

# Late 19th Century British Literature & Culture: Aesthetes, Libertines, & Dandies



English 341-01: Dickinson College, Fall 2018  
M/R 3:00-4:15; Althouse 201  
Class website: [www.blogs.dickinson.edu/britishlit](http://www.blogs.dickinson.edu/britishlit)

Professor Sarah E. Kersh  
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[sarahkersh.com](http://sarahkersh.com)

Office Hours: Thurs 10:00-11:30, Fri 8:30-10:00 and by appt

Office phone: 717-254-8952

Office: Historic President's House, 6B\*

\*NOTE: My office is located on the 2nd floor, which is only accessible by going upstairs. This building does not have an elevator. If this is problematic for you, I will gladly arrange to meet you on the main floor or at another, more accessible, location. Please let me know.

## Course Description

The fin de siècle—French for ‘the end of the century’— is a period of literature and culture that has been portrayed as being “caught between two ages, the Victorian and the Modern” (Ledger and Luckhurst). This in between period is perhaps known best for its cry of “art for art’s sake” and the suggestion that morality is relative. Because it usually is characterized by decadence and questions of immorality, the end of the nineteenth century is too often overlooked as a period of enormous technological, political, social, and intellectual change in British literary and cultural life. In this course, we will examine literature, and art more broadly, in the context of discourses on urban problems, ‘The New Woman,’ imperialism and socialism, as well as place it in conversation with a number of developments in science, psychology, and sexology.

We will read a range of different works of fiction, drama, and poetry by authors such as Oscar Wilde, Michael Field, Mona Caird, H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Bram Stoker, and William Morris.

## Course Materials<sup>1</sup>

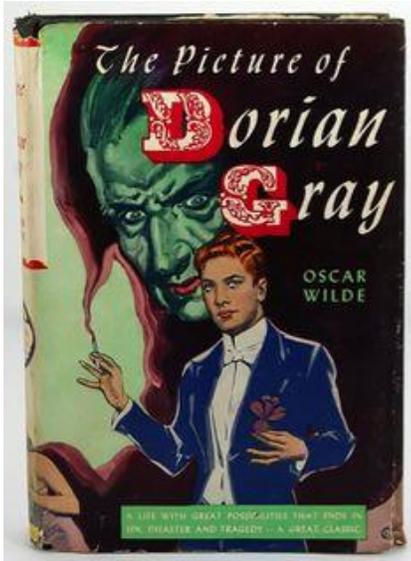
The following texts are required for the course and are available at the college bookstore:

- *Six Great Sherlock Holmes Stories* by Arthur Conan Doyle (ISBN 978-0-486-27055-5)
- *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (ISBN- 978-0-14-143984-6)
- *Late Victorian Gothic Tales* (ISBN: 978-0-19-953887-4)
- *The Island of Dr. Moreau* by H.G. Wells (ISBN: 978-0-486-29027-0)
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde (ISBN: 978-0-14-143957-0)
- Additional readings are available on our class website unless otherwise specified in the syllabus.
- *Writing Analytically*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen (ISBN: 978-1337284448)\*

\*There is a copy of *Writing Analytically* on reserve at the library. If you chose it use that copy, you must photocopy the pages assigned for class so that you can have them with you in class.

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<sup>1</sup> **Content Note:** Some of the texts presented in this course are explicit in their treatment of sex, of bodies, and of violence. Reading and discussing these texts can be demanding in ways that are often unexpected, and your success in this class will require an open engagement with the material. I will make every effort to work with students who have difficulty; however, if you feel you are not inclined or able to work with explicit material, I encourage you to think about other course options.



### Attendance

**Preparation, attendance, and participation are crucial to this course and your success in it.** This class is a workshop/seminar and therefore depends on the participation of its members. Failure to attend undermines the class as a whole. Attendance, therefore, will be a substantial part of your participation grade. You may miss *up to two* class periods without penalty. I do not distinguish between “excused” and “unexcused” absences, so please use these judiciously. I strongly advise you keep at least one free absence “in the bank” in case something comes up. If you miss the class for any reason, you are responsible for what went on in the class, including changes of assignments. I will not answer emails asking me to describe what went on in class. You are responsible for contacting one of your classmates to find out what went on, including any changes of assignments. **If you miss more than three classes your grade will decrease per missed class.** If you have extenuating circumstances, please contact me as soon as possible.

Please make an effort to be on time. Class begins promptly and if you are more than ten minutes late, I will record you as absent. If you have a reason that may cause you to be late from time to time, please let me know. (If you are a student athlete or member of a student group that requires you to miss class for a university-sanctioned event, please let me know as soon as possible.)

