



The Battle of Vertières: The last major battle of the Haitian Revolution led to the establishment of the Republic of Haiti.

ENGL 372: NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE OF THE AMERICAS & THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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What Students Say

"Professor Whitson was welcoming, enthusiastic, and really wanted us to be as excited as he was about the course."

"Dr. Whitson is eager to hear what the students have to say and show us why we should care about what we cover."

"I found Dr. Whitson's class personally challenging, but ultimately fulfilling."

"Whenever a student is confused and remains confused, Professor Whitson stays and helps explain ideas until the student has a full understanding of it."

Course Resources



Teaching Philosophy

Stories shape how we understand ourselves. We often appeal to the characters and stories that most moved us as children when determining who we are as human beings. Diverse writers and stories can challenge those ideas in powerful ways and broaden who we are. Carrie Fisher did that for me when she depicted the heroic and inspiring Princess Leia fighting a despotic Empire.

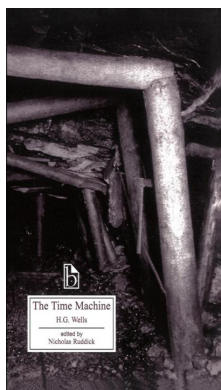
Rethinking one's perspective can be highly valuable. Our perspectives are inevitably influenced by our background. I value students who try to empathize with and learn from people who are different from them. We all have blind spots, including me. We can all learn from questioning our assumptions.

Learning happens by reading critically, listening to each other, and engaging in class.

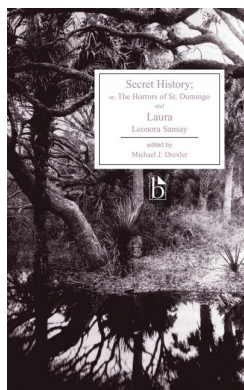
Ultimately, I value stories that inspire good discussions. That's what I want out of a literature class: a great conversation. I never expect you to have the right interpretation; in fact, I don't believe in a single correct interpretation. But I do want you to read and participate regularly, and learn from one another. Give yourself room to dwell in what John Keats calls "negative capability": the ability to be uncertain, unclear, and perhaps disturbed about what you're reading. Giving yourself room to doubt and be confused can lead to some of the most powerful and life-changing experiences when reading literature. Try not be so closed-minded that you can't see the beauty, complexity, or oddity of what we read.

Books to Purchase (at the Bookie or Online).

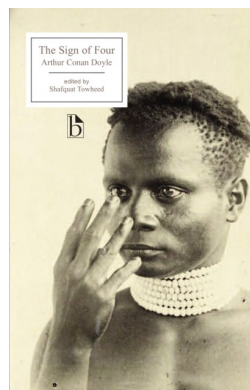
Required coursepacket is available for purchase at Cougar Copies.



HG Wells. [*The Time Machine.*](#)
Ontario:
Broadview Press,
2001.



Leonora Sansay.
[*Secret History; or, the Horros of St. Domingo and Laura.*](#)
Ontario: Broadview
Press, 2007.



Arthur Conan
Doyle. [*The Sign of the Four.*](#) Ontario:
Broadview Press,
2010.



Edith Johnstone.
[*A Sunless Heart.*](#)
Ontario:
Broadview Press,
2008.



Stephen Crane.
[*Maggie: A Girl of the Streets.*](#) Ontario:
Broadview Press,
2006.

Course Description

372 [HUM] 19th Century Literature of the British Empire and the Americas. 3 credit hours.

Literary and cultural texts in English from 1800 to 1900 focusing on global British literature and literatures of the Americas.

My investment in the course. I am concerned about our country's inability to work against climate change, the mass incarceration of African Americans, and widespread sexual assault. Each of these problems have a long history in British and American literature. By exploring that history, my hope is that we gain perspective on issues that concern all of us today.

