

The Victorian Period Course Syllabus

ENGL 380 Fall 2025

Instructor	Dr. Melisa Klimaszewski mk470@evansville.edu	Student Drop-In Office Hours	Mon/Wed 1:45-3:00 & by appointment
Office Location	Visiting Faculty Office		
Course Mode	In-person		
Course Meeting Days and Time	Mon/Wed 3:30pm-4:45pm		
Required Experiential Learning Dates	31 October trip to Haworth and hiking on the moors (!). {No extra fee.}		

Course Information

Course Description

The Victorian era was not gray or sleepy, as many 21st-century readers assume. Rather, it was full of contradiction, debate, and rebellious figures. In this class, students read 19th-century literature with a focus on British novels. We will focus on understanding how the Victorians questioned and developed concepts that remain central to human experience. How did Victorians represent and define race? How do stories about scandalous marriages comment on restrictive laws? What do rebellious fictional wives tell us about feminism in the nineteenth century? How does detective fiction interrogate race? What do domestic servants reveal about family structures and labor dynamics? As we work collaboratively to develop answers to the questions above, students will closely analyze textual details as they build strong critical analyses in class discussion as well as written assignments.

Catalog Description

Explores British literature from 1837 to 1901, with emphasis on the Victorian writer as poet, sage, and novelist. Includes such authors as Barrett, Browning, Tennyson, Newman, Gaskell, and Dickens.

Credit Hour Policy Statement

Standard lecture: This class meets the federal credit hour policy of 1 hour of class with an expected 2 hours of additional student work outside of class each week for approximately 15 weeks for each hour of credit, or a total of 45-75 total hours for each credit.

Course Learning Outcomes

- Close reading/close analysis skills, as evidenced in written assignments and class discussion.
- Clear, cogent writing that follows MLA standards.
- Conduct academic research.
- Coherent verbal presentation of research.
- Knowledge of the 19th-century British history covered in lectures and readings.

Required Materials

Print editions of the following books (not e-books or anything requiring a screen). The editions below are recommended if you do not already own a reputable (Oxford Classics, Penguin, Broadview) edition.

Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. *Lady Audley's Secret*. Broadview ISBN 1551113570

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Oxford ISBN 978-0141441146

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Oxford ISBN 0192833545

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. Penguin ISBN 9780141439563

Seacole, Mary. *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs Seacole in Many Lands*. Penguin ISBN 0140439021

Methods of Instruction: Lectures, in-person discussion, reading quizzes, written papers, verbal presentations.

Grading Criteria

25% Daily Verbal Participation

25% Reading Quizzes

25% Analysis Papers (4-5 papers, 2-3 pages in length)

25% Final Presentation and Annotated Bibliography

*Attendance also affects your final course grade. See policies below.

All assignments are scored on a 100-point scale, and I will provide detailed assignment sheets well in advance of due dates. Reading quizzes are straightforward and usually not difficult if you have completed the reading with attention. For written assignments, completing all assignment requirements and doing average work earns a grade in the "C" range. Doing a written assignment well (with a minimum of mistakes, weak areas, or errors) earns a score in the "B" range. Impressive written work that achieves the assignment goals with distinction earns a score in the "A" range.

GRADING SCALE

100-point scale scores convert to letter grades as follows:

Point Score	Letter Grade
98-100	A+
93-97	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
73-76	C

70-72	C-
67-69	D+
63-66	D
60-62	D-
59& below	F

Class Participation and Preparation

You are expected to do the assigned reading before each class meeting and to bring the reading with you to class (printed copies of the shorter readings and print books, not e-books). Come to class prepared to engage in a lively discussion. To accomplish our goals and to have as much fun as possible this semester, it is essential for every class member to contribute to discussion. Arrive with comments or questions, and be ready to speak.

Participating in class not only helps you to learn but also contributes to the learning of other students. When it comes to participation, good listening skills are as important as good speaking skills. All students are responsible for maintaining a respectful environment. Any disruptive or disrespectful activity will result in substantial lowering of your participation score, and I may ask you to leave the class. Such activities include phone activity of any sort, sleeping, arriving late, leaving early, reading or doing work for other courses, and having “side conversations” with classmates. Unless you have been given permission from the professor, you should not have a laptop computer open during class meetings. Students routinely report that the real-time, face-to-face, shared focus of our classroom – without the distractions of screens or phones – is an element of their university education that they value most highly.

