

Preliminary Web Course Description

*Please note: This is a preliminary web course description only. The department reserves the right to change without notice any information in this description. The final, binding course outline will be distributed in the first class of the semester.

School of English and Theatre Studies

Course Code: ENGL*4250	Course Title: 18 th - & 19 th -century literatures	Date of Offering: W'19
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Course Instructor: Michelle Elleray	Course Format: Capstone seminar
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Brief Course Synopsis: "Ecocriticism and the Victorian Novel"

The Victorian period saw the rise of industrial pollution, urban overcrowding, animal extinction, fast fashion, and environmentally-damaging resource extraction, as well as opportunities for big-game hunting through Britain's imperial presence. Meanwhile scientists expanded the Victorians' understanding of geological time from thousands of years to millennia, the second law of thermodynamics generated narratives of resource exhaustion, and Darwin exploded the distinction between human and non-human animals. This course will situate the Victorians' developing understandings of the biosphere in conversation with the ecocritical concerns raised in our own time as we investigate the Victorian novel. Issues we might examine are the extent to which Victorian social causes intersect with a concern for environmental justice; the mobilizing force of narratives generated by scientific reframings of the environment and its resources; the extent to which a post-Darwinian awareness of the interrelatedness of organisms and environments raised questions of biological egalitarianism; or investigation into what is enabled through Victorian confluences of moral and environmental pollution. This is a double-weighted reading- and writing-intensive course.

Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

- 10% Participation
- 30% 2 x short response paper, 15% each (400-500 words)
- 20% Research presentation
- 10% Research essay abstract
- 30% Research essay (4,500-6,000 words)

Texts and/or Resources Required (e.g. Internet access, specific textbook title, lab kit, etc.)

- Charles Dickens, *Hard Times* (1854)
- Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1855)
- Charles Kingsley, *The Water-babies* (1863)
- H. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines* (1885)
- H. G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896)

Plus assigned secondary reading on Victorian literature and culture, and contemporary ecocriticism

Other information: This course fulfills the 18th- & 19th-century literature distribution requirements under the old Academic Calendar requirements for the English major.