

Spring 2021
Online Course
MWF 1:50-2:40pm
rachel.teukolsky@vanderbilt.edu

Professor Rachel Teukolsky
Office hours: email any time
to set up a Zoom meeting

English 3614. The Victorian Period: The 19th-Century Criminal

The nineteenth-century criminal was a popular, sensationalized figure whose lurid appeal has persisted into the present day. Victorian Britain saw the invention of the Metropolitan police force, the professional detectives at Scotland Yard, the mug shot, and the fingerprint. At the same time, systemic oppression and inequalities cast certain men and women into the category of “criminal.” Our class will study the plight of the prostitute and the African-American slave. Texts will include: Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*; detective stories by Edgar Allen Poe; Robert L. Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon*; and Arthur Conan Doyle, selected Sherlock Holmes stories. We will also analyze Victorian crime in contemporary film and television, asking the question, why does this old-fashioned underworld still appeal to contemporary sensibilities? How do Victorian ideas of “the criminal” compare with our ideas about criminality today?

Required Texts

- Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (Penguin Classics 2003)
- Robert L. Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Broadview, 2005)
- Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (Penguin Classics, 2001)
- Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon; or, Life in Louisiana: A Play in Five Acts* (Broadview, 2014)
- Other selected readings will be available electronically on the class Brightspace page, under “Course Content” (BR).
- The course also requires the viewing of assigned movies and TV shows; I will provide information on where and how to stream.

Mon, Jan. 25 Introduction: Crime and the 19th Century
Weds., Jan 27 Contrasts. Tennyson, “Ulysses”; Images by Gustave Doré, *London: A Pilgrimage*
Fri., Jan 29 Darkest London. Friedrich Engels, from *The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844* (BR). In-class lecture: Introducing 19th-Century Britain.
Mon., Feb. 1 Criminality and the Gothic. Edgar Allan Poe, “The Murders in the rue Morgue” (BR); handout on transcendentalism (BR)
Weds., Feb. 3 Emile Durkheim, “The Normal and the Pathological” (BR).
Fri., Feb. 5 **Asynchronous**: Henry Mayhew, “The street children of London” (BR)
Mon., Feb. 8 Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, Book 1.
Weds., Feb. 10 Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, Book 2, chs. 1-4; two Dickens letters about Fagin (BR).
Fri., Feb. 12 Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, Book 2, chs. 5-9

- Mon., Feb. 15 Dickens, *Oliver Twist*, finish novel.
 Weds., Feb. 17 Dickens, *Oliver Twist*
 Fri., Feb. 19 Dickens, *Oliver Twist*

Sunday, Feb. 21, 11:59pm Paper #1 (5 pp.) due uploaded to class Brightspace Page

- Mon., Feb. 22 Movie: *Oliver Twist*, dir. Roman Polanski (2005)
 Weds., Feb. 24 In-class reading day (we will meet): Games, conversation, de-stress
 Fri., Feb. 26 **Asynchronous:** Richard Altick, “The Weaker Sex” (BR); British Library Video on Victorian gender (BR).
- Mon., Mar. 1 Victorian Womanhood. Coventry Patmore, “The Angel in the House”; John Ruskin, from “Of Queen’s Gardens” (all on BR)
 Weds., Mar. 3 The fallen woman & prostitute. William Acton, “Prostitution Considered in its Social and Sanitary Aspects”; Judith Walkowitz, “The Common Prostitute in Victorian England”; paintings of “The Fallen Woman” (all on BR)
 Fri., Mar. 5 Prostitute in Poetry I. D.G. Rossetti, “Jenny” (BR)
- Mon., Mar. 8 Prostitute in Poetry II. Augusta Webster, “A Castaway” (BR)
 Weds., Mar. 10 The female criminal. Anon., “Woman in Her Psychological Relations” (BR); Cesare Lombroso, *The Female Offender*, pp. 147-155; ‘Synthesis,’ pp. 187-91.
 Fri., Mar. 12 **Asynchronous:** “True Cases of Women in Crime”: Pulp Fiction Cover Art Portraying Female Criminals
- Mon., Mar. 15 Feminist revisions. *The Fingersmith*, 2-part BBC TV series (3 hrs total)
 Weds., Mar. 17 TV show: *Orange is the New Black*, Season 1, episodes 2 & 3
 Fri., Mar. 19 The Criminal Body & the State. Mary Warner Marien, from *Photography: A Cultural History* (BR).