Withdrawal and Attendance Policies

Harlaxton College expects regular class attendance by all students. Students are considered sufficiently mature to appreciate the necessity of regular and punctual attendance, to accept this personal responsibility and to accept the consequences of failure to attend. When absences occur due to emergency or medical reasons, students are expected to notify their instructors of the absence prior to class or to seek the assistance of the College nurse or a member of the Student Experience Team for help in notifying instructors.

Instructors have the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons upon review of appropriate documentation and professional recommendation supporting such a request. In the event of long-term illness, reasonable accommodations will be made to allow a student to complete a course. accommodation. In these cases, the Dean will need to approve the long-term nature of the accommodation.

The Dean of Harlaxton College has the authority to grant excused absences for medical, psychological, or personal reasons. Each instructor is expected to maintain an attendance policy in keeping with the nature of the Harlaxton program and may consider it in evaluating performance in their courses.

Policy Governing Unexcused Absences

Harlaxton College operates an attendance policy that is binding on all faculty and students. The number of unexcused absences that are allowed before incurring a penalty is related to the number of times a class meets each week. For courses which meet three times a week, students are allowed a maximum of three unexcused absences during the semester without attracting penalty points. For courses meeting twice a week two such absences are permitted, and for courses meeting once a week a single absence is allowed. Additional unexcused absences will attract a grade penalty. In this class, any unexcused absence beyond two will result in a half-letter grade deduction [a student with 3 unexcused absences would forfeit 5 points on the 100-point scale, so a final course grade of 90 (A-) would be lowered to 85 (B).]

Policy Governing Excused Absences

- Excused absences are not given to facilitate student travel independent of College-sponsored travel.
- Students may be permitted to miss class because of participation in academic field trips.
- Instructors must coordinate and confirm academic field trips with the Dean, prior to the commencement of the Semester to ensure their inclusion in the Semester timetable.
- Where authorization for an academic field trip is requested after the commencement of the semester, the request must be submitted to the Dean.

The following information is required:

- Purpose and brief description of the official Harlaxton event or academic fieldtrip.
- Dates, location, and times (as applicable).
- Alphabetical list of students involved [Last Name/First Name] along with their student identification number.

If approval is granted:

- Instructors affected will be notified at least one week prior to the class period during which absence is anticipated, or as soon as possible.
- Missed class time due to student participation is to be considered an excused absence.
- The grade of a student may not be lowered in any class due to excused absences.
- It is the student's responsibility - to take the initiative by consulting with their instructors before the absence occurs, and - to do what is required by the instructor to make up all missed assignments and/or examinations.
- Instructors are required to assist students in these occasional situations of excused absences.

Honor Code

All students at the University of Evansville agree to the University honor code: *I will neither give nor receive unauthorized aid, nor will I tolerate an environment that condones the use of unauthorized aid.* If you witness another student using unauthorized aid, you are obligated to report the incident.

Course AI and Academic Integrity Policy

In this course, submission of any work that is not entirely your own is considered academic dishonesty. The use of generative AI tools such as ChatGPT are prohibited and constitute a violation of academic integrity as examples of unauthorized aid. Online translators and writing aids, such as Grammarly, are

also prohibited. "Synonym copying" is also a form of plagiarism. If you have questions about online writing aids, please ask your professor.

Any paper (whole or in part), regardless of its quality, that is plagiarized, uses sources that are not cited, or is determined not to be the work of the cited author will receive an "F," and the student will receive an "F" in the course. Using books, study aids, or notes during quizzes or exams, or looking at someone else's answers, is prohibited.

Course Schedule

Subject to minor change/adjustment with ample notice.

Note: Closer to the start of classes and when final enrollment numbers are available, I will update this document with a more detailed reading schedule (including the number of chapters to be completed for each date) and assignment due dates.

