ENG 6824.8SG2, Proseminar in English
Multiraciality and Narrative Form in the Victorian Novel
Fall 2025
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Course Meets:	W 7:20-10:10 p.m. in 342 Dauer Hall
Office Location:	4336 Turlington Hall
Office Hours:	M 3:00-4:30, F 10:30-12:00, and by appointment
Required Texts:	Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin)
	Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Penguin)
	Wilkie Collins, *Armadale* (Penguin)
	Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone* (Penguin)
	Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Penguin)
	Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (Penguin)
	Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*
	Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Penguin)
	Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Penguin)
	Anthony Trollope, *The Way We Live Now* (Oxford World's Classics)

Course Overview

ENG 6824 occupies a unique place in English's graduate curriculum in that it is always topical/thematic according to the literary and theoretical interests of its instructor, but it is also designedly meant as an introduction to graduate studies. Many graduate seminars incorporate discussions of different professional genres of writing and different professional engagements and activities. But in ENG 6824 those conversations become an explicit part of the instruction. So this course is both topical/thematic *and* designed to lay at least some foundation for your success in graduate school and beyond.

In *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network* (2015), Caroline Levine redefines the idea of "form" in literature to mean more than broad, overarching concerns with the structure or genre or wholeness or unity of a literary work. Rather, "Form, for our purposes," she writes, "will mean all shapes and configurations, all ordering principles, all patterns of repetition and difference" (3). As she explains—and as we shall read—"form" means for her not *the* wholesale shape of a work but rather the many small forms that recur within books or that structure its action and themes, or that recur across multiple literary texts and therefore seem to take on outsized significance as representations of social or cultural principles. And each form, she argues, has one or several "affordances," by which she means identifiable consequences arising from the presence of the form in the literary work.

This class is organized around Levine's theory and works from a particular hypothesis: that multiraciality in nineteenth-century novels is a form, one of the most critical affordances of which is, for novelists at least, new possibilities for narrative innovation. During an era that saw races as fundamentally, biologically different, and that treated multiracial people through the binary of whiteness/darkness—with massive and chilling effects—the mere presence of multiracial characters in novels seems to have collapsed imaginative boundaries. This seems to have led in turn to other kinds of collapses: innovations in narrative structure, for instance, or the

creation of generic hybrids (fairy tale / autobiography, or Gothic / realist). This semester we will read several major nineteenth-century novels: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Wilkie Collins's *Armadale* and *The Moonstone*, Charles Dickens's *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, Anthony Trollope's *The Way We Live Now*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. We will also read chapters and essays from travel writing, natural history, sociology, and other texts, so that we consider contemporary writing about race and multiraciality. And what we will consider—besides the social and cultural problem of race generally—is what the particular form of multiraciality gives to the nineteenth-century novel, what conversations it enables, what artistic transformations it encourages and allows.

Learning Principles
Expected Learning Outcomes
Students who complete this course successfully will be able to: (1) express a complex understanding of graduate-level literary studies and the issues of theory, form, and methodology that they engage; (2) conduct research in your field at the highest level of achievement and with specific journals, conferences, and other venues in mind; (3) discuss critically the primary literary texts for our semester and explain the kinds of questions those texts take up; and (4) compose a professional quality research project on one or more of the novels/authors we study this semester and see it through many of the typical stages we associate with professional scholarly activity, including idea formation, abstract, oral presentation, and scholarly essay.

Assessment Methods
These include: (1) seminar discussions, by which I mean participation in cogent, intelligent classrooms conversations about our primary and secondary readings and the disciplinary ideas they engage, also including a scheduled opportunity to lead discussion; (2) completion of a Resource Scan identifying journals, conferences, organizations, and sites in your field of study; (3) completion of a conference-style Abstract describing the plans for the final paper and also of an accompanying Preliminary Bibliography illustrating the scope of research; (4) a Conference-style Presentation, in which you describe the body of research surrounding your intended seminar paper and the argument and essay that you are developing; and (5) a seminar paper in which you use bibliographic, historical, and/or theoretical methodologies to conduct and compose original research.

Course Policies
Handouts and PDF Readings
Handouts, class lecture slides (when there are any), and PDF readings will be made available via Canvas, which I intend to use sparingly (more on this below). Since you must have handouts and readings with you during our class time, you should download and print copies to bring to class or bring an electronic device that will allow you to access them during our class time.

Submitting work
For principled reasons, I will ask you this semester to submit your written work for this class in one of two ways: either by emailing it to me at sean.grass@ufl.edu as an attached Word or PDF file, or by printing it and handing it to me in hard copy. This is not an effort to be "old school"; rather, it is an acknowledgment that Canvas was this past year bought out by KKR, who is now "partnering" with OpenAI to, in effect, make every word of both faculty and student work posted

to Canvas available for AI-mining. You have not agreed to that, nor have I. We will not be paid. But billions of dollars will be made from the collective intellectual work of students and faculty all over the country as a result. I simply refuse to put you in a situation in which your intellectual property is made freely available to others without your consent.

