Professor: Veronica Alfano
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Schedule: Tues./Thurs. 12 noon - 1:20 pm
Room: Volcanology 307
Office Hours: Tues. 2:30-5:30, 519 PLC

Course Description
In an 1849 letter, Matthew Arnold laments that his age is “deeply unpoetical.” Arthur Hugh Clough, writing in 1853, agrees that the times are “prudent and prosaic.” The preeminence of the Victorian novel, and the subsequent marginalization of verse, has since become a critical commonplace. In this course, we will survey the works of major Victorian poets and poet-critics, including Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Matthew Arnold, Christina Rossetti, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and Thomas Hardy. In the process, we’ll examine various conceptions of the poet’s position in or out of society (prophet? solitary singer? moralist?) and theorize the role of poetry during a seemingly prose-dominated era. While we will devote a great deal of attention to the formal properties of Victorian poems, we will also consider the cultural context in which these verses were composed.

Required Texts
Please purchase The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory (eds. Collins and Rundle). You’ll find it at the Duck Shop Bookstore. Additional readings will be emailed or handed out.

Course Requirements, Policies, and Grading
You will write two response papers (2-3 pages and 3-4 pages). In these papers, you may conduct a detailed close-reading; you may reflect on a theme that connects several poems; you may analyze an author’s work in relation to a particular set of historical circumstances; you may link a poem or poems to literary criticism or theory that interests you. In other words, you have a great deal of freedom in your approach! The second response paper, though, must incorporate secondary materials. Each response paper will be accompanied by a five-minute class presentation in which you summarize your argument(s) aloud – feel free to use handouts or whatever other media you like. You will also write a final research paper of 6-8 pages (for undergrads) or 10-12 pages (for grad students who want seminar credit), preferably dealing with poems we have not analyzed at length in class. We will dedicate one class to discussing final paper intros and theses. Note that an Incomplete will be granted only when there has been a genuine emergency beyond a student’s control.

Here is the grading breakdown:
Response paper / presentation 1: 15%
Response paper / presentation 2: 20%
Final research paper intro and thesis: 10%
Final research paper: 40%
Attendance and participation: 15%

All materials should be submitted promptly; last-second extensions will not be granted, and late papers will be graded down – or, if significantly late, not accepted. If you miss class the day an assignment is due, please place that assignment in my English Department mailbox by 3 pm the same day. Please check your UO email frequently, because I will be sending you important messages and documents.

It goes without saying that attendance is both important and required. If you know that you must be late or absent, speak to me in advance. You are responsible for all work assigned and all material covered during absences. (If class is ever canceled due to inclement weather, I will email you as far in advance as possible.)
Arrive in spirit as well as in body! I expect every person to participate meaningfully in class. Ask thoughtful questions or share exciting insights, direct our attention to an important passage, listen and respond to the perceptions of your peers. It is important for every member of the course to have a voice. And you’ll find that speaking up regularly will help you understand the material better. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable talking in class, please let me know. Being absent, arriving late, or not contributing to our discussions will lower your attendance/participation grade.

And if at any point you feel that you are struggling with the material or would like extra feedback, please see me! I am happy to talk about any questions or concerns at any time. Find me after class, come to my office hours, send me an email, or make an appointment to see me. I especially encourage you to meet with me about paper ideas and theses before you start to write.

Plagiarism involves using someone else’s words or ideas without properly citing your source; this applies to direct quotations or paraphrases of any source material, printed or digital. Do not attempt to pass others’ work off as your own; doing so is unethical. Students who are unsure how and when to cite should consult with me or with a librarian. Consequences of plagiarism may range from failing the assignment, to failing the class, to being reported to the university for disciplinary action. See also the UO Student Conduct Code.

If you anticipate needing accommodations for accessible education in this course, please make arrangements to meet with me soon. Please also request that the Accessible Education Center (http://aec.uoregon.edu; [541] 346-1155) send a letter outlining your needs.

