



**ENGLISH 4322:
ENGLISH POETRY 1840-1890
Dr. Monica Smith**

Office: 413C Classroom Center

Office Hours: T/TH 2:30-4:30 or by appointment

Email: msmith@mail.wtamu.edu

Class Time/Location: MW 1:00-2:15; CC 412

COURSE DESCRIPTION: We will sample some of the extraordinary poems written during the Victorian era: the sonnet sequence, which during the nineteenth-century enjoys a popularity unseen in English letters since the early modern period; the verse novel, a poetic enterprise uniquely Victorian; the dramatic monologue, a decisive move away from Romanticism's autobiographical impulses; poems expressing anxieties about social progress alongside verses depicting worries intensely personal; amatory verse that has shaped our modern notions of ideal romantic love; and poems staggering in their psychological complexity and dazzling in their sophistication and humor. Along the way, we will discover writings that, although sometimes dwarfed by the novel in both curriculums and criticism, are as rich, provocative, exhilarating, and exasperating as anything one could ever hope to find.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: Students should develop an understanding of Victorian poetic culture and its relationship to social and historical context; understand the fundamentals of prosody; discuss and write critically about genre, period, and authors; employ literary terminology correctly.

CLASSROOM PERFORMANCE: This is an active, discussion-oriented class with substantial, demanding, daily readings. Each day, students should come to class prepared to articulate and defend their own readings, both on paper and in person.

TEXTS:

Required:

- *Broadview Anthology of Victorian Poetry and Poetic Theory*. Eds. Thomas J. Collins & Vivienne J. Rundle. Broadview Press, 1999. ISBN: 1-55111-100-4.
- Course materials available via WTONline.

To access course materials online:

1. Go to <http://www.wtonline.wtamu.edu>
2. Login with your WTAMU username and password.
3. Find our course. Click on this link.
4. On our course page, click on Lessons on the left-hand toolbar.
5. Readings are arranged by Required and Recommended. Other supplementary materials can be found here as well.

Optional for undergraduates, required for those enrolled for graduate credit:

- Abrams, M. H. *Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8th edition. Boston: Thomson Wadsworth, 2005. ISBN: 1-4130-0218-8. I will make assignments from this text, but I will also make those specific readings available via WTONline. If your budget permits, however, I do recommend buying a copy, for you will find it an invaluable aid in this course and others. New copies tend to be expensive (around \$40), but you can find much more affordable (and usually used) copies online.
- Barrett Browning, Elizabeth. *Aurora Leigh*. Ed. Margaret Reynolds. Norton, 1996. ISBN: 0-393-96298-9. While our Broadview anthology contains the excerpts from EBB's verse novel that we will cover in class, reading this poem in its entirety is a pleasure I urge you to allow yourself.
- Tucker, Herbert F., ed. *A Companion to Victorian Literature & Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1999. ISBN: 0-631-21876-9. I won't make specific assignments from this text, but it is a fantastic companion both to the period and to the writers we'll discuss. I will place the library's copy on reserve, and you're also welcome to come by my office and use my copy.

ASSIGNMENTS AND REQUIREMENTS:

Daily Readings are substantial and demanding. The study of poetry demands careful, multiple readings; skimming will not suffice, and may in fact do more harm than good. I recommend that you get in the habit of looking ahead on the syllabus; know when our next long work is due, and plan to start reading in advance. All readings should be completed before coming to class. Do not come to class without your books and supplementary readings from WTONline.

Quizzes and In-class Writings will vary from a quick, four or five line response to a question or prompt to a short reading comprehension quiz to a detailed analysis of a particular passage. These writings will be assessed according to the degree of engagement the student demonstrates with the question or assignment. Quizzes and in-class writings cannot be made-up and may be administered at any point during the class period. At the end of term, I will drop the lowest grade from this category.

Memorization Projects: Twice during the semester students will select 14-20 consecutive lines of verse recite them to me. Students may not choose two sets of lines from the same poem or two poems by the same author.

Response Papers will be due three times during the semester.

- Papers should be typed, one full page, single spaced (using Times New Roman 12 pt. font and 1" margins). Responses may cover one work in detail, or the response may address compelling connections between several texts. The first topic will be assigned; the others will be at the student's discretion.
- Responses will earn points for demonstrating the following: the student's significant and close engagement with the reading(s); detailed, notable textual analysis; original thought and critical reaction grounded in the text; observations that build on and go beyond class discussion.
- Responses will be penalized for the following: weak, sloppy, or insubstantial analysis; repetition of class discussion; lack of engagement with work; analysis based on vague assertions rather than close reading; remarks off-topic or not grounded in the text.
- The only materials that should be used in preparing the response papers are the assigned readings and a dictionary. No secondary sources of any kind, whether from journals, books, or the internet, should be used. I am interested in your interpretations, not someone else's.

The Critical Essay should be 5-8 pages. Paper topics will be distributed several weeks before the due date. The critical essay should adhere to all the conventions of formal academic prose, following the guidelines specified by MLA. The essay must be your own original work and must be written specifically for this class. If you have questions about the ethics or mechanics of acknowledging another person's writings or ideas, please see me. Papers are due at the beginning of class.