Grading
Your grade for the course will be based upon these areas: class preparedness/participation, including a scheduled opportunity to lead discussion (20%); a Resource Scan (2 slides) (10%); an Abstract and Preliminary Bibliography (750 words) (15%); a Conference-style Presentation (12 minutes) (15%); and a Seminar Paper (6,000-7,000 words) (40%). We will discuss each assignment in class on August 27 and September 3, and I will provide a handout for each giving details regarding expectations and evaluation.

For now, keep in mind two particular requirements regarding your work. First, you must be far enough along in your planning for the seminar paper by late October to be able to turn in an abstract defining your planned work on October 27. Second, I expect everyone in this class—not excepting myself—to strive for the highest levels of professionalism and intellectual achievement. If we aim for extraordinary rigor and occasionally fall a little short, we will still have a fantastic semester.

Attendance and Classroom Conduct
Other course policies worth noting are these:
- attendance for all classes is mandatory; you can expect to see a penalty against your course grade for any absence beyond two (2);
- due dates for work are not generally negotiable, since time management is one of the skills I expect you to hone;
- you must complete all major assignments in order to pass the course, including the individual opportunity to lead discussion;
- you must observe the highest levels of academic honesty and integrity
- tolerance, accommodation, sensitivity, and civility are minimum expectations for our communications with each other during the semester, in our classroom time and in written and office-hour communications

Classroom Access Statement
A final note: you might have a learning disability or physical limitation that, if unacknowledged, would prevent you from performing as well as you should in my class. I will do my utmost under UF guidelines to accommodate your particular learning needs, but you *must* first register with campus officials through the Disability Resource Center. By university policy, I cannot accommodate undocumented learning issues. If you've already registered with the DRC, please come by and talk to me at your convenience about how I can assist and promote your learning.

Please let me know if you have concerns about these policies or needs of which I should be aware. Come by my office hours, or contact me for an appointment, which we could conduct in person or via Zoom. I am happy to speak with you about your concerns regarding this class, literature generally, or anything else on your mind.

Online Course Evaluations
Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online. For guidance on giving feedback in a professional and respectful manner, see https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu, or via https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/. Now that you have finished reading this syllabus, for extra credit send me an email guessing my favorite band of all time.

Weekly Schedule

Aug 27   Introduction to the course; Please also read *in advance of class*:
- Gregory Semenza, *Graduate Study for the 21st Century*, Chs. 4-5, available electronically at the permanent library link (https://ufl-flvc.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01FALSC_UFL/pek2if/cdi_springer_books_10_1057_9780230105805_5)
- Caroline Levine, *Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network*, "Ch. 1 Introduction: The Affordances of Form"

Sep   3   Discussion of Resource Scan; Discussion of Abstract and Preliminary Bibliography Assignments; Reading:
- Caroline Levine, *Forms*, Chs 2-6
- Robert Wedderburn, *The Horrors of Slavery* (1824) (https://archive.org/details/horrors_of_slavery)
- Harriet Martineau, "Morals of Slavery" (1837); (https://racism.org/articles/citizenship-rights/slavery-to-neoslavery/slavery-2/119-articles-related-to-slavery/2018-morals-of-slavery-1837)
- Harriet Martineau, *Retrospect of Western Travel* (1838), Ch. 15 (PDF)

      10   Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*

      17   Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*

      24   Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*

➔   **29   (Monday) Resource Scan Due**

Oct   1   Discuss Resource Scans; Reading:
- Robert Knox, "Lecture I," from *Lectures on the Races of Men* (1850) (PDF)
- Alfred Russell Wallace, "The Origin of Human Races and the Antiquity of Man Deduced from the Theory of 'Natural Selection'" (1864) (PDF)
- Francis Galton, "Selection and Race" and "Influence of Man upon Race," from *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development* * (1883) (PDFs)

	8	Wilkie Collins, *Armadale*
	15	Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*
	22	Charles Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*
→	**27**	**(Monday) Abstract and Preliminary Bibliography Due**
	29	Discuss Abstracts and Preliminary Bibliographies; Reading:

- William Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), Chs. 1-2 (PDFs)
- Michel Foucault, *"Society Must Be Defended"*, Ch. 11 (PDF)

Nov	5	Anthony Trollope, *The Way We Live Now*
	12	Bram Stoker, *Dracula*
	19	Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*
	26	No class—Thanksgiving break
Dec	3	**Conference Presentations**

Seminar papers due Wednesday, December 10 at 12:00 p.m. (noon)