Course Schedule (subject to change)
The listed readings will be supplemented with handouts or online resources as necessary. Texts listed with page numbers are in *The Broadview Anthology*; others (marked with an asterisk) are in the supplementary handouts. Of course, not all assigned material will be discussed in class.

**October 1:** Introduction / Roots – what is Victorianism?
Percy Bysshe Shelley, from “To a Skylark”*
John Keats, from “Ode to a Nightingale”*
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Kraken” (162)
Thomas Hardy, “The Convergence of the Twain”*

**October 3:** “A graft of the lyric on the dramatic”
William Wordsworth, “The Solitary Reaper”*
William Johnson Fox, “Tennyson – Poems, Chiefly Lyrical – 1830” (1181)

**October 8:** Mourning
Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (204) (we’ll concentrate on the first half of the poem in class)
Alice Meynell, “The Rhythm of Life” (1431)

**October 10:** Mourning II
Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (finish poem)

**October 15:** The Dramatic Monologue
John Stuart Mill, “What is Poetry?” (1212)
Walter Bagehot, “Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning; or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry” (1308)

October 17: The Dramatic Monologue II
Browning, “Essay on Shelley” (1243)
Alice Meynell, “Robert Browning” (1429)

October 22: Poetry as Activism & the Woman Question
Felicia Hemans, “The Image in Lava” (21)
Thomas Hood, “The Song of the Shirt” (26)
LEL, “The Factory” (42)
Sydney Dobell, “To the Authoress of ‘Aurora Leigh’” (763)
Arthur Munby, “The Serving Maid” (833)
Gerard Manley Hopkins, “Tom’s Garland” (1053)

October 24: The Poet in Crisis
Arnold, “Preface to the First Edition of Poems” (1270)
Arthur Hugh Clough, “Recent English Poetry” (1254)

October 29: The Failures of Poetry
George Meredith, Modern Love (793)
John Ruskin, “Of the Pathetic Fallacy” (1282)

October 31: Symbol and Scandal
Robert Buchanan, “The Fleshy School of Poetry: Mr. D. G. Rossetti” (1329)
D. G. Rossetti, “The Stealthy School of Criticism” (1341)
Algernon Charles Swinburne, “Under the Microscope” (1346)

November 5: Sacred / Secular & the Woman Question II
LEL, “Erinna”
Charlotte Bronte, “Obscure and little seem my way” (544)
Emily Bronte, “No coward soul is mine” (548)
Alice Meynell, “Cradle-Song at Twilight” (1090), “A Father of Women” (1094)

November 7: Poetry as Icon
Paintings by D. G. Rossetti: “The Tune of Seven Towers”* and “The Blue Closet”*
Morris, “Of the Origins of Ornamental Art” (1372)

**November 12:** Paper conferences (preliminary materials due)

**November 14:** The Word Made Flesh
John Morley, “Mr. Swinburne’s New Poems” (1320)

**November 19:** Pattern and Irony
Hardy, “Apology” (1441)

**November 21:** Poetry as Prayer

**November 26:** The Persistence of Form
Alfred Edward Housman, A Shropshire Lad*

**November 28:** Thanksgiving holiday – NO CLASS

**December 3:** Fin de Siècle
Oscar Wilde, “Hélas!” (1106), “Impressions” (1107), “Symphony in Yellow” (1007)
Walter Pater, from The Renaissance
Oscar Wilde, “The Critic as Artist”
James McNeill Whistler, “Ten O’Clock”

**December 5:** The End and Beyond / Branches
Browning, “One Word More”*
Tennyson, “Crossing the Bar” (279)
Hardy, “The Darkling Thrush” (1030)
William Butler Yeats, The Wind Among the Reeds*
Ezra Pound, “Portrait d’une Femme,”* “In a Station of the Metro”*
Arthur Symons, “The Symbolist Movement in Literature”

**Final paper due Dec. 5** (6-8 pages for undergrads, 10-12 pages for grad students who want seminar credit)