

## **ENGL 360/ WGST 300: Victorian Sexualities**

Dickinson College, Spring 2015

MWF 9:30-10:20, East College 301

<http://blogs.dickinson.edu/victorianlit> #VictorianSex

Professor Sarah E. Kersh

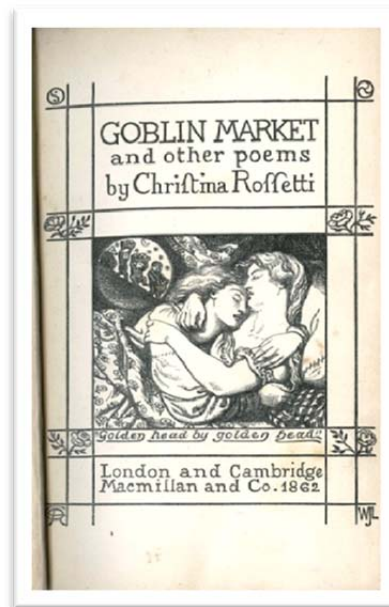
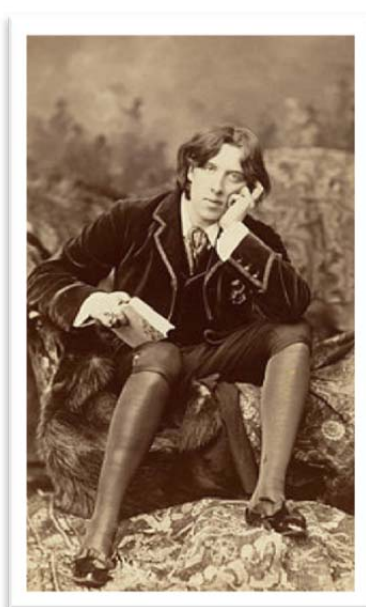
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\* see course website for image credits

### **Course Description and Objectives**

Often the Victorian era (1832-1901) is depicted as a period rigid in its attitudes toward morality, gender, and sexuality. However, nineteenth-century literature saw an array of “dangerous” people inhabit its pages: effeminate men, political women (also known as the New Woman), prostitutes, and hysterics to name a few. Victorians lived during a time of new emphasis on democracy and equality, scrutiny of marriage and property law, and, at times, openness to diversity in gender and sexuality. While our course will pay special attention to changing conceptions of the individual, sexuality, and gender, we also will look at the ways in which gender and sexuality intersect with race, class, nationality, and other social factors. This course is an upper-level seminar in Victorian literature of many genres—poetry, drama, the novel, and non-fiction prose— by a variety of authors.

The learning objectives for this class, and all other English 300-level courses, are as follows. By the end of this course, students will understand and be able to:

1. make a cogent and controvertible argument that relies on literary evidence and demonstrates familiarity with the relationships between primary and secondary sources;
2. use library databases, construct an annotated bibliography, and cite sources properly, through successful completion of the Literary Studies Research (LSR) laboratory;
3. use the knowledge gained from class assignments, presentations, and discussion to locate individual works in wider contexts and traditions as well as to develop a specific, original literary thesis;
4. evaluate arguments and sources and to identify and employ methodologies in critical arguments.

### **Course Materials**

The following texts are required for the course and are available at the college bookstore. In addition, you will need to be able to access various other texts on our class website.

- 1) *The Penguin Book of Victorian Verse* edited by Daniel Karlin (Penguin Classics) ISBN-10:0140445781
- 2) *The Importance of Being Earnest and other Plays* (Oxford Classics) by Oscar Wilde ISBN-10: 9780199535972
- 3) *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins (Penguin) ISBN-10: 0141439610
- 4) *\*Writing Analytically*, 6th ed. (2011) by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen ISBN-10: 0495910082

\*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.

### **Attendance and Participation**

**Preparation, attendance, and participation are crucial to this course and your success in it.** Regular attendance and conscientious preparation for class are assumed and expected. That said I recognize things sometimes come up, and as such, I give you up to *three* absences throughout the course of the semester without penalty. Missing classes beyond that will result in a reduction of your participation grade. Just showing up for class, however, is not enough to guarantee a high participation grade. Your participation grade will be calculated based on the following criteria:

- You come to class having done the day's reading.
- You prompt discussion and/or respond to your peers.
- You enter the conversation without dominating or silencing others.
- You offer more than just personal opinion or anecdote – that is, you root your comments in the text we are discussing. (In other words, people who try to comment on things they have not read will lose points.)
- You attend peer review sessions with a complete rough draft.

- You work collaboratively with people to achieve learning goals when you are placed in a small group.
- You are present and engaged in every class. Therefore, you take care of your needs before you come to class. You will lose all of your participation points if you make a regular habit of excusing yourself in the middle of class to take a phone call or to use the restroom.

