

Rae Yan

Office Hours: Thurs 11am-1pm & by appt.
(email to schedule)

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ENL6256

Spring 2023

MAT 0007

T 6-8, 12:50-3:50pm

ENL6256: Experimental Nineteenth-Century British Novels



Turner, J.M.W. (painter). "Rain, Steam and Speed – The Great Western Railway" c1844. Courtesy of the National Gallery, UK.

By engaging with a diverse range of Victorian literary works that address technological innovations of the age, this seminar on Victorian literature and culture addresses persistent anxieties about—and enthusiasm for—a changing world shaped by the influence of Victorian technologies including (1) railway travel, (2) the microscope, (3) the telegraph, (4) the bicycle, and (5) the typewriter, among others. Along the way, we will explore the history of the book and technologies of printing and publishing that have materially shaped the development of the Victorian literary texts we will analyze in addition to thinking about the pedagogical applications of our work as they would benefit your professionalization. Workshops will be held on digital platforms such as Discord, Twitch, and YouTube, for pedagogical and professional purposes.

Primary Texts

Primary Readings

- Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (1848)
- Mary Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands* (1857)
- George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871)
- Grant Allen, *The Type-Writer Girl* (1897)
- Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (1897)

Assignments

I. Self-Evaluation Letters and Meetings (3 letters, 2 meetings)

You are required to write 3 letters of self-evaluation and schedule 2 meetings with Professor Yan this semester.

- **Letter 1** should outline your concrete and specific research, teaching, and/or writing goals for the work you complete in this class and your sense of what it would mean for you to succeed this term.
- **Letter 2** should address how you are meeting the goals that you outlined in your first letter and a self-assessment of your work thus far.
- **Letter 3 / Final Self-Evaluation Letter** should address whether you feel you have met all the goals that you outlined earlier this semester, a plan for how you will utilize the assignments you have completed for future projects (teaching/writing) in the next year, and a letter grade you would assign for yourself based on a self-evaluation.

You are required to schedule office hour meetings with Professor Yan within 2 weeks before or after of submitting both Letters 1 and 2 to discuss and clarify your self-assessments.

Self-evaluation letters should be submitted as Word documents to canvas by midnight on 1/31, 3/7, and 4/28.

II. Close-Reading or Contextualization Responses (8 per semester, 500-1000 words each)

To stay engaged with each week's readings and develop ideas for future projects, including the end-of-term conference paper, you will be required to write 8 out of 13 possible reading responses this semester. Each response should total between 500-1000 words and be posted before our class sessions by 12:50pm. Your response must take the form of a close-reading or a research-based contextualization—the goal is that your short reading response should be of use to you for a future work, i.e. as the basis to start a conversation during class discussion, to shape a mini-lecture for teaching, or as the seed for a section of a larger writing project. Include the page numbers of passages that you reference or quote in your writing and cite any secondary sources you use appropriately in either MLA or Chicago.

Post completed short reading responses to the appropriate thread in Canvas Discussions by 12:50pm.

III. Discussion Leading (2 times during semester)

Sign up to serve as discussion leader twice this semester. You will need to prepare 2 passages that address 2 different topics or questions of your choice to discuss with the group during our open discussion. One of the passages may be a passage on which you focus for your reading response.

IV. Conference Paper Proposal (10% of final grade, maximum 300 words)

Find a CFP for an upcoming field or pedagogical conference to which you would apply. Write a conference proposal for this CFP based on a text from our course on the subject of your choice. Provide a copy of the CFP, a brief bio of 50 words to go with your abstract, and your abstract in your submission. You can examine the guide provided by Karen Kelski on her blog *The Professor Is In* to help you shape your abstract: <https://theprofessorisin.com/2011/07/12/how-today-how-to-write-a-paper-abstract/>.

Submit the CFP information, brief bio, and draft of your conference paper proposal to Canvas Discussions by 12:50pm on Tuesday, March 21st. Email me your final conference paper proposal by 12:50pm on Tuesday, March 28th.

