

Neo-Victorian Novels and Films – Adapting the 19th century for a Contemporary Audience

1. Course Description:

This course will examine some of the best known works of Neo-Victorian fiction in the 20th century in Britain. The course will start with an overview of the genre by looking at its precursors: Victorian fiction and historical fiction. We will consider the genre from a diachronic point of view, by analyzing its evolution, and from a synchronic point of view, by analyzing the historical context when the novels were published and their reception. The approaches employed will be cultural studies, for the investigation of the way the Victorian cultural background is rewritten and adapted in these novels and films. We will also examine a few theoretical texts, which will be provided in the course pack.

2. Pre-requisites: Previous readings in Victorian Literature and Postmodernist Literature.

3. Course requirements:

A. Readings: The theoretical readings will have to be completed in the first weeks of class, according to a schedule you will receive, together with the course outline and the course pack, during our first meeting. These texts are short ranging from 10 pages to 20 pages.

B. Presentations:

You will have to do presentations dealing with the theoretical readings. The presentation will count for 30% of your final grade. We will schedule the presentations in the first meeting.

C. Essays:

You will write one essay this semester, which will make up the majority of your graded work for the course (50%).

The essay will be due at our last week of class, it will be 6–7 pages in length and it will deal with either sources of inspiration for the Neo-Victorian novels to be discussed (for some element of the Victorian Age present in those novels), or with the depiction of a cultural typology or an element of Victorianism in one of the novels / movies / TV series we will discuss. This paper will count for 40% of your final grade.

Do not by any means plagiarize. If you use any outside source (book, website etc.) to help you prepare for writing your essay, please quote/mention it. Any form of plagiarism brings the grades of your essays down to **one (1)**. Keep in mind that I use plagiarism detection software to check your essays. For this reason, I ask that the essays will be turned in electronically to the following email address: elianaionoia@yahoo.com.

- Title of the document in which you write your essay – 3A / 3B gr no Last name_First Name_name of author on which you wrote your essay,
- Length – 4–5 pages long / 6–7 pages long, using MLA style,
- Top left corner – your name, year, group and languages, written with Times New Roman 10,
- Top right corner – name of course and of course instructor, written with Times New Roman 10,
- Bottom centre – page numbers – 1 of 6, 2 of 6, so on and so forth
- Title – centred, bold, Times New Roman 16 – the title should not be the title of the work you analyse, but rather should reflect the content of the essay, it should be original and it should pose an implied question for which the essay provides the answer
- The essay should be organized in introduction, body and conclusion
- The introduction should clearly state your thesis statement and methodological approach to the text.
- Body of essay – justified, first line indented for each paragraph, 1.5 spacing, Times New Roman 12, organized in well-thought out and well-written paragraphs.

- **Short quotes** (any quote under 3 lines) – included in the body of the essay, in inverted commas, after them add the in-text citation – like so „,...” (Last name of author, page number)
- **Long quotes** (any quote over 3 lines) – indented as a separate paragraph at 0.5 inches or 1.27 centimetres, Times New Roman 11, single spaced, no inverted commas (since the indentation already marks it as a quote), after them add the in-text citation (Last name of author, page number)
- The **conclusion** should summarize the main points of the body and should show the impact of the chosen theme.
- **Bibliography** – alphabetized by last name of author or editor, the bibliography can be divided in primary sources (the book you are analysing) and secondary sources (theoretical or critical works)

E.g.

Burnett, John, ed. *The Middle Ages*. London: Routledge, 2001. – use italics for titles of books, novels, volumes

Campbell, Christian. "Religion in the Middle Ages" in *The Middle Ages*. Ed. By John Burnett. London:

Routledge, 2001. Pp. 26–41. – use inverted commas for chapters or articles in books or journals

D. Class Participation: You are expected to participate in class discussion so your contributions will be factored in as a large percentage of your final grade (20%). The success of the course relies on your participation and reading of the materials.

