

# Victorian Underworld: Victorian Literature of Scandal and Sensation

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ENL3251-023C, Summer A 2018  
M-F Period 4, PUGH 120

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**Office Hours:** T and Th Period 5 and by appointment

## Course Description

Victorians, like us, were simultaneously fascinated with and fearful of scandal. What scandalized the Victorians, and how did they respond? To answer these questions, this course surveys Victorian literature to explore the Victorian underworld and what it revealed about prevailing social and moral codes. We will draw on a variety of Victorian literature like murder trial court transcripts, essays on prison life, and mental and public health laws, in addition to poetry, short stories, novellas, and a novel. As we comb through these sources, we will consider how they engaged with hotly debated issues, such as the scandals relating to marriage, divorce, sexuality, and prostitution; the tensions among social classes; and the booming market for cheap, unhealthy literature.

We see this most vividly in the exceedingly popular sensation genre, which often fictionalized salacious news reports and reproduced these tales for the masses. In “Sensation Novels” (1862), published anonymously in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Review*, the essayist suggests that the disappointingly “safe life” of mid-nineteenth-century Britain caused “the need of a supply of new shocks and wonders” and goes on to explain how and why sensation fiction fulfills that need. But the Victorian obsession with people, actions, and objects that existed outside of the norm extended far beyond the sensation genre, and this course will examine the breadth of the Victorians’ dichotomous relationship to the Other as well as its intersection with issues of class, gender, politics, and race.

## Required Texts

The following novel is required reading for this course. You may use any edition (print or electronic), but you *must* have access to your text in class. Shorter readings (like poems, essays, short stories, scholarly criticism, and critical theory) will be available on Canvas. Complete reading assignments appear on the Course Schedule below (page 6).

- Braddon, Elizabeth. *Lady Audley’s Secret*. (any unabridged version is acceptable)

## Goals

By the conclusion of the course you will be able to:

1. Craft stronger original, critical readings of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation and analysis, while identifying and interpreting formal and genre-related elements in the texts.
2. Locate and apply critical works to primary texts.
3. Critically assess the variety of roles that literature has played historically and continues to play in the human experience.
4. Draw connections between nineteenth-century texts and their biographical, historical, and cultural contexts of authorship and reading.
5. Construct and support viable, original arguments about literature in an approved MLA format.

## Assignments

All assignment deadlines appear on the Course Schedule below (page 6). Detailed prompts are posted on Canvas.

Participation	100 points
Short Paper and Class Lead	250 points
Periodical Project	250 points
Final Paper	400 points
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

### *Participation (100 points)*

Participation includes completing assigned readings, quizzes, conferences, homework, in-class writing activities, presentations, and discussions. I expect you to come to class prepared to actively participate in class discussions and other in-class activities. This means having completed any reading or homework assigned for that day. Our classroom acts as a safe environment where you can air your opinions and consider those presented by your classmates, so take advantage of this and see how something you are thinking of writing a paper on, for instance, flies in general discussion.

You will receive credit for participation if you contribute anything substantive to the discussion: a complex thought, a clarification, an observation, a question, etc. Each time you participate, you will receive points towards your participation grade.

*If something prevents you from actively participating in class, please schedule a conference with me early in the semester to make other arrangements.*

### *Short Paper and Class Lead: 2 pages (250 points)*

This assignment has two parts: an individual paper and an in-class discussion lead. This assignment asks you to synthesize information from a critical article and your close reading of a text. I will assign the articles, and you will have access to them well in advance of your due date.

You (and one or two classmates) will be responsible for reading a critical article that will help expand our understanding of the text under discussion that day. This discussion leadership is informal, but I will be noting your ability to condense a scholarly argument and weave it into our conversation via questions and analyses. Since most of the class will *not* have read the article, you should be prepared to offer a summary of the article's argument and main points. The goal of this assignment is to refine your ability to engage with literary scholarship. To that end, you should provide an example of how the article can be applied to our text (you may draw on your short paper) and develop thoughtful and productive questions to continue our class discussion for the day.

Individually, you will write a short paper exploring how the critical article can be applied to the text for the assigned day. These papers must have a clear thesis statement and follow proper essay format construction. Compare notes with your group members to ensure that your argument/chosen passage is different than everyone else's. **Papers are due to Canvas by 11AM the day you lead class.**

### *Periodical Project and Essay: 2 pages (350 points for the entire project)*

As a class, we are going to create an issue of our own Victorian periodical. Based on primary sources and secondary materials, the class will determine an audience and general purpose for our periodical and then

decide what type of content to include. With a group of classmates, you will research and create an assigned element of the periodical (social issue essays, installment of a novel, advertisements and illustrations, etc.). Your creative project and accompanying Works Consulted page are worth 200 points.

