

English 457/557-17366/17367

## Victorian Literature & Culture: Victorian Poetry Fall 2013

Professor: Veronica Alfano  
Phone: (541) 346-1526 (not a great way to reach me)  
Email: [valfano@uoregon.edu](mailto:valfano@uoregon.edu) (the best way to reach me)

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"\*  
Tennyson, "Mariana" (156), "Supposed Confessions..." (157), "The Poet" (160), "The Poet's Mind" (161), "The Lady of Shalott" (162), "The Palace of Art" (165), "The Lotos-Eaters" (172), "Break, break, break" (194), "Locksley Hall" (195), "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (253)  
William Johnson Fox, "Tennyson – Poems, Chiefly Lyrical – 1830" (1181)  
Arthur Henry Hallam, "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry" (1190)

#### **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**

Tennyson, "St. Simeon Stylites" (183), "Ulysses" (186), "Tithonus" (277)  
Browning, "My Last Duchess" (309), "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister" (310), "Porphyria's Lover" (312), "The Bishop Orders His Tomb..." (315)

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, "Fra Lippo Lippi" (319), "A Toccata of Galuppi's" (325), "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came" (336), "The Last Ride Together" (347), "Andrea del Sarto" (363), "Two in the Campagna" (400), "Abt Vogler" (407), "Caliban upon Setebos" (414)

Browning, "Essay on Shelley" (1243)

Alice Meynell, "Robert Browning" (1429)

### October 22: Poetry as Activism & the Woman Question

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "The Cry of the Children" (74), all selections from *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (77), "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (78), *Aurora Leigh* Second Book, lines 1-523 (98), "A Curse for a Nation" (133), "A Musical Instrument" (134)

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

Matthew Arnold, "Resignation" (694), "The Forsaken Merman" (697), "To Marguerite—Continued" (699), "Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Obermann'" (700), "Dover Beach" (722), "The Buried Life" (723), "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (724), "The Scholar-Gipsy" (727), "Thyrsis" (733)

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

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, "The Blessed Damozel" (806), "My Sister's Sleep" (808), "Jenny" (809), "The Portrait" (815), "The Woodspurge" (817), "A Last Confession" (818), *The House of Life* (all) (827)

Robert Buchanan, "The Fleshly 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

Christina Rossetti, *Goblin Market* (848), "A Birthday" (855) "After Death" (856), "Song" (857), "Uphill" (858), "A Better Resurrection" (858), all selections from *Monna Innominata* (866), "In an Artist's Studio" (870), "A Pause"\* , "Winter: My Secret"\* , "Remember"\*

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

William Morris, "The Defence of Guenevere" (885), "The Haystack in the Floods" (890), "Riding Together" (893), "Near Avalon" (893), "An Apology" (894), "The Blue Closet,"\* "The Tune of Seven Towers"\*

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**

Algernon Charles Swinburne, "Laus Veneris" (965), "Itylus" (978), "Hymn to Proserpine" (984), "The Leper" (987), "The Garden of Proserpine" (996), "Hertha" (997), "A Forsaken Garden" (1001), "The Lake of Gaube" (1008)

John Morley, "Mr. Swinburne's New Poems" (1320)

**November 19: Pattern and Irony**

Thomas Hardy, "Hap" (1029) "Neutral Tones" (1029), "The Self-Unseeing" (1030), "The Minute Before Meeting" (1031), "Night in the Old Home" (1031), "The Something that Saved Him" (1032), "Afterwards" (1032), "Snow in the Suburbs" (1033), "During Wind and Rain,"\* *Poems of 1912-13*\*  
Hardy, "Apology" (1441)

**November 21: Poetry as Prayer**

Gerard Manley Hopkins, "The Wreck of the Deutschland" (1041), "God's Grandeur" (1047), "The Windhover" (1047), "Pied Beauty" (1047), "The Caged Skylark" (1048), "Felix Randal" (1049), "As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame" (1049), "Spelt from Sibyl's Leaves" (1051), "Carrion Comfort" (1051), "No worst, there is none" (1051), "I wake and feel the fell of dark, not day" (1052), "My own heart let me more have pity on" (1053), "Harry Ploughman" (1053), "Spring and Fall"\*  
Hopkins, "Author's Preface" (1355)

**November 26: The Persistence of Form**

Alfred Edward Housman, *A Shropshire Lad*\*

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

**December 3: Fin de Siècle**

Michael Field, "La Gioconda" (1077), "The Birth of Venus" (1077), "It was deep April, and the morn" (1085), "Noon" (1085), "Cyclamens" (1086)

Oscar Wilde, "Hélas!" (1106), "Impressions" (1107), "Symphony in Yellow" (1007)

Ernest Dowson, "Nuns of the Perpetual Adoration" (1156), "Non Sum Qualis..." (1156) "Villanelle of Sunset" (1157), "To One in Bedlam" (1157), "Vitae summa brevis spem nos vetat incohare longam" (1159)

Lionel Johnson, "The Dark Angel" (1160), "In a Workhouse" (1162), "Bagley Wood" (1163), "The Destroyer of a Soul" (1163), "The Precept of Silence" (1163)

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)