Sunday, Mar. 21 by 11:59pm, Paper #2 (5 pp.) due uploaded to class Brightspace page

- Mon., Mar. 22 Slavery & Criminality. Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon* (pp. 21-75; also read the description of the alternate ending on pp. 107-108)
 Weds., Mar. 24 *The Octoroon*, cont.
 Fri., Mar. 26 **Asynchronous:** “John Brown’s Day of Reckoning”
<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/john-browns-day-of-reckoning-139165084/>
- Mon., Mar. 29 Movie: *12 Years a Slave*, dir. Steve McQueen (2013)
 Weds., Mar. 31 The Dark Double. Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (read the entire novella).
 Fri., Apr. 2 *Jekyll and Hyde*, cont.
- Mon., Apr. 5 Judith Walkowitz, “Jack the Ripper.” From *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (BR).
 Weds., Apr. 7 In-class reading day (we will meet): Games, conversation, de-stress
 Fri., Apr. 9 **Asynchronous:** True Crime Podcast Assignment

Sunday, Apr. 11 by 11:59pm, Paper #3 (5 pp.) due uploaded to class Brightspace page

Mon., Apr. 12	Movie: <i>From Hell</i> , dir. Hughes brothers (2001).
Weds., Apr. 14	Mark Seltzer, “The Serial Killer as a Type of Person” (BR).
Fri., Apr. 16	Karen Halttunen, “The Pornography of Violence,” in <i>Murder Most Foul: The Killer and the American Gothic Imagination</i> (BR).
Mon., Apr. 19	<u>Sherlock Holmes</u> . Arthur Conan Doyle, <i>A Study in Scarlet</i> , Part 1 (pp. 7-67)
Weds., Apr. 21	Doyle, <i>A Study in Scarlet</i> , Part 2 (pp. 70-127).
Fri., Apr. 23	Asynchronous: Arthur Conan Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia” (BR)
Mon., Apr. 26	<i>Sherlock</i> (British TV, 2010), episode 1: “A Study in Pink” (90 min)
Weds., Apr. 28	Subject TBD
Fri., Apr. 30	Last Day!

Paper Revisions—Optional—due Tues., May 4 by 11:59pm uploaded to our Brightspace page

Course Policy

Teaching and Learning in the COVID-19 Era: The world is currently being engulfed by a global pandemic. These are tough circumstances for taking a class. Any one of us might get sick. You may need to shift your lodgings abruptly. In all cases, **communication is key**. Please let me know if you get sick, or if personal issues arise that will affect your course performance. We can make adjustments if you need extensions on deadlines or ways to make up missed classes.

Requirements: This course requires three 5-page essays and a series of smaller writing assignments. The grade break-down is as follows: Paper #1 (20%), Paper #2 (20%), Paper #3 (20%), Discussion Posts (10%), Participation (20%). Course participation will take place online via Zoom; see below for more details.

Revision Option: You will have the option of revising any of the papers toward a higher grade. The new grade will be averaged with the old grade. A new grade will only be awarded if the paper is significantly rewritten, using my comments on the earlier draft. The revisions are **optional** and are due on Tues., May 4 by 11:59pm (noted above).

Assignments: Complete all the readings for the day listed on the syllabus. If the syllabus lists a video, movie, or TV show, you should watch it before the class meeting. Many of the course readings will be posted on Brightspace (BR). *Please make sure that you have all the course readings accessible for our class discussion.*

Writing Assignments: Papers should be double-spaced, in a reasonable twelve-point font (like Times New Roman), with one-inch margins all round. Papers are due by 11:59pm on the day noted in the syllabus: they should be uploaded under “Activities & Assessments”/ “Assignments” on the course Brightspace page. Late papers will be penalized 1/3 grade for each day they are late. If you need an extension on a paper deadline, please try to ask me in advance, ideally at least one week before the paper is due. *In the pandemic era, the professor is more flexible about assignments and due dates. However, you must **communicate with me via email** if you need an accommodation for a paper due date.*

Class Meetings: Class meetings will take place online using Zoom. You can find the link to enter class on the course Brightspace page, under the ‘Zoom’ tab. This class is mostly a “synchronous” online class, which means that course participation will largely take place during our course meeting time, from 1:50pm to 2:40pm. I invite you log in to Zoom a couple of minutes early, if possible, so that we can start class on time. Please be considerate and don’t be late!