Individually, you will also turn in a short paper explaining your creative decisions and supporting them with research. This essay is worth 50 points. **Projects and papers are due to Canvas by 11AM on Thursday, June 21st.**

*Final: 5-6 pages (400 points)*

You will select one of our primary texts and create an argument about it. This assignment asks you to combine close reading skills with critical concepts or historical information introduced in class or supplemental readings. The goal is for you to produce a strong conceptual argument supported by textual and contextual evidence.

This project requires scholarly research. Over the course of the semester, you will be expected to turn in a proposal, a partial annotated bibliography, and a final paper. The earlier elements will help prepare you for the final paper and will count towards your score for this assignment. You can find detailed prompts for each element of this project on Canvas. **Papers are due to Canvas by 11AM on Wednesday, June 20th.**

## Grading

A	93-100	4.0	C	73-76	2.0
A-	90-92	3.67	C-	70-72	1.67
B+	87-89	3.33	D+	67-69	1.33
B	83-86	3.0	D	63-66	1.0
B-	80-82	2.67	D-	60-62	.67
C+	77-79	2.33	E	0-59	0.0

**Note:** A grade of C– is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

### *General Assessment Rubric*

Here is the meaning behind the grades I assign to your papers (use the Grading Scale above to convert between points and letters as necessary); you can use these statements to determine how you might work toward a higher grade:

**A-range papers—Insightful:** Your paper is thoughtful, carefully developed, and clearly presented. You demonstrate strong comprehension of the materials under discussion, clear engagement with course themes and contexts, and offer a sustained reading that successfully illuminates the text or texts under discussion. A-range papers are well-organized, well-supported, and well-developed. They are written in an engaging, polished, and clear prose style.

**B-range papers—Proficient:** Your paper is solid, competent, and capable; it would clearly benefit from **either** more complex development, fuller explanation or examples, stronger organization, increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original examples), **or** clearer presentation (structure, prose style, grammar/mechanics).

**C-range papers—Satisfactory:** Your paper is passable, even promising, but has **multiple** key areas that require **considerable** improvement: a more rigorous topic, a stronger thesis, stronger development of ideas, improved focus (in identifying the issue or guiding the reader through your analysis), fuller explanation of examples, increased risk-taking (including subtler or more original examples), **and/or** clearer presentation (structure, prose style, grammar/mechanics).

**D papers—Poor:** Your paper is not yet adequate. D papers are often off track, superficial, have a non-viable thesis (or struggle to narrow down a viable topic), or they struggle to organize and sustain a persuasive reading in readable prose.

**E papers—Fail:** F papers fail to meet the basic criteria of argument, organization, and mechanics, or they fail to respond in a meaningful way to the assignment, or they contain passages that are plagiarized.

## Course Policies

### *Academic Honesty*

Plagiarism is a serious violation of the [Student Honor Code](#). The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a.) Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b.) Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire [Student Honor Code](#).

All the work submitted on Canvas will be passed through Turnitin.com, a website that compares your paper to other papers on the Internet, any published work, and the Internet itself. If you plagiarize, you will be caught, which could result in an automatic E for the assignment, the course, or a disciplinary measure from the university, depending upon the gravity and frequency of the matter.

### *Attendance*

Attendance is *required*. You are allowed **three absences** without any direct effect on your grade. If you reach **four absences**, your final grade will drop a letter. If you reach **five absences**, you will automatically fail the course. If you are facing unusual circumstances that affect your ability to abide by these expectations, please schedule a conference with me.

Class begins promptly at 12:30PM and tardiness will not be tolerated. **Two tardies will be considered as an absence.**

Absences for events and obligations recognized by UF as excused absences are not counted against your attendance record for this course. When possible, please discuss such absences with me *prior* to the date that will be missed. This course complies with [UF's official attendance policies](#).

*If you are absent, it is your responsibility to be aware of all due dates/classwork. If absent due to a scheduled event, you are still responsible for turning assignments in on time.*

### *Classroom Civility*

Please keep in mind that you and your classmates come from diverse cultural, economic, and ethnic backgrounds. Some of the texts we will discuss and write about engage controversial topics and opinions. Diversified backgrounds combined with provocative texts require that you demonstrate respect for ideas that may differ from your own. Disrespectful behavior will result in dismissal, and accordingly absence, from the class.

### *Grade Appeals*

You may appeal a final grade by filling out a form available from Carla Blount, Program Assistant, Department of English. Appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower grade.

### *In-Class Work*

You will be expected to work in small groups and participate in group discussions, writing workshops, and other in-class activities. You must be present for all in-class activities to receive credit for them. In-class work cannot be made up. In general, you are expected to contribute constructively to each class session.

### *Instructor Evaluations*

You are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based. These evaluations are conducted online at: <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but you will be given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available at <http://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>.

