

# Let's Get Real: The Victorian Novel

English 8108, Fall 2015  
Classes meet Monday, 1:00-3:20 pm, 1138 Anderson Hall

Prof. Peter Logan  
914 Anderson Hall, 215-204-8567  
Digital Scholarship Center, 09A Paley Library  
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Office Hours, Monday and Thursday, 3:30-5:00 pm, in 914 Anderson, and by appt.

## Description

It is axiomatic that the Victorian novel is an example of realism. But Victorian novels were not all realist, and those that were differ so radically from one another as to challenge the very idea of realism as unifying principle. What is realism and why were Victorian writers preoccupied with it? This course uses a select group of Victorian novels to consider different approaches to realism as an art form. We couple that with a list of the major critical and theoretical essays on realism in philosophy and literary studies, to give you a strong conceptual grounding in one of the most critical issues in literature, both then and now.

## Assignments and Grading

Students will give an oral report to the class, write two short essays, a 20-page seminar paper, and an ungraded 5-page précis of the seminar paper. The last day of class will be devoted to student presentations on your research project. I will mark down or refuse late papers, but you may arrange for an extension in advance.

Because this course is a seminar, attendance is expected at every class, and all students are encouraged to take a regular leadership role in seminar discussions. Please contact the instructor in advance if you are unable to attend a class.

### *Grading schema*

Seminar paper	50%
2 Short essays	15% each
Oral Presentation	20%

## Oral Reports

Students will give a 20-minute presentation to the class on a critical essay from the syllabus. Reports should describe the essay's main argument and discuss its implications for our reading materials. Please provide a written 2-4 page summary of your report to the instructor the same day.

## Essays

The short essays are exercises in articulating your original ideas based on a careful reading and analysis of a short section of one of the assigned works. Please do not do supplemental research for these papers. The seminar paper is a full research project, requiring at least 15 sources. Your précis, due 3 weeks before the paper, will be a 5-page discussion of your topic, with an additional one-page bibliography of potential sources. There will be conferences with the instructor about your précis in the week following. In addition, student conferences will be arranged two weeks before the précis to discuss your thoughts. Instructions will be handed out in class for each assignment well in advance.

## Required Texts

### Books

- Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (Norton Critical)
- Collins, *Woman in White* (Oxford)
- Darwin, *Origin of Species* (ed. Appleman, Norton)
- Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (Oxford)
- G. Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Oxford)
- Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (Oxford)
- Hardy, *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (Oxford)
- Thackeray, *Vanity Fair* (Oxford)
- Aristotle, *Poetics* (trans. Heath, Penguin)
- Jameson, *Antinomies of Realism*
- McKeon, *Theory of the Novel*

### Articles (PDF files on \*OwlBox)

- Armstrong, "What is Real in Realism?"
- Auerbach, "Odysseus Scar"
- Barthes, "Reality Effect"
- Eliot, G., "Natural History of German Life"
- Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality"
- Jakobson, "On Realism in Art"
- Plato, Book 7, *Republic*,

### Accessibility

Students who need accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me to discuss the situation as soon as possible. Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex will coordinate accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### Compulsory Language on Freedom

"Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty and Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link:  
[http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy\\_no=03.70.02.](http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02.)"

### Plagiarism

The unacknowledged use of another writer's work constitutes plagiarism. Whether you use a verbatim quotation of a published source or summarize ideas from it in your own words, the source must be credited with full bibliographical details. Plagiarism will result in a final course grade of F and notification of the English Director of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

\*Indicates handouts on OwlBox

- Aug. 24 Introduction  
C19 Britain, Philosophical Realism, Literary Realism, Organization
- 31 \*Plato, Bk. 7, *Republic*  
Aristotle, *Poetics*  
\*Jakobson, "On Realism in Art"  
Robert, from *Origins of the Novel* (in McKeon 57-69)
- Sep. 7 Labor Day (No Class)
- Sep. 14 *Vanity Fair* ("Before the Curtain" - ch. 35)  
\*Lukács, Preface to *Studies in European Realism*
- 21 *Vanity Fair* (finish)  
Lukács, from *Theory of the Novel* (in McKeon 185-218)
- 28 **Essay #1 Due (5 pp)**  
*Mary Barton*  
Bakhtin, from *Dialogic Imagination* (in McKeon 321-51)
- Oct. 5 *Aurora Leigh*  
\*Auerbach, "Odysseus' Scar," *Mimesis*
- 12 *Our Mutual Friend* (Books 1 - 2)  
Watt, from *Rise of the Novel* (in McKeon 363-80)  
**Voyant Tutorial**, Digital Scholarship Center, 9A Paley, 2:00-3:30
- 19 *Our Mutual Friend* (finish)  
\*G. Eliot, from "Natural History of German Life"  
\*Barthes, "Reality Effect"
- 26 **Essay #2 Due (5 pp)**  
*Woman in White*  
Levine, from *Realistic Imagination* (in McKeon 613-29)
- Nov. 2 *Middlemarch* (Books 1 – 3)  
Jameson, *Antinomies of Realism* (1-26)
- 9 **Seminar Paper Précis Due**  
*Middlemarch* (finish)  
Jameson, *Antinomies of Realism* (27-44)
- 16 Darwin, *Origin of Species*  
\*Gallagher, "Rise of Fictionality"

23 Fall Break Week

30 *Tess of the D'Urbervilles*  
\*Armstrong, "What is Real in Realism?"

Dec. 7 **Seminar Paper Due (20 pp)**  
Class Presentations