### Papers

Papers will go through the invention, drafting, feedback, and revising process. The process of revision and the ultimate success of the paper depend upon a thoughtful first draft as well as a polished final draft. For each longer paper, you will have ample time for writing the first version and for revising after receiving feedback on the draft. All papers (first and final versions) must be word-processed and meet standard format practices (either double-spaced, 12 point font, pages numbered in the right hand corner, title and name on first page, and date of submission OR an online equivalent). Throughout the paper, the citations and documentation style should be consistent. Late papers will be penalized one full letter grade.

#### **Evaluation Policies for Writing Assignments**

In general, I will evaluate your writing by considering how well you have achieved the following goals (developed by the Writing Program):

1. The author crafts an introduction that identifies a question, frames the question, and states a thesis.
2. The author organizes the writing, demonstrates a progression of ideas, and maintains a consistent focus or thread.
3. The author contextualizes the question and supports it with evidence.
4. The author sustains analytical inquiry throughout the assignment.
5. The author effectively incorporates relevant outside information.
6. The author engages the intended audience with a consistent, distinctive voice appropriate to the task.
7. The author adheres to appropriate standards for language use.
8. The author conforms to appropriate formats for citation of source material.

### **Requirements and Grading**

Beyond participation, your grade will be based on regular short writing assignments and two more formal essays. The relative weight of each component is as follows:

Attendance and Participation	15%
Blog Posts, comments, and other short writing (This makes each blog post worth <i>about</i> 5% of the final grade)	35%
Proposal & Source Analysis	20%
Final Paper: Analytical Essay with Outside Research	30%

Final letter grades will be assigned in the following way:

A = 93-100	B- = 80-82	D = 60-69
A- = 90-92	C+ = 77-79	F = 0-59
B+ = 87-89	C = 73-76	
B = 83-86	C- = 70-72	

### **A Note About Grades:**

If you would like to discuss graded work, please take at least two days to review my comments, along with the grading criteria for the assignment. While I don't negotiate grades, I am happy to discuss strategies for improving your writing.

### **Extra Credit:**

If you attend any Dickinson College screening, workshop, or lecture and write a 1-2 page reflection stating how the event related to this class and what was interesting about it for you, I will award 1 point extra credit. You may complete up to 5 extra credit reflections. These points will be added to your final paper grade at the end of the semester. I will reject any reflection I feel is insufficient or unsuitable.

### **Participation:**

I also expect you to read the assigned material and prepared to ask questions and offer opinions about it during class. Attendance alone with little or no contribution will only earn you approximately a C in participation. I recognize that some students are hesitant to speak in front of class. If this is the case, please come talk with me during office hours early in the semester.

### **Technology:**

The point of my course technology policy is to create a distraction-free environment for you and the people sitting near you. Therefore, during class time, you may only use laptops and tablets for e-readings and taking notes. If you are using technology appropriately, you will spend far more time looking at your classmates than you do looking at the screen. You may not have Facebook, games, or internet sites open during class, and doing so will end your computer/tablet privileges. We recommend you switch off your wireless connection to help you avoid unwanted distractions. Please turn your phone to silent and enclose it completely in your bag away from your sight and touch. Translation devices are allowed if you speak to me first. Per Pennsylvania state law, the use of recording devices is not permitted unless specifically cleared for accommodation purposes.

### **Deadlines:**

Deadlines are firm. Unless you have asked for and received prior permission to extend the deadline or you have a signed medical excuse, late assignments will lose one grade increment per day late. I cannot accept assignments more than one week late.

“How can I know what I think until I see what I say?” – E.M. Forster

### **Blog Posts:**

You will complete a number of blog posts over the course of the semester as well as comment on other posts made by your classmates. These posts will be in response to prompts handed out in class or of your own direction. Over the course of the posts, I expect you to engage with the readings and discussions and not simply summarize them. I also expect you to make connections to other sources, media, and class texts so please add quotations, images, links, videos, etc that relate to the week’s topics and your interpretation of them. We will explore these skills in class.

### **Privacy**

Part of our class will be trying out new and different perspectives and positions because I want to give ourselves the room to experiment, I request you all create a screen name under which you blog for our class. **I am happy to remove any blog posts at the end of the term and/or you may remove your own writing once it is graded.** (If you choose to delete a post, however, please do let me know.)

