

## English 295: British Literature from the Victorians to the Modernists

Dr. Lisa Jadwin  
110 Basil Hall  
585.385-8192 (voice)  
585.385-7311 (fax)  
ljadwin@sjfc.edu (e-mail)

Office Hours: T/R 9-9:30, W 4-5  
(no appointment is necessary during office hours)  
and by appointment at other times



### Description and Goals

We will study important literary works from the Victorian era through the high modern period within their historical contexts, aiming to establish connections across time between different writers, genres, and eras. The course is designed to give you a sense of literary history, an understanding of some central texts, and a grasp of how British literature and its readers have developed in the past century and a half. You will be required to read carefully and to write critically. The course will combine lecture and discussion.

### Texts

Abrams *et al.* *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Volume II, OR Abrams *et al.*, *The Victorian Age and The Twentieth Century* (Vols 2B and 2C of the *Norton Anthology*, Vol. II).

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Penguin edition preferred)

Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich edition preferred)

### Electronic Resources

A website for English 295 will be under continuous development throughout the semester at the URL <http://www.jadwin.net/295>. It will contain this syllabus with any updates, links to electronic resources other materials, and downloads of assignments, handouts, and other materials. E-mail me (ljadwin@sjfc.edu) with ideas and suggestions for links to the English 295 website.

### Requirements

- **Weekly writings** (totaling 50% of your final grade). Prepare for class each week by writing responses to study questions on the week's readings. These writing assignments will help you better understand and internalize the readings so that you come to class well-prepared to learn and to contribute your own ideas.

These writing assignments should be 1-2 pages long single-spaced and must be typed in a 10- or 12-point font, with 1-inch margins, single-spaced, titled, and carefully proofread. They will be evaluated on the basis of their completeness, originality, and presentation; assignments with more than one sentence-level error per page will be heavily penalized and may receive an "F," no feedback, or both. Sorry, but for security reasons (viruses/worms), I cannot accept e-mailed papers or attachments.

Each writing assignment will be due at the start of class each week.

- **Exams** (totaling 50% of your final grade). There will be two midterms (15% each of your final grade) and a final exam (20% of your final grade). See the calendar below for details.
- **Attendance.** I will not take attendance in this class. BUT before you start cheering and planning late-night binges for Mondays and Wednesdays (ha!), however, take note. *There is no substitute for showing up.* It is advisable to attend class regularly unless you are a genius and/or have an eidetic memory. Aim to miss no more than 2 classes. If you have a serious emergency, such as a death in the family, auto accident, hospitalization, etc., please contact me in advance or as soon as possible because it may be desirable for you to withdraw from the class rather than fail outright.
- **Participation.** Students who participate constructively in class learn more, increase the quality of the class, and introduce important ideas and questions. If you participate regularly and constructively (speaking at least once, and preferably more often, per class meeting) **you will**

**receive a bonus, based on my estimate of the value of your contribution, on your final grade.** Conversely, if your participation is negative - whispering with friends, passing notes, chowing down on a noisy meal, leaving litter behind, sleeping in class, etc. - **you will receive a deduction, based on my estimate of the value of your behavior, from your final grade.**

If you miss class, have another student discuss his or her notes with you. Then, if you have further questions that they are unable to answer, contact me. You're responsible for finding out about any assignments, due dates, and announcements and for fulfilling them on time. Extra handouts and worksheets will be available after class on the front of my office door, and on the website, for pickup or download anytime.

### **Statement for Students with Diagnosed Disabilities**

In compliance with St. John Fisher College policy and applicable laws, appropriate academic accommodations are available to you if you are a student with a disability. All requests for accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation/diagnosis and determined reasonable by St. John Fisher College. Students with documented disabilities (physical, learning, psychological) who may need academic accommodations are advised to make an appointment with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in the Student Development Center, Kearney 211. Late notification will delay requested accommodations.