09/01 Introductions

09/03 Introductory Lecture on the Victorian Period

09/08 Getting acquainted with the Victorian period. Peter Fryer on William Cuffay (excerpt from *Staying Power*); Henry Mayhew from *London Labour and the London Poor*; Sarah Stickney Ellis from *The Women of England*; and Sarah Lewis from *Woman's Mission*.*

09/10 Elizabeth Gaskell, "The Old Nurse's Story"*

09/15 Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market"*

09/17 *Jane Eyre*

09/22 *Jane Eyre*

09/24 *Jane Eyre*

09/29 *Jane Eyre*

10/01 Joan Anim-Addo "Queen Victoria's Black 'Daughter'" from *Black Victorians, Black Victoriana** and Bressey selections from *Black Victorians: Black People in British Art 1800-1900*.*

10/06 *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* through 75

10/08 *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* finished

10/13 *Wuthering Heights*

10/15 *Wuthering Heights*

~ Fall Break ~

10/27 *Wuthering Heights*

10/29 *Wuthering Heights*

10/31 Required day trip to Haworth parsonage. We shall hike on the moors!

- 11/03 Fisch, “‘Repetitious Accounts So Piteous and Harrowing’: The Ideological Work of American Slave Narratives in England”*
- 11/05 *Great Expectations*
- 11/10 *Great Expectations*
- 11/12 *Great Expectations*
- 11/17 *Lady Audley’s Secret*
- 11/19 *Lady Audley’s Secret*
- 11/24 *Lady Audley’s Secret*
- 11/26 *Lady Audley’s Secret*
- 12/01 Robert Browning, “Porphyria’s Lover”* and presentations
- 12/03 Charles Dickens, “What Christmas Is As We Grow Older”* and presentations
- 12/08 Presentations and in-class reflective essay
- 12/10 Presentations and course wrap up.

University Policy Statements

Disability Policy:

The University of Evansville is committed to providing an accessible and supportive environment for students with disabilities. It is the policy and practice of the University of Evansville to make reasonable accommodations for students with properly documented disabilities. Students should contact Disability Services at 812-488-2663 to seek services or accommodations for disabilities. Written notification to faculty from Disability Services is required for academic accommodations.

Institutional Equity and Title IX

UE is committed to fostering an atmosphere free from harassment and creating an inclusive campus for all members of the University community regardless of their sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion, ethnicity, country of origin, ability, or veteran status. All Faculty members are considered Responsible Employees and required to report instances of discrimination, harassment, or sexual violence to the Office of Institutional Equity

You may also choose to speak to a Confidential Resource about your experience. Confidential Resources at the University include:

Counseling Services: 812-488-2663, counselingservices@evansville.edu

Crayton E. and Ellen Mann Health Center: 812-488-2033, healthcenter@evansville.edu

Spiritual Formation Coordinator: 812- 488-5265, spiritualformation@evansville.edu

If you or someone you know has been harassed, assaulted, or discriminated against you can find the appropriate resources by contacting the Assistant Director of Institutional Equity and Title IX

Coordinator: email titleix@evansville.edu ; phone (812) 488-5261. For more information visit <https://www.evansville.edu/offices/titleix/policy.cfm> .

Non-discrimination Statement

The University of Evansville expects all members of its community to treat each other with respect and civility. Harassing behaviors directed towards any member of our community will not be tolerated. As part of its commitment to non-discrimination, the University specifically prohibits harassment based on any other characteristics set forth in its nondiscrimination statement as follows: including race, color, gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, creed or religion, national origin, age, disability, veteran status and all federally protected groups/classes. Any form of harassment undermines the mission of the University and negatively impacts the University community as a whole. For more information contact the [Center for Inclusive Excellence](#).

Campus Safety

All members of the UE community are automatically enrolled in the Ace Alerts Emergency Alert System. When the system is activated, emergency notification information is sent in the following manner: calls to campus IP phones, text messages, emails, campus housing speaker system, active threat sirens (non-weather related), digital signage, and AlertUS desktop on campus-owned computers.

To contact the Office of Public Safety:

Emergencies: 812-488-6911

Non-emergencies: 812-488-2051

Complaints, Grievances, and Appeals

The University of Evansville seeks to resolve all student concerns in a timely and effective manner through policies and processes documented in the University [Course Catalog](#) and [Student Handbook](#).

Additional Student Resources

Harlaxton College Nurse: Lesley Selby, RGN, +44 01476 403027, lseyby@harlaxton.ac.uk

Harlaxton College Counselling Services: counselling@harlaxton.ac.uk