Examinations: Exams will consist of identifications. The final exam will be a comprehensive essay examination. Alternate testing dates are not available, and make-ups will only be allowed under the most extreme circumstances—circumstances documented and verified by the Office of Student Services.

ATTENDANCE: Regular attendance is essential and expected. I will take roll every day. All absences will be treated the same, i.e. no differentiation between “excused” or “unexcused” absences. Habitual or excessive tardiness may be counted as an absence. I reserve the right to fail any student who misses more than four class periods.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS: Assignments are due in class and are to be delivered in person unless prior arrangements have been made with me. Any assignment that does not adhere to this requirement is considered late. Late assignments will lose one letter grade per business day, **not** class day. Assignments are not considered submitted until I receive them. To be safe, then, papers should never be left in my mailbox or sent via email attachment. Each student is held responsible for all assignments, regardless of her/his class attendance on the day the assignment is made. If a previously scheduled event coincides with an exam or due date, a written request for an extension or make-up date will be considered. All such requests must be submitted prior to the date in question. Any requests for extensions based on illness or family emergency must be accompanied by written documentation verified by the Office of Student Services. All make-ups and extensions are at the instructor’s discretion.

COMPUTER ACCESS: Students are expected to check email daily and the course webpage several times a week or as indicated on the daily schedule. Students are responsible for securing working computer equipment; labs are available on campus. Please note that since “The printer wouldn’t work,” “Something’s wrong with my disk,” and “I don’t know what happened—I saved it but now it’s not there” have become the 21st century versions of “The dog ate my homework,” computer, software, or printer malfunction/failure of any kind will not constitute a valid excuse for missed, late, or incomplete work. Remember: save early, save often; print early, print often.

CONFERENCES: Office hours are Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30-4:30 or by appointment. You are always welcome to drop by during office hours.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All students are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. Any instance of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs. Students are responsible for informing themselves of all university regulations concerning academic honesty. For more information, please see the Code of Student Life, Appendix III (<http://www.wtamu.edu/administrative/ss/code/index.htm>)

ACCESS STATEMENT: If you need adaptations or accommodations because of a disability (i.e., physical, mental, psychological, learning), have emergency medical information to share with me, or need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. West Texas A&M University seeks to provide reasonable accommodations for all qualified persons with disabilities. This University will adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and guidelines with respect to providing reasonable accommodations as required to afford equal educational opportunity.

GRADING:

Quizzes, In-class writings, Memorizations	15%
Response Papers	15%
Critical Essay	20%
Exam One	15%
Exam Two	15%
Final Exam	20%

Grading Scale:

Excellent work will earn an A (90-100).

Good work will earn a B (80-89).

Average work will earn a C (70-79).

Fair work will earn a D (60-69).

Poor work will earn an F (0-59).

A = 95

C+ = 78

D- = 60

A- = 90

C = 75

F = (as marked; work not submitted marked as 0)

B+ = 88

C- = 70

B = 85

D+ = 68

B- = 80

D = 65

DAILY SCHEDULE: Subject to change. The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary. The most update version of the syllabus will be available online. Unless otherwise specified, readings can be found in the *Broadview Anthology*.

Week	Monday	Wednesday
Week 1		Wednesday, January 17: The Victorian Era Introduction to class
Week 2	Monday, January 22: Progress and Anxiety: An Introduction to Victorian Culture Required: “The Victorian Age: 1830-1901” (WTOonline); Tennyson, “Locksley Hall” (195); Matthew Arnold, “Dover Beach” (722) Recommended: Anthony Hecht, “Dover Bitch” (WTOonline)	Wednesday, January 24: The Dramatic Monologue Required: Robert Browning, “My Last Duchess” (309), “Dramatic Monologue” (from Abrams; also available on WTOonline) Recommended: “Caliban Upon Setebos” (414), “Andrea del Sarto” (363)
Week 3	Monday, January 29: The Dramatic Monologue Required: “Porphyria’s Lover” (312), “Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister” (310) Recommended: “Fra Lippo Lippi” (319), excerpts from <i>The Ring and the Book</i> (419)	Wednesday, January 31: The Sonnet Sequence Required: EBB, <i>Sonnets from the Portuguese</i> , Sonnet 1 (WTOonline); start reading the rest of <i>Sonnets from the Portuguese</i> ; “Sonnet” information (from Abrams; also available on WTOonline) Response Paper One Due
Week 4	Monday, February 5: The Sonnet Sequence Required: EBB, <i>Sonnets from the Portuguese</i> , Sonnets 2-44; “Sonnet” information (from Abrams; also available on WTOonline) Memorization One Due this week	Wednesday, February 7: The Sonnet Sequence Required: George Meredith, <i>Modern Love</i> (793); Dante Gabriel Rossetti, <i>House of Life</i> (827); “The Stealthy School of Criticism” (1341); Robert Buchanan, “The Fleshly School of Poetry” (1329)
Week 5	Monday, February 12: The Sonnet Sequence Required: Christina Rossetti, <i>Monna Innominata</i> (866) Recommended: Christina Rossetti, “A Birthday” (855), “Up-Hill” (858), “ ‘For Thine Own Sake, O My God’ ” (870) Response Paper Two Due	Wednesday, February 14: The Role of Poetry Required: John Stuart Mill, “What is Poetry?” (1212); Arnold, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” (1291) “Preface” to <i>Poems, 1853</i> (1270); Gerald Massey, Preface to <i>Babe Christabel</i> (1279); Amy Levy, “James Thomson: A Minor Poet” (1358) Recommended: Letitia E. Landon, “On the Ancient and Modern Influence of Poetry” (1206)