### *Mode of Submission*

All papers will be submitted as MS Word (.doc or .docx) documents to Canvas **by 11AM**. Final drafts should be polished and presented in a professional manner. File names will be your last name\_assignment name (like: Smith\_ShortPaper.docx).

All papers must follow MLA format. They should be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins and pages numbered. Your last name should precede the page number (like: Smith 1). Your name, my name, the course number, the date, and the word count should appear in the upper left-hand corner of the document. Every paper should have a title centered at the top of the document, but after your name, etc. All of this information, like the body of your paper, will be double spaced with no additional extra spaces.

**Papers are due at 11AM. Late papers will not be accepted.** Failure of technology is not an excuse.

### *Paper Maintenance Responsibilities*

You are responsible for maintaining duplicate copies of all work submitted in this course and retaining all returned, graded work until the semester is over. Should the need arise for a resubmission of papers or a review of graded papers, it is the your responsibility to have and to make available this material.

### *Phones, Computers, etc.*

Out of courtesy for your fellow classmates, and myself, it is expected that you silence your cell phone/other gadgets off before class. If you are using a laptop in class, it should only be used for taking notes or accessing the reading.

### *Sexual Assault and Harassment*

Students, faculty, and staff of the University of Florida are protected under [UF policies](#) that mandate an educational and working environment that is free from sex discrimination and sexual harassment.

### *Students with Disabilities*

The University of Florida complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Should you need any accommodation, contact the Students with Disabilities Office, Peabody 202. That office will provide you with documentation that you will then present to me when requesting accommodation.

## Tentative Course Schedule

Reading and assignments are due the day they appear on the calendar. Additional homework/reading may be assigned at my discretion.

Week	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Week 1 (5/14-5/18)	<i>Introduction</i>	(2) Excerpts from Foucault and Bentham	(3) Dickens' "A Detective Police Party," "On Duty with Inspector Field," and "A Visit to Newgate"	Wilde's <i>The Ballad of Reading Gaol</i>	(2) Excerpts from <i>The Mysteries of London</i> and Koven's "Introduction: Slumming"
Week 2 (5/21-5/25)	<i>Periodical Project Group Work</i> Secondary Source Readings	Collins' "Who Killed Zebedee?"	<i>Periodical Project Group Work</i> Primary Source Analysis	Conan Doyle's "A Scandal in Bohemia"	<i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> , Vol. I
Week 3 (5/28-6/1)	<b>**NO CLASS**</b>	<i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> , Vol. I	<i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> , Vol. I and II	<i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> , Vol. II	<i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> , Vol. III
Week 4 (6/4-6/8)	Road House murder trial	de Quincey's "On Murder"	(2) Jane Crosby trial and excerpts from Wood's <i>St. Martin's Eve</i>	(2) Tennyson's <i>Maud</i> and Browning's "My Last Duchess"	<b>Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due</b> (2) Lady Rosina and excerpts from le Fanu's <i>The Rose and the Key</i>
Week 5 (6/11-6/15)	(2) D. G. Rossetti's "Jenny" and G. Rossetti's "Goblin Market"	Gaskell's <i>Lizzie Leigh</i>	(2) Hardy's "The Ruined Maid" and Swinburne's "Dolores"	(2) Contagious Diseases Act and Wilde's "The Harlot's House"	Egerton's "A Cross Line"
Week 6 (6/18-6/22)	(2) Arthur Munby/Hannah Cullwick and <i>The Pearl</i>	(2) Excerpts from Saul's "Sins of the City" and Beardsley images	<b>Final Paper Due</b>	<b>Periodical Project and Paper Due</b>	<i>Periodical Project Presentation</i>

### Short Paper and Class Lead Reading Options:

5/22—Miller, D. A. "The Novel and the Police." In *The Novel and the Police*

5/24—Sussman, Herbert. "Shrinking the Globe, Expanding the Empire." In *Victorian Technology*.

5/31—Mitchell, Sally. "Sensation, Sex, and the 1860s." In *The Fallen Angel*.

6/1—Showalter, Elaine. "The Rise of the Victorian Madwoman." In *The Female Malady*.

6/5—Weir, David. "The Definition of Decadence." In *Decadence and the Making of Modernism*.

6/8—McCandless, Peter. "Liberty and Lunacy."

6/11—Marcus, Sharon. "Friendship and the Play of the System." In *Between Women*.

6/12—Auberach, Nina. "The Rise of the Fallen Woman." In *Woman and the Demon*.

6/13—Logan, Deborah Anna. "'Marry, Stitch, Die, or Do Worse.'" *Fallenness in Victorian Women's Writing*.

6/14—Walkowitz, Judith. "The Common Prostitute in Victorian Britain." *Prostitution and Victorian Society*.

6/15—Ledger, Sally. "Who was the New Woman?" In *The New Woman*.

6/18—McClintock, Anne. "Empire of the Home." In *Imperial Leather*.