4. Course grading: Presentation – 30%, Essay – 50%, Class Participation – 20%.

5. Class schedule, outline, course pack including theoretical readings: to be received during our first meeting.

6. Bibliography and Filmography:

A. Primary sources: Any edition of the novels will be acceptable, below I am merely listing the editions I own.

Books:

1. Ackroyd, Peter. *The Limehouse Golem*. London: Vintage, 2017.
2. Byatt, A.S. *Angels & Insects*. London: Vintage Books, 1995.
3. Faber, Michel, *The Crimson Petal and the White*. Canongate, 2002.
4. Fowles, John. *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. London: Vintage, 2004.
5. Gray, Alasdair. *Poor Things*. London: Penguin, 1993.
6. Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. London: Penguin, 2011
7. Waters, Sarah. *Fingersmith*. Virago: 2002.

Films:

1. *Angels & Insects*. Dir. Philip Haas. Playhouse International Pictures, 1995. DVD.
2. *Fingersmith*. Dir. Aisling Walsh. Salle Head Production (BBC), 2005. DVD.
3. *The Limehouse Golem*. Dir. Juan Carlos Medina. New Sparta Films, 2016. DVD.
4. *Penny Dreadful* – Season 1. Creator John Logan. Showtime Networks, 2014. DVD.
5. *The Crimson Petal and the White*. Dir. Marc Munden. Origin Pictures and Cite Amerique (BBC), 2011. DVD.
6. *The French Lieutenant's Woman*. Dir. Karel Reisz. Juniper Films, 1981. DVD.
7. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Dir. Brendan Maher. Kudos Production (BBC), 2006. DVD.

B. Secondary sources: theoretical readings – in the course pack

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979.

Chapter 1: "The Queen's Looking Glasses: Female Creativity, Male Images of Women and the Metaphor of Literary Paternity" Pages: 3–44

Chapter 2: "Infection in the Sentence: The Woman Writer and the Anxiety of Authorship" Pages: 45–92

Pearsall, Ronald. *The Worm in the Bud: The World of Victorian Sexuality*. London: Penguin Books, 1972.

Chapter 3 "A Dream of Fair Women"

Subchapters

B. The Submissive Woman 104–120

C. The Predatory Woman 120–134

D. The Girl of the Period 134–141

Chapter 5 “The Facts of Life”

Subchapters

- A. Childbirth and Women’s Diseases 254–262
- B. Menstruation 262–272
- C. Birth Control 272–285
- D. Venereal Disease 285–292
- E. The Facts of Life 292–303

Chapter 6 “Prostitution”

Subchapters

- A. Aristocratic Fun 307–319
- B. Men about Town 319–331
- C. The Demi-Semi-Monde 331–340
- D. Facts and Figures 340–348
- E. Working Class Prostitution 349–358
- F. Child Prostitution 358–366

Scull, Andrew. *The Disturbing History of Hysteria*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Chapter 3 “An English Malady?” pages 43–61

Chapter 4 “Reflexly Mad” pages 62–83

Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of Their Own: From Charlotte Bronte to Doris Lessing*. London: Virago Press, 2003.

Chapter 1: “The Female Tradition” pp 3–36

Sweet, Michael. *Inventing the Victorians*. London: Faber and Faber, 2001.

Chapter 5 “I Knew My Doctor Was a Serial Killer Because...” pp 71–85 – murderers

Chapter 6 “Last Exit to Shadwell” pp 86–103 – drugs

Chapter 7 “The Archaeology of Good Behaviour” pp 104–120 – angel in the house

Chapter 10 “Presumed Innocent” pp. 155–171 – childhood

Chapter 11 “Whatever Happened to Patriarchy” pp 172–189 – men and women

Chapter 12 “The Monomaniacs of Love” pp. 190–206 – sexuality and pornography

Taylor, Miles and Michael Wolff, eds. *The Victorians since 1901: Histories, Representations and Revisions*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2004.

Chapter 10 “The BBC and the Victorians” author: James Thompson, pages: 150–166

7. Facebook Group

Information will be posted to the following group: [Neo-Victorian Elective 2020](#)