A note for concerned students. I am not a disinterested or unbiased teacher; however, I am dedicated equally to the learning and success of all of my students and do not grade against particular views. Racism, sexism, or harassment of any kind has no place in this classroom – and I do expect all of my students to be respectful in how they disagree with me or with fellow students. We will be dealing with stories that reflect the cultural attitudes of the nineteenth century, and texts may use offensive words, depict scenes that are upsetting, or may represent race, gender, or violence in ways that are disturbing or bigoted, even when their intent is to protest racism, sexism, or other forms of social injustice. I am happy to work with students who might be triggered by such topics, but I won't always be able to give warnings before this material is encountered. If you are concerned about potentially upsetting material, please make an appointment to speak to me as soon as possible.

Objectives



Learn how to cite primary and secondary sources and evaluate arguments in papers



Read with the grain, against the grain, and for cultural meanings not immediately apparent.



Empathize with the life experiences of people who are different from you.



Explore how the stories we read, and the 19th C more generally, resonate with our lives today.

Unit 1: Ecology and Climate Change

This module introduces environmental writing in the nineteenth century as well as what lessons we can learn from them regarding climate change.

Keywords: anthropogenic, imagination, evolution, industrialization

Class	Topics / Theme	In-Class Learning	Texts Due * = in Course Packet	Assignments Due
T 1/10	Why read?	Selfie Introduction Course Overview	IN CLASS Arnold, "Dover Beach"	
Th 1/12	Climate Change	Think, Pair, Share: What makes reading interesting? What makes it boring? Presentation: What is close reading? How do you do it? Discussion: Capitalism and the Climate	* Bate , "from <i>Song of the Earth</i> " * Klein , "from <i>This Changes Everything</i> "	
T 1/17	Nature and the Imagination	Introduce: Reading Groups and Project 1. Think, Pair, Share: What's the relationship in these pieces between imagination and nature? Discussion: Beauty, Disgust, and Nature.	* Wordsworth and Coleridge , "Lyrical Ballads" * Wordsworth , "Lines Written A Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey;" * Blake , "London," * Emerson , "Nature"	
Th 1/19	Reading Groups 1 and 2 Meet.		* Zitkala-Sa , "The School Days of an Indian Girl"	Reading Leaders: 10 questions; 5 pertinent quotes from the reading. Leaders will lead discussion.
T 1/24	Reading Groups 3 and 4 Meet		Same Readings	Same Prep
Th 1/26	Race and Industry	Presentation: Transcendentalism, Manifest Destiny, and	* Bryant , "The Praries." * Fuller , "from A Summer on the Lakes"	

		<p>Indigenous Peoples in WA and ID.</p> <p>Think, Pair, Share: What's the relationship between racism, modernity, and environmental views in Bryant's work?</p> <p>Quotes: Consider Darwin, and Huxley in the context of the Romantics we've been discussing thus far.</p>		
T 1/31	Darwin and Degeneration	<p>Think, Pair, Share: How were you taught evolution in school?</p> <p>Discuss: Eugenics, Nationalism, and History.</p> <p>Clips: Rod Taylor's <i>The Time Machine</i></p>	Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i>	First blog post due.
Th 2/2	Utopia and Struggle	<p>Quotes. Read three quotes from Marx, Bellamy, and Morris regarding 19thC utopianisms. Why might Wells disagree?</p> <p>Think, Pair, Share: Are we more or less likely than 19thC people to dream of a perfect world? Why?</p>	Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i>	
T 2/7	The End of the World	<p>Reading Quiz 1</p> <p>Images: The fourth-dimension and the heat death of the universe.</p> <p>Discussion: How have fears of the end of the world impacted the stories you</p>	Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i> (finish)	

		read as a child? What's your favorite dystopia / apocalyptic tale?		
Th 2/9	Climate Change	Watch, <i>The Island President</i>		
T 2/14	Climate Change	Finish and Discuss, <i>The Island President</i> Think, Pair, Share: What are your fears about climate change? What can we do about it? Discuss: Was it the right decision for Nasheed to negotiate at the Copenhagen summit?	Lee, "Life After Life"	
Th 2/16	NO CLASS			Second blog post due.

Unit 2: Colonialism and Slavery

This module traces the development of slavery in the global nineteenth-century economy and shows how it continues to impact mass incarceration and contemporary racisms.