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. In addition, if extenuating circumstances arise that are interfering with your ability to attend and/or participate in this class or others, please come see me as soon as possible. Dickinson has many resources available to you that might help you navigate a challenging a time or situation and I can help you locate those resources. As a general rule of thumb, if you are struggling in some way, please see me 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	10%	
Paper #1	15%	Short Close Reading

Paper #2	20%	Proposal and annotated bibliography
Blog Posts and other short writing	30%	
Paper #3	25%	Analytical Essay with outside Research

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	

**Grade Calculations:**

I use an excel worksheet to calculate my 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 lowest paper grade at the end of the semester. I will reject any reflection I feel is insufficient or unsuitable.

**Lateness, Cell Phones, and Other Disruptions:**

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. Please remember to turn OFF all cell phones unless otherwise directed. 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.

**Technology in the Classroom:**

Since thoughtful listening and responding will be instrumental to the success of our course, I will limit the use of laptop/tablets/etc. to particular in-class assignments. **In other words, I do not like for students to use laptops for general note taking in class.** Of course, if you feel this will harm your ability to succeed in the class, please see me; there are reasons to make an exception.

When working on an in-class assignment which requires you to access online texts and/or various social media, I expect **all students to stay on-task and not stray from our class focus.** To put it simply, I do not tolerate students surfing the web or chatting online during class.

**Deadlines:**

Deadlines are firm. Unless you have asked for and received prior permission to extend the deadline or you have extraneous, extenuating circumstances, 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**

### **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/>

### **Academic Integrity**

**Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.** Consistent with Dickinson College's Student Code of Conduct, cheating of any kind may lead to disciplinary action, which often includes failing the course. Submission of someone else's written work or using sources without proper credit is unacceptable. Enrollment at Dickinson represents a commitment to abide by the College's principles of academic integrity. Please read Dickinson's plagiarism and academic integrity policy, available at:

[http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/2976/academic\\_integrity\\_and\\_how\\_to\\_avoid\\_plagiarism](http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/2976/academic_integrity_and_how_to_avoid_plagiarism)

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 and/or somehow credit *all* of your sources. We will discuss ways of doing this before your first written assignment 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. Normally, a paper may be submitted in fulfillment of an assignment in only one course. Exceptions require permission from the instructors. Collaboration must be noted in writing and requires the consent of all instructors."

From: [http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/3694/2014-2015\\_community\\_standardspdf](http://www.dickinson.edu/download/downloads/id/3694/2014-2015_community_standardspdf)

### **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 College makes reasonable academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities, according to equal access laws. I am available to discuss the implementation of those accommodations. Students requesting accommodations must first register with Disability Services to verify their eligibility. After documentation review, Marni Jones, Director of Learning Skills and Disability Services, will provide eligible students with accommodation letters for their professors. Students must obtain a new letter every semester and meet with each relevant professor prior to any accommodations being implemented. These meetings should occur as soon as possible in the semester, and at least five days before any testing accommodations. Disability Services is located in Biddle House. Address inquiries to Stephanie Anderberg at 717-245-1734 or email [disabilityservices@dickinson.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@dickinson.edu). For more information, see the Disability Services website: [www.dickinson.edu/disabilityservices](http://www.dickinson.edu/disabilityservices).

**Other Needs:**

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. I am committed to providing equal educational opportunity to all students.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

4. 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.

**Course Schedule** (readings and assignments should be completed by the date on which they appear)

Note: I suggest you have a notebook for this class. I expect you to come to each class prepared with what you think are key passages from the text of the day and at least one question you have after completing the reading. I will start most classes by asking for volunteers to share their passages/questions.

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignments	What to prepare for class today/what assignments are due
1 (M)	1/19	Welcome and Introductions		+ What do we already know about the Victorians/ Victorian Literature?
1 (W)	1/21	Defining the Victorian	+ Read articles from <u>The Victorian Web</u> : " <u>Victorian &amp; Victorianism</u> ," " <u>Victorianism as a Fusion of Neoclassical and Romantic Ideas and Attitudes</u> ," " <u>Queen Victoria</u> "	+ come ready with three points that either support or refute the list created in class on 1/19
1 (F)	1/23		+ excerpt from <u>Sex Scandal: The Private Parts of Victorian Fiction</u> by William Cohen + "Why are Women Redundant?" by William Rathbone Greg (1862) (PDF)	+ identify three key moments from the reading and formulate 3 questions based on the reading (write these in your notebook)
<b>UNIT 1: Love, Marriage, &amp; the Redundant Woman</b>				
2 (M)	1/26		+ <i>The Woman in White</i> by Wilkie Collins (hereafter: <i>WIW</i> ); pp 9-63	
2 (W)	1/28		<i>WIW</i> ; pp 63-126	+ <b>Writer's Questionnaire Due</b>
2 (F)	1/30		<i>WIW</i> ; pp 126-195 (end of The First Epoch)	
3 (M)	2/2		+ <i>WIW</i> ; pp 195-266 + <i>Writing Analytically</i> , Chapter 3 pp53-66 (focus on "Five Analytical Moves") and pp70-71, "What it Means to Have an Idea"	
3 (W)	2/4		+ Freud: "Remembering, Repeating and Working Through" (PDF)	
3 (F)	2/6		+ <i>WIW</i> ; pp 266-338	+ <b>Response #1</b>
4 (M)	2/9		+ <i>WIW</i> ; pp 338-411 (end of The Second Epoch)	+ <b>comment on 2 blog posts (make a connection)</b>
4 (W)	2/11	Visual art and Victorian culture	+ <i>WIW</i> ; pp 411-464	
4 (F)	2/13		+ <i>WIW</i> ; pp464-521 + <i>Writing Analytically</i> , "Toolkit of Analytical Moves" pp 85-104 (Simply familiarize yourself with the 5 tools)	
5 (M)	2/16		+ <i>WIW</i> ; pp 521-578	
5 (W)	2/18		+ <i>WIW</i> ; pp 578-627 (end of The 3rd Epoch)	
5 (F)	2/20		+ Carolyn Dever, "The Marriage Plot and its Alternatives" (PDF) + Pamela Perkins and Mary Donaghy, "A Man's Resolution: Narrative Strategies in Wilkie Collins' <i>The Woman in White</i> " (PDF)	+ <b>Response #2</b>