V. Conference Paper and Presentation (20% of final grade 9 to 10 pages OR roundtable format, to be read aloud)

For your conference paper presentation, you will need to prepare an 8 to 10-page conference paper (to be read within 20 minutes) on the subject outlined in your abstract OR a roundtable of 4-6 participants with fellow classmates where you produce short papers and field a Q&A discussion section. If you would find it helpful, you may use visual presentations or handouts. You will be expected to ask and answer questions during the mock panel sessions.

Submit a draft of your conference paper to Discussions for peer review by 12:50pm on Tuesday, April 18. Post your final visual presentation and conference paper to the appropriate forum in Discussions by 12:50pm on Tuesday, April 25th.

Grading

Ryan Cordell suggests that becoming a graduate student requires a shift of perspective from thinking of your intellectual development in terms of letter grades to imagining your work as it fits within a system where one takes ownership of one's own work as it meets expected standards of scholarship and professionalism. We will use a consultative grading schema modeled after Cordell's own (<https://ryancordell.org/teaching/contract-grading/>) to encourage your perspectival shift and offer more room for experimentation this term. Our consultative grading schema will require that you draft self-evaluation letters 3 times a semester, including a final self-evaluation where you assign yourself a grade for the term. Your final grade will be based on your self-assessments—given a single caveat, described below—and require commitments from both “instructor”/mentor and students alike.

My Commitments to Students of This Course:

1. Substantive and timely comments on all your assignments meant to help advance your research skills, analytical arguments, oral/visual presenting, and writerly voice.
2. Regular availability for practical help, mentorship, and guidance via in-person or Zoom consultations during weekly office hours and other scheduled times, and timely response to email or text communications as needed.
3. Understanding in regards to assessing projects that do not turn out as expected, taking into consideration your personal goals and methods when taking intellectual and professional risks.
4. Encouragement of students with expertise in particular knowledge bases, technologies, or capabilities to design projects that will challenge and help them grow as writers and scholars.
5. Respect for the ways your experiences, identities, perspectives, and intellectual commitments shape your work for our course. I will commit to not dismissing or taking your ideas lightly, though I may push you in different directions.
6. No assumptions of expertise, but rather a focus on learning from the foundations.
7. A single caveat: the right to adjust grades as appropriate if a student should take undue advantage of the consultative grading paradigm. Please note that I do not anticipate exercising this caveat.

Your Commitments to This Course:

1. Accountability to your own highest standards to produce your best work in terms of reading, discussion, presentation, and other written assignments in a timely manner.
2. Taking intellectual risks that will push you to read, think, write, and create in new modes in order to grow as a scholar and teacher.
3. Willingness to experiment with new tools and skills with an open mind and relative enthusiasm.
4. Respect and collegial collaboration with colleagues and your mentor for this course, assuming no shared expertise. Our goal should be to build understanding together, knowing that everyone has had different of experiences, identities, perspectives and intellectual commitments.
5. Clear articulation of goals and methods you will use when taking risks on assignments so that I may understand what you seek to accomplish.
6. Commitment to meet with me in person or via Zoom at least twice during the semester to discuss your work and ensure you are meeting expectations (your own and mine) for work in this class.

Course Schedule

The schedule for this course is subject to change according to necessity. You will be updated of such changes as soon as they are made. If there is an unexpected class cancellation, look for direct communications.

Week 1: What Do We Mean When We Talk About Technology?

T, 1/10: First Day

- Introductions and Syllabus

Week 2: Enframing Technologies in *Dombey and Son*

T, 1/17:

- Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Ch I “Dombey and Son” through Ch XXI “New Faces”)
- Heidegger, Martin. “The Question Concerning Technology.” 1954. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, translated by William Lovitt, Garland Publishing, 1977, pp. 3-35

Week 3: Railway Time

T, 1/24:

- Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Ch XXII “A Trifle of Management by Mr. Carker the Manager” through Ch XLI “New Voices on the Waves”)
- Baumgarten, Murray. “Railway/Reading/Time: *Dombey & Son* and the Industrial World.” *Dickens Studies Annual*, Vol 19, 1990, pp. 65-89.

