

*Secret Gardens:  
Women and Gardens in the Long 19th Century and  
Beyond*



**LIT 6934 (5396) Spring 2016**

Instructor: Dr. Judith Page, Department of English, Turlington 4326, 392-6650, ext. 293  
(only on Tuesday mornings)

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**Please note: Our meeting will be at the Harn Museum of Art on February 8 and our meeting will be in Library East, Special Collections on March 7.**

### *Description and Rationale*

In February of 1913, suffragettes attacked the Orchid House and burned down the Tea Pavillion at the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew. The *Journal of Horticulture and Home Farmer* reported on the second incident in this way: “For the second time within a fortnight female vandals have visited Kew Gardens with direful consequences. The picturesque tea pavilion was razed to the ground by fire. Happily the perpetrators were captured and are unlikely to resume their insane campaign for some time to come.” No longer content to be hothouse plants themselves, these early feminists apparently viewed Kew, with its vast collections of plants from around the world, as a bastion of masculine and imperialist power. Considered by the establishment as insane for wanting to destroy such beautiful and treasured places, the women saw the garden as a contested space and put their political agenda before aesthetic appreciation.

This course will explore the various dimensions of women’s engagement with gardening, botanical studies, and horticulture in England during the long 19<sup>th</sup> century—from the early educational treatises to such radical political acts. Representations of the garden and landscape—and women’s place in them—are often central to women’s literature. In the earlier part of the period, women writers used the subject matter of gardens and plants to educate their readers, to enter into political and cultural debates, particularly around issues of gender and class, and to signal moments of intellectual and spiritual insight. Gardens were viewed as real places and textual spaces to be read and interpreted for oneself and others. As more women became engaged in gardening and botanical pursuits, the meanings of their gardens became more complex. The garden became less a retreat from the world, as it had been in earlier eras, and more of a protected vantage point for engagement and expression of one’s status and aspirations to the world. Gardens were seen as transitional or liminal zones through which women could negotiate between domestic space and the larger world, as is evident in the range of women’s writing about the garden.

In looking toward the twentieth century, we see an increasing interest in what Virginia Woolf famously termed “Professions for Women.” The garden is no longer merely the woman’s domesticated landscape but it is the site of professional advancement and identity. Women such as Beatrix Potter became important environmental advocates and farmers. As horticultural colleges opened their doors to women and some were founded specifically for women, women began to write about their new opportunities. The first chapter of Frances Wolseley’s *Gardening for Women* (1908) is not accidentally called “Gardening as a Profession for Women.” Professional “lady gardeners” were important in the response to the war effort in World War I, when estates were encouraged to give over some of their pleasure grounds to useful crops and women became part of a “land army” at work for the good of Britain and the war effort, a more socially acceptable way to demonstrate their competence than burning down tea rooms. Women writers increasingly became interested in the preservation of rural England, a goal that

sometimes clashed with the more public, visible, and active lives of women in both the countryside and the metropolis.

### **Requirements**

Regular class attendance, preparation, and participation are required for successful completion of the course. Please come to class having read all assigned texts and with questions and insights to share with the class. All students are responsible for material covered in class and for any changes made to the syllabus when announced in class.

Many of the readings for class are on ARES through Library West: <https://ares.uflib.ufl.edu/ares/>. If you do not already have an account for ARES, please get one now so that you can get going on the reading. In addition to articles and chapters on ARES and available electronically, we have another resource through the library: Eighteenth Century Collections Online (through Gale): <http://gdc.gale.com/products/eighteenth-century-collections-online/>. When you see the abbreviation “ECCO” on the syllabus, go to this collection through the database link on the library page. You may read the required pages on line and also print them out. Some books are also available as e-books through other sites.

