# Hong Kong Shue Yan University

# Department of English Language & Literature

1st term, 2018-19

Course Title: Victorian Literature and Society

Course Code: ENG 485

Year of Study: 4th

Number of Credits: 3

Duration in Weeks: 15

Contact Hours per Week: 3

Pre-requisite(s): Nil

Prepared by: Dr. Michelle Chan

**Course Aims**

This course focuses on the major literary genre of the Victorian age (c. 1837-1900): the novel. We will approach three key Victorian novels through a number of key questions: How was society shaped in the Victorian world? What ideas influenced education? How did both religion and science influence Victorian lives? What was the status of Victorian women? What did masculinity and femininity mean to the Victorians? What did the Victorians think about love and marriage? What was the role of the imagination and art? How important was the novel in Victorian culture? How relevant is Victorian literature today? Students will explore the important social, cultural, and intellectual issues of the period and consider how literary writers engaged with the concerns of their time. Viewing film adaptations will enrich our reading of literary texts and we will learn how to relate relevant critical theories as well as selected non-fictional writings of the time, such as social commentaries, journalism, or philosophical essays. By the end of the course, students will learn to recognize and analyze the intersections between Victorian literature and society and evaluate its continuing significance.

**Course Outcomes, Teaching Activities and Assessment**

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| **Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)** | |
| Upon completion of this course students should be able to: | |
| **ILO1** | Have and communicate a good understanding of the texts |
| **ILO2** | Describe the features of Victorian literature |
| **ILO3** | Demonstrate an understanding of Victorian society |
| **ILO4** | Analyse critical issues related to Victorian literature and society |
| **ILO5** | Develop a critical reading of literary texts |

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| **Teaching and Learning Activities (TLA)** | |
| **TLA1** | Critical reading and analysis of the set texts |
| **TLA2** | Explanation of the social, cultural, and intellectual background of the texts |
| **TLA3** | In-class Discussions |
| **TLA4** | Researching and writing the course essay |

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| **Assessment Tasks (AT)** | | |
| **AT1** | Group Project (1000 -1500 words) | 15% |
| **AT2** | Mid-Term Examination | 20% |
| **AT3** | Term Paper (3000-3500 words) | 25% |
| **AT4** | Final Examination | 40% |
|  | TOTAL | 100% |

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| **Alignment of Course Intended Learning Outcomes, Teaching and Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks** | | |
| **Course Intended Learning Outcomes** | **Teaching and Learning Activities** | **Assessment Tasks** |
| ILO 1 | TLA 1,2,3,4 | AT 1,2,3,4 |
| ILO 2 | TLA 1,2,3,4 | AT 1,2,3,4 |
| ILO 3 | TLA 1,2,3,4 | AT 1,2,3,4 |
| ILO 4 | TLA 1,2,3,4 | AT 1,2,3,4 |
| ILO 5 | TLA 1,2,3,4 | AT 1,2,3,4 |

**Course Outline**

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| Week 1 | Introduction |
| Week 2-4 | **Science and Darwinism:**  **Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886)**  Reading:  Donald Lawler, ‘Reframing Jekyll and Hyde: Robert Louis Stevenson and the Strange Case of Gothic Science Fiction’  Karl Miller, ‘The Modern Double’  Stephen Jay Gould, ‘Post Darwinist Theories of the Ape Within’  Patrick Brantlinger, ‘An Unconscious Allegory about the Masses and Mass Literacy’ |
| Week 5-7 | **Social Criticism and Justice:**  **Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1838)**  Reading:  Henry Mayhew, ‘Boy Inmate of the Casual Ward’ from *London Labour and the London Poor* (Excerpt)  Graham Greene, ‘The Young Dickens’  John Bayley, ‘*Oliver Twist*: “Things as they really are”’  Keith Hollingsworth: ‘The Newgate Novel and the Moral Argument’ |
| Week 8 | Reading Week |
| Weeks 9-11 | **Aestheticism and Decadence:**  **Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891)**  Reading:  John Ruskin, ‘A Definition of Greatness in Art’ (Excerpt) from *Modern Painters*  Walter Pater, ‘Leonardo Da Vinci’, ‘Conclusion’ from *The Renaissance*  Oscar Wilde, ‘The Critic as Artist’ (Excerpt), ‘The Decay of Dying’ (Excerpt) |
| Weeks 12-14 | **Detective Fiction and Colonialism**  **Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (1868)**  Reading:  Joseph Chamberlain, ‘The True Conception of Empire’ (Excerpt)  D.A. Miller, ‘From *roman policier* to *roman-police*: Wilkie Collin’s *The Moonstone*’  Tamer Heller, ‘Blank Spaces: Ideological Tensions and the Detective Work of *The Moonstone*’ |
| Week 15 | Recapitulation |