### **Norman M. Eberly Writing Center:**

Writers of all levels and abilities need feedback in order to develop their ideas and grow as writers. Dickinson’s trained writing tutors can help you generate ideas, begin drafting, revise a rough draft, figure out your professor’s preferred documentation style, understand and respond to professor feedback, edit your writing – among other things. You can walk in or call and make an appointment at (717) 245-1620 (or 245-1767 for foreign language writing). For more information about hours and procedures, visit the web:

<http://www.dickinson.edu/academics/resources/writing-program/content/Writing-Center/>



*Cover image of  
Michael Field's Works  
and Days*

### **Academic Integrity**

With respect to all assignments in this course, I expect you to do your own work. You are certainly encouraged to discuss course content and readings with your fellow classmates, but your work in papers must be your own. Regarding outside sources, you will need to cite all of your sources. We will discuss ways of doing this before your first paper is due. If you have any questions about what constitutes cheating or plagiarism, please feel free to ask. From Dickinson College's Community Standards:

*Respect for ideas – our own and others’ – is a hallmark of academic integrity. We show respect by acknowledging when we have used another’s words or ideas in our work. We expect others to acknowledge when they use our ideas or words in their work. Students are expected to do their own work on quizzes, papers, examinations, class assignments, etc.*

([https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/963/community\\_standards](https://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/963/community_standards) )

### **Accommodations**

I am committed to including all students in this course and am happy to discuss accommodations with students, provided that this conversation happens **early** in the semester and definitely before any papers/projects are due. From Dickinson College’s Disability Services:

*Dickinson values diverse types of learners and is committed to ensuring that each student is afforded an equal opportunity to participate in all learning experiences. If you have (or think you may have) a learning difference or a disability – including a mental health, medical, or physical impairment– that would impact your educational experience in this class, please contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to schedule a meeting with Director Marni Jones. She will confidentially discuss your needs, review your documentation, and determine your eligibility for reasonable accommodations. To learn more about available supports, go to [www.dickinson.edu/ODS](http://www.dickinson.edu/ODS) , email DisabilityServices@dickinson.edu, call (717) 245-1734.*

**Other Needs:**

I am committed to providing equal educational opportunity to all students. If you have a concern or issue regarding this class, your ability to participate in it, or the material we are covering, please stop by my office hours or email me to set up an appointment. The sooner we can talk about your concerns, the better I will be able to help you negotiate a solution. Please note I do not usually check email after 5:00 pm or on weekends.

**Class Contacts:**

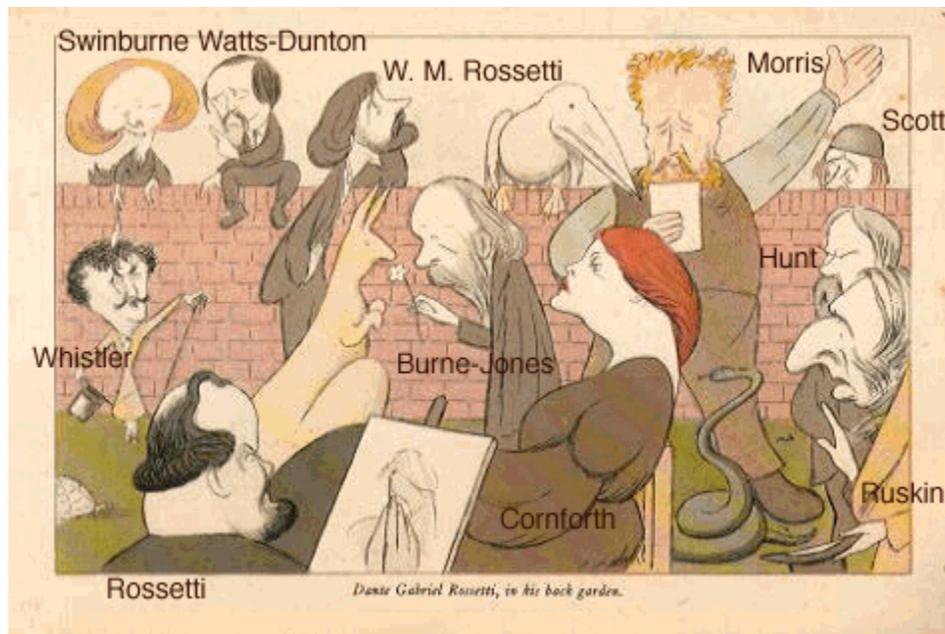
If you miss class for ANY reason it is YOUR responsibility to contact another member of the class to see what you may have missed. Please make sure you have at least three contacts:

1. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

2. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

3. name: \_\_\_\_\_ cell: \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: The policies, procedures, schedules, and requirements in this syllabus are subject to change— should any occur I will make every effort to give you plenty of notice.



Max Beerbohm's Caricature of the Rossetti Circle — *Dante Gabriel Rossetti, in his back garden*  
<http://www.victorianweb.org/painting/prb/3.html>

## Late 19th Century British Literature & Culture: Aesthetes, Libertines, & Dandies

NOTE: This COURSE SCHEDULE MAY CHANGE.