Asynchronous Assignments: Periodically, Friday class meetings won’t take place; instead, you will be asked to respond to assigned texts (or images/videos) on the class discussion board. You can find the discussion board on Brightspace under “Activities & Assessments/ Discussions.” In response to the discussion prompt, please write a minimum of 125 words, maximum of 225 words. I invite you to respond to the prompts thoughtfully and incisively. The discussion post is **due by 11:59pm on the Friday** it is assigned for. If you post timely responses for all the asynchronous assignments you will receive full credit (numerical score: A = 92); in other words, each response is graded Pass/Fail. **Please read the syllabus carefully: it’s up to you to keep track of when the class is meeting in-person versus asynchronously.**

Attendance: Attending our online conversation is a vital and mandatory part of this course. I understand that sometimes you have to miss class. I don’t distinguish between excused or unexcused absences, since the course offers you a way to make up your absences.

*Please note that attendance also goes into evaluating your participation grade.

After **3 absences**, every additional absence will decrease your **final** grade by 1/3 of a letter.

If it turns out that you must miss class, owing to illness or a faulty internet connection, you can **make up the missed class** by turning in a 4-page, double-spaced paper that answers the discussion questions posted for the day. I will post a PowerPoint presentation for each class on Brightspace; it will go live usually 10 or 15 minutes before class starts. The PowerPoint will cover the day’s course material. If you miss a class, I invite you to **watch the recording of our class discussion** while writing your make-up paper and working through the PowerPoint, so that you can see how your classmates weighed in on the day’s discussion questions. **If you miss 6 or more classes without turning in make-up papers, you will fail the course.**

Participation: I want to hear from you. It is important to me to get as many people talking in class as possible. Even if you are shy or unused to speaking in class, you will have the opportunity to practice in our friendly and welcoming environment. Please be aware that **I may call on you during our class discussion.** Zoom is sometimes a challenging environment for class conversations, and it helps to break the ice if I can randomly call on students. You will always have the opportunity to say ‘Pass’ if you can’t think of anything to say. Often, you will be asked

to weigh in on a question that was asked in advance, so you'll have time to prepare something before class starts. Your voice matters to me!

Please note: if you have multiple absences without makeup papers, your participation grade will be affected.

Technology: In an in-person class, I ask that students put away cell phones and other distracting electronic devices. For an online class, I still prefer that you turn off and stow your phone during class. Consider taking notes the old-fashioned way, using pen and paper. I ask that you do everything you can to focus your attention on our Zoom screen conversation.

Academic Integrity: This class is governed by the Vanderbilt Honor Code. You are required to bring your own original ideas to the interpretation of the texts. I ask that you don't consult outside sources in the writing of the papers. If you present the words or ideas of others without citing your sources, then you are guilty of plagiarism. Your case will be referred to the Vanderbilt Honors Council, and you will likely fail the class. For an in-depth description of what counts as plagiarism, please see:

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/student_handbook/chapter2.html#honorcode>

Documented Disability: If you need to be accommodated for any kind of documented disability, please let me know at the beginning of the semester so that I can work with you to help you succeed.

Grade Distribution: Paper grades are equivalent to the following numerical values:

A+= 100	B+=88	C+=78	D+=68
A= 95	B=85	C=75	D=65
A/A-= 93	B/B-=83	C/C-=73	D-=61
A-= 91	B-= 81	C-=71	D--=59
A-/B+=90	B-/C+=80	C-/D+=70	

The following percentages translate into letter grades for your final grade.

A=100-93	C+=79-78
A-=92-90	C=77-70
B+=89-88	D=69-60
B=87-83	F=below 60
B-=82-80	

Reaching Me: You can email me anytime to set up an appointment on Zoom: rachel.teukolsky@vanderbilt.edu. We can find a time that will work for both of us. If anything is happening in your life that will affect your course performance, please get in touch. Feel free to set up an appointment to chat about how the class is going. I look forward to getting to know you.