Keywords: reparations, incarceration, subaltern, hegemony

Class	Topics / Theme	In-Class Learning	Texts Due * = in Course Packet	Assignments Due
T 2/21	Slavery and Freedom	<p>Presentation: Racism and Slavery in the Enlightenment.</p> <p>Think, Pair, Share: In what ways has redlining impacted the War on Drugs, Black Lives Matter or other contemporary issues?</p> <p>Discussion: To what degree is democracy dependent upon slavery or other forms of black oppression?</p>	<p>*Buck-Morss, "From Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History"</p> <p>*Coates, "The Case for Reparations"</p>	
Th 2/23	Self-Determination, Fraternity, Servitude	<p>Images/Presentation: The Haitian Revolution</p> <p>Quotes: Reports from Jamaican and Haitian Revolution.</p> <p>Discussion: Is Wordsworth correct about L'Overture's friends? How does Bolivar see European Revolutionaries?</p>	<p>*Wordsworth, "To Toussant L'Overture"</p> <p>*Bolivar, "Letter from Jamaica"</p>	
T 2/28	Patriarchy and the Slave Trade	<p>Think, Pair, Share: Is the novel's focus on domestic</p>	<p>Sansa, <i>Secret History</i></p>	Third blog post due.

		<p>abuse a distraction from race?</p> <p>Quotes: Consider historical accounts from Raguette and Jones and Allen</p> <p>Contemporary: Think about Sansa's account in the context of Jon Henley's report of the 2010 Haiti Earthquake.</p>		
Th 3/2		<p>Reading Quiz #2</p> <p>Quotes: Consider accounts of the Indian Mutiny from accounts by Muir and Grant and accounts of the Adaman Islands.</p> <p>Presentation: Criminality in the 19thC, the mystery genre, and Orientalism.</p> <p>Think, Pair, Share: What role does colonialism play in this novel?</p>	Doyle, Sign of the Four	
T 3/7	R Groups 1-2		<p>Doyle, Sign of the Four (finish)</p> <p>*Dutt, "Our Casuarina Tree"</p> <p>*Naidu, "The Gift of India"</p>	Reading Leaders: 10 questions; 5 pertinent quotes from the reading. Leaders will lead discussion.
Th 3/9	R Groups 3-4			Same Prep.
3/13-17				NO CLASS, SPRING BREAK
T 3/21	Slavery in Popular Accounts	<p>Presentation: The Slave Narrative and White Messianism in the 19thC.</p> <p>Quotes: Consider Frederick Douglass, Mary</p>	*Southey, "The Sailor, Who Had Served in the Slave Trade"	

		Prince, Harriet Tubman Think, Pair, Share: What films about slavery have you watched and what elements do they share with the chapters you read here and Southey's poem?	*Jacobs , "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl"	
Th 3/23		Watch, <i>The 13th</i>		
T 3/28	Local Racisms	Finish and Discuss, <i>The 13th</i> Think, Pair, Share: What elements of the incarceration culture depicted in the film also appear in Idaho and Washington?	Bracken , " Reading Ta-Nehisi Coates in Idaho. "	Second blog post due.

Unit 3: Class and Sexual Assault

This unit looks at the obscured history of sexual assault in the nineteenth century and connects it to more recent struggles by women.

Keywords: *rape, representation, invisibility*

Class	Topics / Theme	In-Class Learning	Texts Due * = in Course Packet	Assignments Due
3/30	Ruin and Rape	Think, Pair, Share: Why is sexual assault so difficult to talk about? Discussion: Were the steps recently taken by the WSU Greek community good enough?	*Higgins and Silver , "From Rape and Representation"; *Solnit , "A Rape a Day"	

		In-Class Reading: Hardy, "The Ruined Maid"		
4/4	Wantonness	Presentation: Women in the 19thC and the New Woman. Think, Pair, Share: How might members of the group #CosplaysIsNotConsent respond to Lynton? Discussion: If Rossetti doesn't directly represent sex in her poem, how does she allude to it? Why?	*Lynton, "The Girl of the Period"; *Rossetti, <i>Goblin Market</i>	
4/6	Class and Rape		Crane, <i>Maggie: A Girl of the Streets</i> (read all)	Reading Leaders: 10 questions; 5 pertinent quotes from the reading. Leaders will lead discussion.
4/11			Same reading	Same Prep
4/13		Reading Quiz #3 Quotes: Pearson, DSM, and Fenwick-Miller on Art, Women, and Labor. Discussion: Compare Crane's naturalistic tone with Johnstone's sentimentalist one. How do these tones impact how each author depicts class?	Johnstone, <i>A Sunless Heart</i>	
4/18		Quotes: Ellis, Stead, and Hamilton on Sexuality; Thomas on the West Indies Discuss: Is Lotus Grace a ruined woman? A heroine?	Johnstone	