<b>Unit 2: In an Artist's Studio: Beauty, the Muse, and the Dangers of Female Sexuality</b>				
6 (M)	2/23		+ John Ruskin, "The Stones of Venice" from "On <i>The Nature of the Gothic</i> " (PDF)	+ <b>comment on 2 blog posts</b>
6 (W)	2/25		Note: all poems are from <i>Victorian Verse</i> : + Alfred, Lord Tennyson, "The Lady of Shalott," pp 134-139 + Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Blessed Damozel" pp 458-462 + " <a href="#">The Femme Fatale as Object</a> " (online article from The Victorian Web)	
6 (F)	2/27	Nostalgia and the Construction of Gender in 19 <sup>th</sup> -century Art	** Report to the Trout Gallery with Dr. Heather Flaherty ** (no new reading)	
7 (M)	3/2		+ Richard Altick excerpt from "The Nature of Art and its Place in Society" from <i>Victorian Peoples and Ideas</i> (PDF) + Christina Rossetti, "In an Artist's Studio" pp 510 + Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" pp207-8 + Matthew Arnold, "Dover Beach" pp380-1	+ <b>Response #3 (visual objects and Victorian texts)</b>
7 (W)	3/4		+ Christina Rossetti, "Goblin Market" pp473-488 + <i>Writing Analytically</i> , pp227-231	
7 (F)	3/6		TBA	
<b>Week 8</b>	<b>3/9-3/13</b>		<b>NO CLASS</b>	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
9 (M)	3/16		+ <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>	
9 (W)	3/18		+ <i>Alice in Wonderland</i> + <i>Writing Analytically</i> , pp114-119 + 129	
9 (F)	3/20	Orientalism and the Fantasy of the "Other" Body	** Trout Gallery with Dr. Heather Flaherty ** (no new reading)	+ <b>comment on 2 blog posts</b>
<b>Unit 3: Marriage, Adultery, and the Victorian Self</b>				
10 (M)	3/23		+ Michel Foucault, excerpt from <i>The History of Sexuality</i> (PDF)	+ <b>Response # 4</b>
10 (W)	3/25		+ George Meredith's <i>Modern Love</i> , focus on sonnets 1-30, pp 430-445 + Gillian Beer on <i>Modern Love</i> 's "Narrative" (PDF)	
10 (F)	3/27		+ <i>Modern Love</i> , focus on sonnets 31-50, pp 445-455 + Helen Vendler, " <a href="#">The Tragedy in the Bedroom: A Masterpiece of Victorian Adultery</a> "	+ pick poem by class time



*Victorian Sexualities: Spring 2015*

11 (M)	3/30		+ excerpt from "Strategic Formalism" by Caroline Levine (PDF)	+ <b>2 comments on blog posts</b>
11 (W)	4/1		+ short story TBA + <u>The New Woman Fiction</u> (online article from The Victorian Web)	
11 (F)	4/3			+ Prospectus in-class workshop
12 (M)	4/6		Oscar Wilde's <i>The Importance of Being Earnest (IOBE)</i>	
12 (W)	4/8		<i>IOBE</i>	
12 (F)	4/10		<i>IOBE</i>	+ <b>prospectus and annotated bibliography</b>
13 (M)	4/13		TBA- in-class poetry annotation workshops	
13 (W)	4/15		TBA- in-class poetry annotation workshops	
13 (F)	4/17		<i>No class</i>	
14 (M)	4/20		Walter Pater and Michael Field	+ <b>poem annotation and short response due</b>
14 (W)	4/22		Michael Field	
14 (F)	4/24		Michael Field	
15 (M)	4/27		In-class peer review	+ <b>final paper draft due</b>
15 (W)	4/29		TBA	
15 (F)	5/1	Last Class, Wrap Up		

**Final Papers and Writer's Memo due: Tuesday, May 5<sup>th</sup> by noon**