**Academic Honesty**

You are expected to do your own work. Dishonesty in fulfilling any assignment undermines the learning process and the integrity of your college degree. Engaging in dishonest or unethical behaviour is forbidden and will result in disciplinary action, specifically a failing grade on the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission. A second infraction will result in an F for the course and a report to College officials.

Examples of prohibited behaviour are:

* **Cheating** – an act of deception by which a student misleadingly demonstrates that s/he has mastered information on an academic exercise. Examples include:
* Copying or allowing another to copy a test, quiz, paper, or project
* Submitting a paper or major portions of a paper that has been previously submitted for another class without permission of the current instructor
* Turning in written assignments that are not your own work (including homework)
* **Plagiarism** – the act of representing the work of another as one’s own without giving credit.
* Failing to give credit for ideas and material taken from others.
* Representing another’s artistic or scholarly work as one’s own
* **Fabrication** – the intentional use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive

**To comply with the University’s policy, the Course Essay must be submitted to VeriGuide.**

**Course Materials**

Collins, W. (2008). *The Moonstone*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dickens, C. (1993). *Oliver Twist*. F. Kaplan (ed.). New York: Norton.

Stevenson, R. L. (2003). *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. K.B. Linehan (ed.). New York: Norton.

Wilde, O. (2006). *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (2nd ed.). D. L. Lawler (ed.). New York: Norton.

**Recommended Reading:**

Abrams, M.H., Greenblatt, S.G., Christ, C.T., & Robson, C. (eds.). (2005) *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Volume E. The Victorian*. Norton: New York.

Brown, J. P. (1997). *Cosmopolitan Criticism: Oscar Wilde’s Philosophy of Art*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.

Clarke, C. (2014). *Late Victorian crime fiction in the shadows of Sherlock*. Hampshire: Palgrave.

Deirdre, D. (ed.). (2001). *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gillespie, M. P. (1995). *The picture of Dorian Gray "what the world thinks me"*. New York: Twayne Publishers.

Gilmour, R. (1993). *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context, 1830-1890.* London: Longman.

Heilmann, A. & Llewellyn, M. (2010). *Neo-Victorianism: the Victorians in the twenty-first century, 1999-2009*. Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jordan, J.O. (ed.). (2001). *The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ledger, S. & Furneaux H. (eds.). (2011). *Charles Dickens in context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Miller, R. K. (2005). *Recent Reinterpretations of Stevenson’s Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: why and how this novel continues to affect us*. Leiwston, N.Y.: Edwin Mellen Press.

Page, N. (1995). *Wilkie Collins: The Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge.

Paroissien, D. (ed.). (2008). *A Companion to Charles Dickens*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

---., (ed.). (1992). *The companion to Oliver Twist*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Pykett, L. (ed.) (1998). *Wilkie Collins*. London: Macmillian.

Reed, J. R. (2015). *Dicken’s Hyperrealism*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press.

Richardson, R. (2012). *Dickens and the Workhouse: Oliver Twist and the London Poor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Taylor, J.B. (ed.). (2006). *The Cambridge companion to Wilkie Collins*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Thoms, P. (1992). *The windings of the labyrinth: quest and structure in the major novels of Wilkie Collins*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Veeder, W. R. & Hirsch G. (eds.). (1988). *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: after one hundred years*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Welz, S. & Schenkel, E. (eds.). (2014). *Dickens on the Move: Travels and Transformations*. Frankfurt am Main, Germany: PL Academic Research.

Wilde, O. (2013). *Art and Morality: A Defence of “The Picture of Dorian Gray”*, S. Mason (ed.). Hardpress.