

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 4350F (001)

Seminar in Nineteenth-Century Literature: Voice, Image and Politics in Victorian Poetry
Fall 2023

DRAFT COURSE OUTLINE. THE FINAL COURSE OUTLINE WILL BE HANDED OUT AT THE FIRST CLASS MEETING.

Prerequisites: 1.0 from English 3000-3999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Depending who you ask, the long reign of Queen Victoria (1827-1902) was either a golden age of English poetry or its most decadent. It was period when major poets like Alfred Tennyson and Elizabeth Barrett Browning were celebrities who became wealthy from the royalties on their work and whose opinions on politics and culture were quoted in the press. It was the last period in English literary history when poetry had more cultural prestige than prose fiction, and when poetry was a medium for political art and for writing about sex with a frankness that was not allowed in popular forms like the novel. It was period of intense formal and generic innovation, which saw the reintroduction of metres from Medieval poetry as well as experiments with free verse. Victorian poets introduced important modern genres like the dramatic monologue.

This course will survey the major poets of the period, including Tennyson and Barrett Browning, as well as Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, D. G. Rossetti, Algernon Swinburne and others. We will discuss metre as the written expression of bodily rhythms. We consider poetic treatments of politics and sexuality and the relation between developments in poetry and developments in print technology and in the mass reproduction of images.

Course Materials

Required text: *The Broadview Anthology of British Literature, Volume 5: The Victorian Era* ISBN 9781554814916. This text is required in paperback—please do not purchase the e-book.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignments:

---Complete the reading assignments by the dates specified. **Come to class prepared to ask and discuss the assigned readings. Bring your book.**

Your attendance and engagement in class will determine 10% of your final grade in the course. This portion of the grade will be reduced to 0 for any student with more than 9 hours of unexcused absence from class in either term. Any student whose attendance has been unsatisfactory to that point will receive written notification on or before November 15.

--There will be two papers. A 1000-word paper on an assigned topic will be due October 11 (25% of final grade); a final 3000-word critical essay on a topic of your choice will be due at our last meeting December 6 (40% of final grade). Please discuss your topic for the final paper with me well in advance of the due date.

--During the course of the term each student will present a poem or passage from a poem orally to the class. Your presentation should take no more than 20 minutes. In this presentation you should begin by reading aloud the poem or passage to be discussed. Then as appropriate explain its formal and generic characteristics: metre, stanza form, dramatic setting (speaker and addressee); explain any historical or literary allusions; then discuss different possible interpretations. Speak about anything in the poem that you *don't* understand—this may provide a point of departure for discussion. (25% of final grade).

--If you require academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed assignment worth more than 10% of your final grade, you must apply to the Academic Counselling office, where you will be asked to provide documentation

Accommodation Policies

Accommodation for Students with Disabilities:

Students with disabilities work with Accessible Education (formerly SSD) which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The accommodation policy can be found here: [Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities](#).

Accommodation for Students on Medical Grounds:

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth (either alone or in combination) 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department.

Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The Student Medical Certificate (SMC) can be found at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf.

The full policy is set out here:

https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Religious Accommodation:

Students should consult the University's list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Statement on Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence and providing compassionate support to anyone who has gone through these traumatic events. If you have experienced gender-based or sexual violence (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts, [here](#). To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Academic Support & Engagement <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Timetable

(All readings in *The Broadview Anthology* unless otherwise indicated)

September 13: Introduction; Alfred Tennyson, "Mariana;" Toru Dutt, "Our Casuarina Tree."

September 20: Hemans, "Properzia Rossi" (handout) Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott," "Ulysses," "The Epic," "Morte d'Arthur," "Tithonus" (handout), J. S. Mill "What is Poetry."

September 27: Elizabeth Barrett Browning: "The Cry of the Children," "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," (handout) "A Curse for a Nation," "A Musical Instrument."

October 4: Robert Browning: "Porphyria's Lover," "My Last Duchess," "The Bishop Orders His Tomb...," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "Andrea del Sarto."

October 11: (Paper 1 due) Robert Browning "Love Among the Ruins," "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," "The Last Ride Together," Matthew Arnold, "The Buried Life," "Dover Beach."

October 18: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*

October 25: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*

November 8: Barrett Browning, "Sonnets from the Portuguese" (handout).

November 15: D.G. Rossetti, "The Blessed Damozel," "Jenny," From *The House of Life* #24-27 ("Willowood") C. Rossetti, "Goblin Market."

November 22: C. Rossetti, "A Triad," "A Birthday," "After Death," "Echo," "Song" ("When I am dead"), "In an Artist's Studio," from *Sing Song* (handout); Augusta Webster, "A Castaway"; Amy Levy "Magdalen;"

November 29: William Morris, "The Defence of Guinevere," "The Haystack in the Floods;" Algernon Swinburne, "The Triumph of Time," "Itylus," "Laus Veneris," "Anactoria."

December 6: (Final paper due) Gerard Manley Hopkins, "God's Grandeur," "The Windhover," "Pied Beauty," "Spring and Fall," "As Kingfishers Catch Fire," "No Worst, there is none," "That nature is a Heraclitean Fire..." Tekhionwake/E. Pauline Johnson, "The Song my Paddle Sings," "Kicking Horse River," "The Cattle Thief," "The Corn Husker," The Art of Alma Tadema, "The Lost Lagoon;" Michael Field, TBA.