Please see our class website for more up-to-date information

Class website: <http://blogs.dickinson.edu/everythinginbetween/> (password: Kersh)

While I intend to stay as faithful to this syllabus as possible, I reserve the right to make changes at any time to accommodate the evolving needs and interests of the class. Changes will always be announced in class prior to the date they take effect. Absent students are responsible for any changes announced in class. Please see our class website for more up-to-date information

**Course Schedule:** Reading and Writing assignments are due in class on the date they are listed. (red assignments are writing assignments or exams)

### Week 1

M 9/3

~ Class Introduction

R 9/6

~ Ledger and Luckhurst's introduction to *The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c. 1880-1900* (handout) \*Note: read this text imagining that it is the introduction to our class. Bring with you 3 points you find interesting, revealing, or strange.

~ *Writing Analytically*, 7<sup>th</sup> ed Chapter 1 pp 10-21

### Week 2

M 9/10

~ read poems by Amy Levy, Arthur Symons, and John Gray (handout) \*come ready with three points in the poems that connect with the reading by Ledger and Luckhurst (in other words, if L&L describe the fin de siècle, then how do these poems fit that description?)

~ introductory material from *The Longman Anthology of British Literature: The Victorian Era* (handout)

~ complete: **Writing Questionnaire**

R 9/13

~ *The Island of Dr. Moreau*; pp1-51

### Week 3

M 9/17

~ finish *The Island of Dr. Moreau*

~ **blog post#1 due**

R 9/19

~ Timothy Christensen's "The 'Bestial Mark' of Race in The Island of Dr. Moreau" (handout) (focus on the first 3 sections– to 585– and come with at least three passages you think are interesting, revealing, or strange as well as any questions)

### Week 4

M 9/24

~ *Dracula* (chapters 1-3)

~ **Comment on at least 2 of your peers' blog posts.** Comments should be about 75-100 words and work to make connections across posts or to other moments in the book.

R 9/27

~ *Dracula* (chapters 4-9)

~ the rest of Freud's "Creative Writers and Day Dreaming"

**Week 5**

M 10/1

~ *Dracula* (chapters 10-14)~ **blog post #2 due**

R 10/4

~ *Dracula* (chapters 15-19)

~ read Emily Gerard's "Transylvanian Superstitions" (handout)

**Week 6**

M 10/8

~ Read *Dracula* (chapters 20-24)~ **Comment on at least 2 of your peers' blog posts.** Comments should be about 75-100 words and work to make connections across posts or to other moments in the book.

R 10/11

~ *Dracula* (chapters 25-end)

~ read your assigned article from the Norton Critical edition (Senf, Moretti, or Craft)

**Week 7**

M 10/15

~ read Vernon Lee's "Dionea" and B. M. Croker's "The Dak Bungalow at Dakor" in *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*~ **blog post #3 due**

R 10/18

~ read Jean Lorrain's "Magic Lantern" and "The Spectral Hand" in *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*~ Read and watch the video on the British Library's website: [Gothic Motifs](#)**Week 8**

M 10/22 – FALL PAUSE; no class

R 10/25

~ Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (chapters 1-3)**Week 9**

M 10/29

~ *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (chapters 4-8)~ **blog post #4 due**\*\*10/30: Special Screening of *Gods and Monsters*, 7:00 Rubendall Details TBA

R 11/1

~ *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (chapters 9-13)**Week 10**

M 11/5

~ *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (chapters 14-end)~ **Comment on at least 2 of your peers' blog posts.** Comments should be about 75-100 words and work to make connections across posts or to other moments in the book

R 11/8

~ read Mona Caird "On Marriage" (handout)

~ read excerpt from Eve Sedgwick's *Between Men* (handout)**Week 11**

M 11/12

~ Michael Field: read "about" and *Sight and Song* volume through "Venus and Mars" (Access the poems here: <https://michaelfield.dickinson.edu/>)

~ These additional pages might be useful as you read: Key to names in the MF diaries and letters and Contemporary Reception of MF (handouts)

~ **blog post #5 Due**

R 11/15

~ finish volume of *Sight and Song*

~ read Michael Field additional information including introduction, selections from diaries, selected letters, and review of *Sight and Song* (handout)

### **Week 12**

M 11/19

~ read Swinburne, Gray, Beardsley, and Raffolovich poetry (handout)

~ **blog post #6 Due**

R 11/22

~ read John Addington Symonds poetry (handout)

~ read Havelock Ellis essay on Symonds (handout)

### **Week 13**

M 11/26

~ **In-class Peer Review: prospectus and source analysis**

R 11/29

~ Conan Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia" and "The Adventure of the Empty House"

### **Week 14**

M 12/3

~ **prospectus and source analysis due**

R 12/6

~ Conan Doyle's "The Adventure of the Speckled Band"

~ Rudyard Kipling's "The Mark of the Beast" in *Late Victorian Gothic Tales*

### **Week 15**

M 12/10

~ **In-class Peer Review: Final Paper**

R 12/13

~ final class wrap up

**Final Paper Due with Writer's Memo Due: by 5:00pm on Thursday December 20**