Week 4: Moving Forward

T, 1/31:

- Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Ch XLII “Confidential and Accidental” through Ch LXII “Final”)
- Hassan, Narin. “Milk Markets: Technology, the Lactating Body, and the New Forms of Consumption.” *Women’s Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 38, No. 3/4, Fall/Winter 2020, pp. 209-228.
- **Letter 1 Due by 11:59pm, Tuesday, 1/31**

Week 5: A Telegraphic Type

T, 2/7:

- Seacole, *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands*
- Section from Menke’s *Telegraphic Realism: Victorian Fiction and Other Information Systems TBD*
- Markovits, Stefanie. “Rushing into Print: ‘Participatory Journalism’ during the Crimean War.” *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 50, No. 4, 2008, pp. 559-586.
- (optional) Bektas, Yakup. “The Crimean War as a Technological Enterprise.” *Notes and Records: The Royal Society Journal of the History of Science*, Vol. 71, No. 3, 2017, pp. 233-262.
 - o note: this source provides significant historical context for those looking for appropriate resources for undergraduate teaching in the future

Week 6: Techniques and Technologies of Realism Part I

T, 2/14:

- Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Books 1 & 2)
- Crary, Jonathan. “Modernity and the Problem of the Observer.” *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision in the Nineteenth Century*, MIT Press, 1992, pp. 1-24.

Week 7: Techniques and Technologies of Realism Part II

T, 2/21:

- Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Books 3 & 4)
- Crary, Jonathan. “Techniques of the Observer.” *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision in the Nineteenth Century*, MIT Press, 1992, pp. 97-136.

Week 8: Microscopic Lenses

T, 2/28:

- Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Books 5 & 6)
- Armstrong, Isobel. “The Microscope: Mediations of the Sub-Visible World.” *Transactions and Encounters: Science and Culture in the Nineteenth Century*, edited by Roger Luckhurst and J. McDonagh, Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 30-54.

Week 9: Reflections

T, 3/7:

- Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Books 7 & 8)
- **Experimenting with Tech Workshop Day**
- **Letter 2 Due by 11:59pm, Tuesday, 3/7**

Week 10: Breaking

T, 3/14:

- No Class, Spring Break

Week 11: Teaching Technology

T, 3/21:

- Green-Lewis, Jennifer. "Teaching Victorian Literature in the Context of Photography." *Victorian Review*, Vol. 34, No. 2, Fall 2008, pp. 33-41.
- **DRAFT Conference Paper Proposal Due by 12:50pm, Tuesday, 3/21**
- **Syllabus and DRAFT Conference Proposal Workshop Day**

Week 12: Typewriter Technologies

T, 3/28:

- Allen, *The Type-Writer Girl*
- Kittler, Friedrich. "Typewriter." *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, translated by Geoffroy Winthrop-young and Michael Wutz, 1986, pp.183-266.
- **FINAL Conference Paper Proposal Due by 12:50pm, Tuesday, 3/28**

Week 13: Vocal Technology

T, 4/4:

- Stoker, *Dracula*
- Halberstam, Judith [Jack]. "Technologies of Monstrosity: Bram Stoker's 'Dracula'." *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 63, No. 3, 1993, pp. 333-352.

Week 14: Teaching Twitch

T, 4/11:

- **Twitch Workshop Day (remote online)**

Week 15: Working Days

T, 4/18:

- **DRAFT Conference Paper or Composition Due by 12:50pm, Tuesday, 4/18**
- **Draft Workshop Day**

Week 16: Technically Finished

T, 4/25:

- **Conference Paper Presentations and Papers Due in Canvas by 12:50pm, Tuesday, 4/25**
- **Letter 3 Due by 11:59pm, Friday, 4/28**