### **--Seminar paper**

You will be required to write a **20-page paper** on some aspect of women and gardens, broadly interpreted. I am open to all approaches and various disciplinary intersections. Also, although the focus of this course is on England (rather than the larger context of Britain or the empire), you may certainly work in this larger geographical space, including intersections with America in the period. All students will also present their preliminary research to the seminar as part of a **mock conference panel**. In addition, you will submit a **prospectus (or proposal)** for the paper one month before the final paper is due. The prospectus should be approximately 2 pages in addition to an **annotated bibliography of at least 8 secondary sources (scholarly books and journal articles)**. For the annotated bibliography, include a one-paragraph summary of the article or book and indicate how it relates to your topic. In this prospectus, you should address the issues that you will consider in your paper. Some questions your prospectus should address include: What is the scope of this study? What are the main questions or issues that have drawn you to the topic? What is your working argument? How does your proposed work fit into the ongoing scholarly debate about the subject or related subjects? How do you envision organizing your paper? What problems or challenges do you anticipate?

### **Grading**

Participation	30%
Seminar paper	70%

### **Required Texts:**

Harrison, *Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition* (Chicago)

MacKay, *Radical Gardening: Politics, Idealism, & Rebellion in the Garden* (Francis Lincoln)

Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin)  
Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)  
Oliphant, *Miss Marjoribanks* (Penguin)  
Burnett, *The Secret Garden* (Norton Critical)  
Potter, *The Tale of Peter Rabbit* (Warne)  
Vita Sackville-West, *The Heir* (Hesperus)

### **Academic Integrity**

All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines. The UF Honor Code reads:

We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honesty and integrity.

On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." For more information please refer to <http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide>.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities** Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the Disability Resources Center (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/>) for information about available resources for students with disabilities.

**Cell phone and laptop policy:** Students must turn cell phones to silent before coming to class. **Cell phones may never be used in class.** Students may use laptops in class only to view the work under discussion if they are using an electronic text.

**Counseling and Mental Health Resources:** Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center (352 392-1575; <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>).

**Sexual Assault and Harassment:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:  
[http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty\\_staff/fees\\_resources\\_policies/addressing\\_sexual\\_misconduct/reporting\\_sexual\\_misconduct/](http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/addressing_sexual_misconduct/reporting_sexual_misconduct/)  
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/>  
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/interpersonal-violence>  
<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/group-listings>  
<http://gatorwell.ufsa.ufl.edu/programs/strive>  
[http://www.police.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/UPD-Safe-Campus-2014\\_Rev10-15-14.pdf](http://www.police.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/UPD-Safe-Campus-2014_Rev10-15-14.pdf)

<b>Schedule of Readings and Assignments</b>	
<b>Jan 11</b>	<b>Introduction: Gardens in Theory and Literature</b> Harrison, <i>Gardens: An Essay on the Human Condition</i>
<b>Jan 18</b>	<b>NO CLASS—Martin Luther King Holiday</b>
<b>Jan 25</b>	<b>Gardens as Cultural Objects:</b> MacKay, <i>Radical Gardening</i> ; Hunt, “The Garden as Cultural Object” and selections from Hunt, <i>Greater Perfections</i> , ARES
<b>Feb 1</b>	<b>Space, Miniature, and Botany:</b> Bachelard, <i>The Poetics of Space</i> , especially <i>felicitous space, huts, nests, miniature, seeds, daydreams</i> ; Chapter 7, “Miniature, is on ARES.  Shteir: all selections on ARES: from <i>Cultivating Women, Cultivating Science</i> ; “Botany in the Breakfast Room,” from <i>Uneasy Careers and Intimate Lives</i> ; and “ <i>Botanical Dialogues: Maria Jacson and Women’s Popular Science Writing in England</i> ”; Page and Smith, Chapter 2, “The Botanic Eye”  <b>Primary texts:</b>  Jacson, <i>Botanical Dialogues</i> , Second part, Dialogue the Third, in ECCO: image # 279-305 (pages 219-241)  Smith, <i>Rural Walks</i> , Dialogue V, “The Lily of the Valley,” in ECCO; Smith, <i>Rambles Further</i> , Dialogue VI, “May Day”, in ECCO
<b>Feb 8</b>	<b>Botanical Illustration at the Harn Museum (Bury and Loudon)</b>  <b>Primary texts:</b> Loudon, <i>Gardening for Ladies</i> , selection on ARES  Johnson, <i>Every Lady Her Own Flower Gardener</i> , from library catalogue, get electronic text: <a href="http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/title/7640">http://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/title/7640</a> Introduction and Chapter 1, General Remarks  Christina Rossetti, “Shut Out” ARES  PDF with readings from Wollstonecraft, More, and Erasmus Darwin, and magazines on ARES  Also read: Helsinger, “Inviting the Indoors Out: Gardens and Other Arts,” in Pagan, Page, and Weltman-Aron, <i>Disciples of Flora: Gardens in History and Culture</i> , on ARES