### **How to Prepare for Class**

All readings listed on the calendar below are required and you will be tested on them as well as on the information and ideas I present in lecture. *Though poetry readings may seem short in number of pages, you are unlikely to understand any poem until you have read it at least three times.* An apparently short poetry assignment of ten pages may actually take you longer to read fully than a longer prose assignment. Read with your pen in hand; take notes, underline and look up unfamiliar words, and note questions and ideas you want to introduce later in class. If you have trouble understanding something, mark the point at which you first became confused. *Though I will be explicating some of these readings in class, you will ultimately responsible for understanding all of them yourself to a reasonable degree.*

Topics for weekly writings will be handed out in class. I always welcome suggestions about these topics, and welcome your questions (and office visits) to work on your writing for the course.

### **Calendar of Readings, Topics, and Exams**

- |   |                   |   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| 1 | 9/6               | <b>Introduction to course.</b><br>Lecture: what is Victorian about Victorian literature?<br>Discussion of Robert Browning, "My Last Duchess" (distributed in class).  |
| 2 | 9/11<br>&<br>9/13 | <b>Robert Browning: shorter poems</b><br><b>Writing 1 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).</b><br>Lecture on Victorian poetry and the interior monologue.<br>Read biographical essay; " <b>Porphyria's Lover</b> ," "The Bishop Orders His Tomb at St. Praxed's Church," "Andrea del Sarto," and " <b>Soliloquy in a Spanish Cloister</b> " and " <b>My Last Duchess</b> ." Read "Love Among the Ruins," "Memorabilia," "Home-Thoughts, from Abroad," " <b>Fra Lippo Lippi</b> " and " <b>Two in the Campagna</b> ." |

**Boldfaced** readings are those on which I am likely to focus in lectures, though this may change according to the needs of the class. **Always read the brief biographical summary that precedes each author's works in the Norton.**

- 3 9/18 **Alfred, Lord Tennyson: shorter poems**  
 & **Writing 2 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
 9/20 Lecture on elegy; Victorian nostalgia; the lyric.  
 Read biographical essay; "Ulysses," "The Lady of Shalott," "The Eagle," "Mariana,"  
 "Crossing the Bar," "The Epic [Morte D'Arthur]," "Break, Break, Break," "Crossing the  
 Bar," "Flower in the Crannied Wall," "Tears, Idle Tears"
- 4 9/25 **Thomas Hardy: poems and a short story**  
**Writing 3 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
 Lecture on Hardy's dual career; decline of religion; irony; social realism.  
 Read biographical essay; the short story "On the Western Circuit" and the poems  
 "Hap," "Neutral Tones"; "The Darkling Thrush," "The Imprecipient," "A Broken  
 Appointment," "The Trampwoman's Tragedy" and "The Convergence of the Twain."
- 9/27 **Thursday: Midterm 1.** The first midterm will require you to (1) identify the source and  
 significance of several brief excerpts from course readings and (2) discuss the  
 significance of a passage from Victorian literature that is representative of the key issues  
 and ideas of the era. The passage may or may not be drawn from course readings.
- 5 10/2 **Industrialization and culture**  
**Writing 4 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
 Read "Industrialism: Progress or Decline?" (NA 1696-1719) including Macaulay, from  
 "A Review of Southey's *Colloquies*;" Engels, from "The Great Towns";  
 Anonymous, "Poverty Knock"; Mayhew, from *London Labour and the London*  
*Poor*, Besant, "The White Slavery of London Match Workers," Chew, "A Living  
 Wage."  
**Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations***  
 10/4 Lecture on rise of novel; Victorian readership; Dickens's career; themes of crime and  
 punishment in the opening chapters.  
 Read biographical essay in Norton II/2B (p. 1333) **and chapters 1-19 (Volume I).**
- 6 10/9 **Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations***  
 10/11 **Writing 5 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
 Lecture on metaphors ("reading," "play," "gentleman") in *Great Expectations*.  
 Read **chapters 20-39 (Volume II).**
- 7 10/16 **Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations***  
 10/18 **Writing 6 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
 Lecture on psychoanalytical dynamics of the novel; memoir; forgiveness; Dickens's  
 career.  
 Read **chapters 40-59 (Volume III).**
- 8 10/23 Catch-up and/or review day, depending on what we need at this point.
- 10/25 **Thursday: Midterm 2.** The second midterm will require you to (1) identify the source  
 and significance of several brief excerpts from course readings and (2) discuss the  
 significance of a passage from Victorian literature that is representative of the key issues  
 and ideas of the era. The passage may or may not be drawn from course readings.