		What ideologies of each would enable us to identify her as one or the other?		
4/20		<i>The Hunting Ground</i>		
4/25		Finish and Discuss: <i>The Hunting Ground</i> Discussion: Do you think Universities can prevent the conflict of interest that pits justice against financial gain in industries like sports and fraternities? Is this happening at WSU? Why/why not?	Potts, "For a Victim of Rape, Silence is No Benefit"	Final Blog Post Due
4/28		Wrap-Up, Final Day		

Blog Post Assignments

750-1000 words per assignment; 3/6 required, 1 from each unit; 1 extra may be completed for 100 points extra credit. Due date is listed on the calendar.

Unit 1: Ecology and Climate Change (No Sources Needed)

1. Compare the indigenous view of nature reported in Zitkala-Sa's "The School Days of an Indian Girl" and those found in *The Island President* with the view of nature reported by Romantics (Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey," Emerson's *Nature* Bryant's "The Praries.") What lessons can we learn from marginalized voices to help preserve the environment?
2. Compare H.G. Wells's view of the future of humanity in *The Time Machine* with the theories of Darwin in *The Origin of the Species* and Debbie Lee's reflections about extinction in "Life After Life." How do we imagine the future and end of our species?

Rubric (75pts for Concepts, Independence; 50 pts for Thesis)

Needs Work	Criteria	Exceeds Standards
(75; 60; 40)	Concepts: Engages with specific textual elements, performs close readings, creates specific references to text.	
(75; 60; 40)	Independence: Demonstrates creative observations of texts, envisions alternatives to the arguments in the text, or draws inspiration from the text.	
(50; 40; 30)	Thesis: Clearly lays out the main argument in the first paragraph. Remains focused on that argument through topic sentences and transitions throughout the entire paper.	

Unit 2: Colonialism and Slavery (2 Secondary Sources Required)

1. Consider Leonora Sansa's *Secret History or the Horrors of St. Domingo* as a text that grapples with American racism. Compare America's problems recognizing the legitimacy of the Haitian Revolution with the horrors of slavery in Harriet Jacobs's "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl" or with mass incarceration in the film *The 13th*. Be sure to support your arguments with secondary sources from Sansa's Broadview edition.
2. Examine the portrayal of the Andaman character Tonga in Doyle's *The Sign of the Four* and compare with his absence in "The Sign of the Three" on BBC television's *Sherlock*. Considering the racist context of the Indian Mutiny from the original novel (be sure to look at the Broadview sources), is this absence a good thing or does it simply silence a racist past?

Rubric for Blog 2 (75pts for Concepts, Intersectionality; 50 for Information Literacy)