<p><b>Feb 15</b></p>	<p><b>Cultivated Gardens and Open Country:</b> <i>Pride and Prejudice</i></p> <p>Recommended reading: essays by Page and Elfenbein in <i>Cambridge Companion to Pride and Prejudice</i></p>
<p><b>Feb 22</b></p>	<p><b>Landscape, Narrative, and Emotion:</b> <i>Jane Eyre</i></p>
<p><b>Feb 29</b></p>	<p><b>NO CLASS—Spring Break—</b>begin reading <i>Miss Marjoribanks!</i></p>
<p><b>March 7</b></p>	<p><b>Into the Archive: Special Collections of The George A. Smathers Libraries</b></p>
<p><b>March 14</b></p>	<p><b>Victorian Gardens:</b> Oliphant, <i>Miss Marjoribanks</i></p> <p>Ruskin, “Of Queens Gardens,” on ARES</p> <p>Recommended: Tange, “Redesigning Femininity: Miss Marjoribanks’s Drawing-Room of Opportunity,” <i>Victorian Literature and Culture</i> 36 (2008): 163-86, on ARES</p>
<p><b>March 21</b></p>	<p><b>Children, Education, and the Land:</b></p> <p>Maria Edgeworth, “Simple Susan;” on ARES</p> <p>Beatrix Potter, <i>The Tale of Peter Rabbit</i></p> <p>Recommended: M. Daphne Kutzer, Chapter 2, “Into the Garden,” of <i>Beatrix Potter: Writing Code</i>, 33-63, on ARES</p> <p>Beatrix Potter, “The Origins of Peter Rabbit” (1929) and “The Lonely Hills” (1942), in <i>Beatrix Potter’s Americans: Selected Letters</i>, ed. Jane C. Morse</p> <p><b>*****Prospectus for Seminar Paper Due*****</b></p>
<p><b>March 28</b></p>	<p><b>Children and Gardens:</b> Frances Hodgson Burnett, <i>The Secret Garden</i></p> <p>Phillips, “The Mem Sahib, the Worthy, the Rajaj and His Minions: Some Reflections on the Class Politics of <i>The Secret Garden</i>,” in Norton; 342-366</p> <p>“Cultivating Mary: The Victorian Secret Garden”: <a href="http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/childrens_literature_association_quarterly/v026/26.1.pri ce.pdf">http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/childrens_literature_association_quarterly/v026/26.1.pri ce.pdf</a></p> <p>View the film by Agnieszka Holland (DVD is on reserve)</p>

<b>April 4</b>	<p><b>Modernity and the Garden:</b>  Virginia Woolf, “Kew Gardens” (1919)  <a href="http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/woolf/monday/monday-07.html">http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/woolf/monday/monday-07.html</a></p> <p>Vita Sackville-West, <i>The Heir</i> (1922)</p> <p>“Sissinghurst”</p>
<b>April 11</b>	<p><b>Professions for Women: Conservation, Preservation, and the Future of the Land</b>  On ARES:</p> <p>Selections (“Conservation: The Land and Its Plants”) from <i>In Nature’s Name</i>, ed. Gates</p> <p>Gertrude Jekyll, Introduction to <i>Wood and Garden</i> (1899)</p> <p>Frances Garnet Wolseley, “Gardening as a Profession for Women” (1908)</p> <p>Flora Thompson, from <i>Lark Rise to Candleford</i></p> <p>Bilston, “Queens of the Garden: Victorian Women Gardeners and the Rise of the Gardening Advice Text”</p>
<b>April 18</b>	<b>Presentations</b>
<b>April 25</b>	<b>Hard copies of papers due in my mailbox in Turlington by 10:00 am</b>

Please complete an evaluation of this course at the end of the semester:  
<https://evaluations.ufl.edu/evals/>