Week 6	<p>Monday, February 19: Verse of Social Protest Required: Thomas Hood, “The Song of the Shirt” (26); EBB “The Cry of the Children” (74) ; Gerald Massey, “Cry of the Unemployed” (789) Recommended: Eliza Cook, “Song for the Workers,” (559); Caroline Norton, “Voice from the Factories” (136); Janet Hamilton, “A Lay of the Tambour Frame” (WTOonline); <i>The People’s Charter</i> (WTOonline)</p>	<p>Wednesday, February 21: “Womankind” Required: Christina Rossetti, <i>Goblin Market</i> (848); illustrations for <i>Goblin Market</i> (WTOonline) Recommended: Coventry Patmore, “The Angel in the House” (739) ; Gerald Massey, “Womankind” (792); Sarah Stickney Ellis, excerpt from <i>The Women of England</i> (WTOonline)</p>
Week 7 (Last Day to Drop or Withdraw w/ Guaranteed X is Friday, March 2)	<p>Monday, February 26: Exam One Critical Essay Topics posted to WTOonline today</p>	<p>Wednesday, February 28: The Fallen Woman Required: Amy Levy, “Xantippe” (1137); Augusta Webster, “A Castaway” (1013) Recommended: The Ladies’ National Association for the Repeal of the Contagious Diseases Act (WTOonline) ; Eliza Cook, “Song of the Ugly Maiden” (556)</p>
Week 8	<p>Monday, March 5: Library Orientation</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 7: “Mankind” Required: Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden” (1152), “If” (1152); Matthew Arnold, “The Forsaken Merman” (697)</p>
Week 9	<p>Monday, March 12: SPRING BREAK</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 14: SPRING BREAK</p>
Week 10	<p>Monday, March 19: Patriotism and Nationalism Required: Tennyson, “Charge of the Light Brigade” (253) Recommended: Arthur Henry Hallam, from <i>On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry</i> (1190) Response Paper Three Due</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 21: Patriotism and Nationalism Required: Felicia Hemans, “Casabianca” (16); E.B.B., “Mother and Poet” (WTOonline) Recommended: Kipling, “Ballad of East and West” (WTOonline)</p>
Week 11	<p>Monday, March 26: Patriotism and Nationalism Required: Tennyson, <i>Maud</i> (254) Memorization Two Due This Week</p>	<p>Wednesday, March 28: The Verse Novel Required: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, <i>Aurora Leigh</i>, First Book (82)</p>
Week 12	<p>Monday, April 2: The Verse Novel Required: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, <i>Aurora Leigh</i> Second Book and Fifth Book (98)</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 4: Past and Present Required: Browning, “ ‘Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came’ ” (336) Recommended: Arnold, “The Scholar Gypsy” (727)</p>
Week 13	<p>Monday, April 9: Past and Present Required: Tennyson, “Ulysses” (186) Recommended: William Morris, “The Defense of Guenevere” (885)</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 11: Critical Essay Workshop Bring two (2) typed copies of a full draft to class. Anyone without a full draft will be dismissed and counted absent for the day</p>
Week 14	<p>Monday, April 16: Poets and Painters Required: Tennyson, “The Lady of Shallot” (162); colorplates for “Lady of Shallot” (WTOonline) Recommended: Michael Field, “A Pen Drawing of Leda” (1082) Critical Essay Due Today</p>	<p>Wednesday, April 18: Art and Artistry Required: Christina Rossetti, “The P.R.B. ” (WTOonline); “In an Artist’s Studio” (870) ; Dante Gabriel Rossetti, “The Blessed Damozel” (806) Recommended: Tennyson, “The Palace of Art” (165)</p>

Week 15	Monday, April 23: Elegy Required: Tennyson, <i>In Memoriam A.H.H.</i> (204) Recommended: Arnold, "Thyrsis" (753)	Wednesday, April 25: Dialect Verse Required: Ellen Johnston, "The Last Sark," "Nelly's Lament for the Pirnhouse Cat," (WTOonline); Ben Brierley, "The Weaver of Welbrook" (WTOonline); William Barnes, "Uncle an' Aunt" (28), "The Vaices that Be Gone" (29) Recommended: excerpts from <i>The Poorhouse Fugitive</i> , "In Defense of Dialect"
Week 16	Monday, April 30: Exam Two	Wednesday, May 2: Review for Final Exam

Final Exam: Friday, May 4, 10:30 a.m.

Full schedule available at <http://www.wtamu.edu/administrative/vpa/reg/finals.htm>.

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