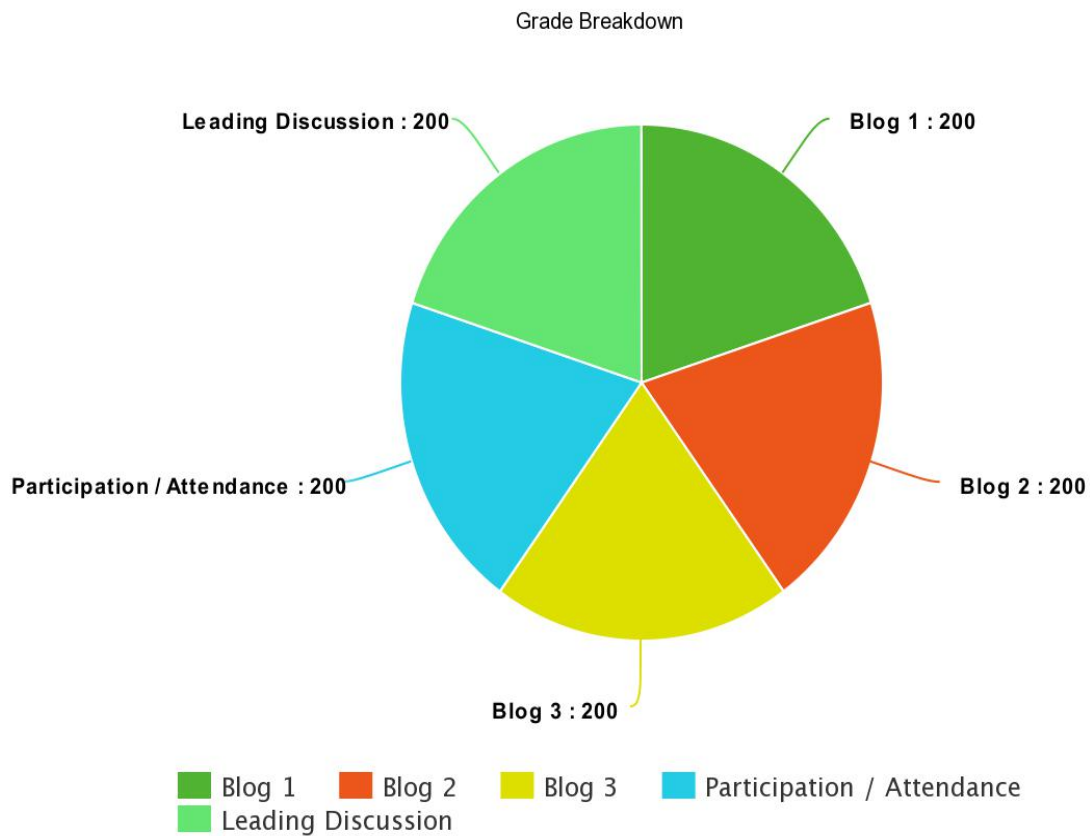
Needs Work	Criteria	Exceeds Standards
(75; 60; 40)	Concepts: Engages with specific textual elements, performs close readings, creates specific references to text.	
(75; 60; 40)	Intersectionality: Uses critical, cultural, and intersectional lenses to engage with the experiences of marginalized people rather than simply stating one's own opinion.	
(50; 40; 30)	Information Literacy: Uses at least three secondary sources from the Broadview editions to contextualize the argument.	

Unit 3: Class and Sexual Assault (No Further Sources Required)

1. Read one of the nonfiction texts in either the course packet or the Broadview edition of *A Sunless Heart* on nineteenth-century Women's sexuality by men (Acton, "The Modern Harlot's Progress;" Stead, "The Maiden Tribute;" Hamilton, "Civil Responsibility of Sexual Perverts;" Ellis, *Sexual Inversion*) and compare them with the representation of sexuality in Crane's *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets*. How do men write about women's sexuality? Would these stories be different if they were written by women?
2. Compare the depiction of schooling and women in Johnstone's *A Sunless Heart* with how schooling is depicted in *The Hunting Ground*. What has changed for women students since Johnstone's time? What has stayed the same?

Rubric for Blog 3 (75pts for Concepts, Intersectionality; 50 for History)

Needs Work	Criteria	Exceeds Standards
(75; 60; 40)	Concepts: Engages with specific textual elements, performs close readings, creates specific references to text.	
(75; 60; 40)	Intersectionality: Uses critical, cultural, and intersectional lenses to engage with the experiences of marginalized people rather than simply stating one's own opinion.	
(50; 40; 30)	History: Demonstrates an ability to properly contextualize literature within the time period in which it was written, while also usefully comparing that period with our contemporary world.	



meta-chart.com

Course Values

Inclusion: Your success in this class is important to me. We will all need accommodation because we all learn differently. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. The sooner I know about your needs, the earlier we can discuss possible adjustments or alternate arrangements that might help you. If you have a documentable disability, please visit the Access Center (Washington Building 217; 509.335.3417) to schedule an appointment with an advisor.