**Boldfaced** readings are those on which I am likely to focus in lectures, though this may change according to the needs of the class. **Always read the brief biographical summary that precedes each author's works in the *Norton*.**

- 9 10/30 **Oscar Wilde: "The Importance of Being Earnest"**  
& **Writing 7 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
11/2 Lecture on fin-de-siècle decadence; drama in the nineteenth century.  
Read "The Nineties"; biographical essay; **"Preface" to *The Picture of Dorian Gray***,  
and William Butler Yeats's short memoir **"[Oscar Wilde]"** (Norton II/2C).  
Read **"The Importance of Being Earnest" (Acts I, II and III)**.  
Students who wish to earn extra credit can do so by providing class with a classic  
English afternoon-style tea on Thursday (see me for instructions).
- 10 11/6 **Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* and "Modern Fiction"**  
11/8 **Writing 8 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
Lecture on development of modern fiction; impressionism; modernism.  
Read biographical essay; the short novel ***Mrs. Dalloway*** and the essay **"Modern  
Fiction."** Reread the essay "The Mark on the Wall" (discussed and read during first  
week of class).
- 11 11/13 **William Butler Yeats: shorter poems**  
11/15 **Writing 9 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
Lecture on Yeats and Irish politics; growing old; the work of art  
Read biographical essay; **"The Lake Isle of Innisfree," "When You Are Old," "Adam's  
Curse," "The Wild Swans at Coole," "Easter 1916," "The Second Coming."**
- 12 11/20 **William Butler Yeats: shorter poems**  
**Writing 10 due at 11:00 a.m. Tuesday (typed, proofread, single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
Explication of some later, difficult Yeats poems.  
**"Among School-Children," "Sailing to Byzantium," "Under Ben Bulbin."**  
11/22 **Thomas Stearns Eliot, shorter poems and an essay.**  
Lectures on radicalism and conservatism of Eliot; allusion; cultural capital.  
Read biographical essay; the essay **"Tradition and the Individual Talent"; "The Love  
Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; "The Gift of the Magi"; "Little Gidding".**
- 13 11/27 No class this week for Thanksgiving break.  
11/29
- 14 12/4 **Thomas Stearns Eliot continued from 11/22.**  
12/6 **Literature of the World Wars.**  
**Writings for week 14 (one optional) due at 11:00 a.m. Thursday (typed, proofread,  
single-spaced, 1-2 pp.).**  
Lecture on war poetry and the War Poets; modern war and human history.  
(Suggestion: since these readings are spread through the anthology, bookmark their  
locations so you will be able to find them easily in class.) Read the essay "Voices from  
World War I" and "Voices from World War II"; Hardy, "In Time of 'The Breaking of  
Nations'"; Sassoon, "from *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*"; "Owen, "Dulce et  
Decorum Est," and "Strange Meeting"; W. H. Auden, "Spain 1937" and "Musée des  
Beaux Arts," Hillary, selection from "The Last Enemy"; Edith Sitwell, "Still Falls  
the Rain."
- 15 t.b.a. **Final examination.** The final will require you to (1) identify the source and significance  
of several brief excerpts from course readings and (2) write an essay comparing two  
excerpts from the literature of the period, explaining how they address differently the  
issues of the age.

**Boldfaced** readings are those on which I am likely to focus in lectures, though this may change according to the needs of the class. **Always read the brief biographical summary that precedes each author's works in the Norton.**