exam

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a very serious offence. 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, firm. Plan ahead.

**Books**

The main books you will need to buy are:

Anthony Trollope, *The Warden*. Broadview ISBN-13: 978-1551111384

Anthony Trollope, *Barchester Towers.* Penguin ISBN-13: 978-0140432039

Anthony Trollope, *An Autobiography.* Penguin

Margaret Oliphant, *Phoebe Junior*. Broadview

Margaret Oliphant, *Autobiography of Margaret Oliphant* ISBN-13: 978-1551112763

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations.* Oxford ISBN-13: 978-0141439563

Charlotte Bronte, *Villette.* Penguin ISBN-13: 978-0140434798

Charles Reade, *Hard Cash.* Acquire your own copy.

Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone.* Penguin. ISBN-13: 978-0140434088

George Eliot, *Middlemarch*. Penguin ISBN-13: 978-0141439549

George Eliot, *The Mill on the Floss.* Penguin. 0141439629

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh.* Broadview.

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray.* Broadview.

Tom Philips, *Humument,* fifth edition. Acquire your own copy.

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.