Time Bank: I have built-in grace periods for the dates of major assignments. You may choose to take:

- 1 two-day grace period for one major project.
- 2 one-day grace periods for two major projects.

Reallocating Your Grade: I realize that you may be more interested in some aspects of this course than others. You may reassign a total of up to 150 points of the final grade in any allotment you wish, as long as your grade adds up to 1000 points. Some examples:

- Remove 100 from participation and 50 from the first blog, then add 100 to the second blog and 50 to leading discussion.
- Remove 150 from leading discussion, and add 150 to the final blog post.
- Remove 50 from all 3 blogs, and add 100 to participation and 50 to leading discussion.

Attendance: I hope you participate actively in the course, because this is the best way for me to engage you in learning. Taking daily attendance is a good way for me to learn your names and know who you are. Of course, we all participate differently, and I've built-in mechanisms to help ensure that you can engage the content in a variety of ways. If you have any difficulties, please talk to me.

Email: I would rather talk to you in person than via email, since email depersonalizes the exchange and makes it easier for me to misinterpret what you mean. If emailing me is necessary, please allow at least 24 hours for a response. I try to respond in a timely manner, but I do not always check my email when not in town or on the weekends.

Reading and Homework: I encourage you to read all of the work for this course, since it enables us to complete discussions, ideas, and projects. I also know that college can be busy, as it was for me. I consider this class a *learning community*, and such a community works better if everyone has read the proper materials. If you are finding it consistently difficult to complete your readings, please talk to me and we'll try to figure out a workable solution.

Academic Honesty: Everyone in this class, including me, must abide by the standards of academic honest set up by Washington State University. See that statement here: <http://wsulibs.wsu.edu/library-instruction/plagiarism>. I work hard to model appropriate academic citation. Please see me if you are unclear about any of these requirements.

Safety: Washington State University is committed to enhancing the safety of the students, faculty, staff, and visitors. It is highly recommended that you review the Campus Safety Plan (<http://safetyplan.wsu.edu/>) and visit the Office of Emergency Management website (<http://oem.wsu.edu/>) for a comprehensive listing of university policies, procedures, statistics, and information related to campus safety, emergency management, and the health and welfare of the campus community. WSU urges students to follow the [“Alert, Asses, Act”](#) protocol for all types of emergencies and the “Run, Hide, Fight” response for an active shooter incident. Remain ALERT (through direct observation or emergency notification), ASSESS your specific situation, and ACT in the most appropriate way to assure your own safety (and the safety of others if you are able).

Please sign up for emergency alerts on your account at MyWSU. For more information on this subject, campus safety, and related topics, please view the [FBI’s Run, Hide, Fight video](#) and visit the [WSU safety portal](#).

Reading Quizzes: I give three reading quizzes during the course of the semester, one for each unit. The dates of these quizzes are clearly marked on the calendar. Quizzes are designed to cover basic information in the readings, are multiple choice, and should be easy for anyone who reads regularly. Together, add up to 100 points of the 200-point participation / attendance grade.

Sources

Assignments:

Donna Campbell. "[Assignments.](#)" *English 372, 19th-Century Literature of the British Empire and the Americas*. Washington State University.

Readings:

Leeann Hunter. [Studies in the Humanities](#). Fall 2012. Washington State University.

Other Reading Suggestions From:

Donna Campbell, Kirk McAuley, Andrea Wood, Jesse Oak Taylor, Benjamin Morgan, Erica Pittman, Rebecca Nesvet, Ryan Fong, Caroline Levine, Aaron Ottinger, Chris Washington, Pamela Thoma, Meredith McGill, Devin Griffiths.

Policies and Design

John Aycock and Jim Uhl. "[Choice in the Classroom.](#)" *ACM SIGCSE Bulletin*. 37.4 (2005): 84-88.

Ashley Boyd. *Young Adult Literature*. Fall 2015: Washington State U.

Anne-Marie Womack, Annelise Blanchard, Cassie Wang, Mary Catherine Jessee. [Accessible Syllabus](#). Web. 3 August 2016.

Anne-Marie Womack. *First-Year Writing: Rhetoric and Research in the Digital Era*. Spring 2014. Tulane U.