

FW 2024-25

AP/EN 3550 6.0A (Y)	The Victorians
Course Director:	Prof. Tina Y. Choi Office 720 Atkinson e-mail <tinayc@yorku.ca> Office hours TBS
Time:	Thursdays 2:30-5:30pm
Delivery Format:	SEMINAR
Description:	<p>Queen Victoria's reign, from 1837 to 1901, was a period of profound transformation for both Britain and the globe: London's population more than tripled, reaching around 6 million by the end of the century; the city unveiled the world's first underground railway; Charles Darwin published his groundbreaking <i>The Origin of Species</i>; England's factories ran 24 hours a day to satisfy a growing population of middle-class consumers; and the reach of Britain's empire expanded across the Pacific, India, the Caribbean, Africa, and North America. In these respects, Victorian Britain seemed to stand at the forefront of technological and political progress in Europe. But these developments also raised numerous questions, to which writers like Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Oscar Wilde, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, produced some of the most memorable and influential literary works of the modern age in response. Many of these questions remain pressing ones for us today. Is industrial and technological progress always a positive thing? With growing social and income inequality, who bears responsibility for the poor and the unhoused? What are the causes of criminality, violence, and suffering, and how can they be addressed? Amid increasing secularization and growing interest in scientific modes of thought, Britons asked what relevance religion might still have in modern society. Do women belong in the workplace, or in the realm of politics? As empire expanded, how should Britain make sense of its relationship to foreign spaces and colonized peoples?</p> <p>We will attend to the period's transforming literary conventions and its subgenres, which include the "condition-of-England" novel, adventure fiction, and the aestheticist essay. More generally, the course will consider the ways in which these works imagined individual and national experience, and the contributions of gender, race, and social class to their representations.</p> <p>This course provides an overview of British literature of the Victorian period. Students will learn to read, think, and write critically about these works, and to contextualize them with relation to broad literary and artistic trends, historical events, and cultural influences of the period. English 3550 offers a foundation</p>

	for more advanced study of nineteenth-century literature and cultural history, or for the continuing study of British literature of other periods.
Category:	C
Historical Requirement:	Time Period II (1700-1900)
Requirements: (tentative)	close-reading essay (1000 words) 15% short essay (1500 words) 25% final essay (2500 words) 35% in-class test 10% in-class activities and participation 15%
Reading List: (tentative)	<i>Norton Anthology of English Literature</i> , 11th edition, Volume E Mary Elizabeth Braddon, <i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> (Oxford) Charles Dickens, <i>Oliver Twist</i> or <i>Great Expectations</i> (Penguin) Elizabeth Gaskell, <i>Mary Barton</i> (Oxford) H. Rider Haggard, <i>King Solomon's Mines</i> (Oxford) + additional short works by Henry Mayhew, Gustave Doré, Arthur Conan Doyle, and others, to be distributed
Open To:	Years 3 and 4