

## 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*6431	Course Title: Topics in 19 <sup>th</sup> -century literature: Victorian Literary Ecologies	Date of Offering: W23
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Course Instructor: Michelle Elleray	Course Format: Seminar
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#### Brief Course Synopsis:

Ernst Haeckel's mid-nineteenth-century term "ecology" announced the study of relations between organisms and their environment, both animate and inanimate, as a distinct branch of science; taking ecology as our starting point, our focus in this course is to examine how the inter-relationship of organisms and environment is reflected in, constructed through, and manifested by the Victorian novel. Not only did the nineteenth century see the emergence of ecology as a field of study, it also saw ecological relationships affected by industrial pollution, urban overcrowding, animal extinction, and environmentally damaging resource extraction. Meanwhile attention to the environment saw scientists expand the Victorians' understanding of geological time from thousands of years to millennia, the first and second laws of thermodynamics focused attention on energy and generated narratives of resource exhaustion, while Darwin exploded the presumed distinction between human and non-human animals. The Victorian novel thereby provides us with the opportunity to seek historical depth in our understanding of the Anthropocene as well as the chance to question how the humanities—specifically literary narrative—shape our grasp of ecological concerns. The Victorian novels for this course are grouped under the headings of energy, water, eco-apocalypse, trees, and geology; they will be supplemented by contemporary work in environmental studies, material that provides historical context for our ecological focus, and Indigenous-authored texts that denaturalize and recontextualize the Victorians' worldview.

#### Methods of Evaluation and Weight:

- Keyword assignment 20%
- Data and creation public writing project (1,000-1,200 words) 20%
- Research presentation 20%
- Research essay (6,500-7,000 words) 40%

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

- Elizabeth Gaskell *North and South* (Oxford UP)
- George Eliot *The Mill on the Floss* (Oxford UP)
- Richard Jefferies *After London* (Edinburgh UP—nb: an online version of this edition is available through the library)
- Thomas Hardy's *The Woodlanders* (Oxford UP)
- H. G. Wells *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (Oxford UP)

Tip: you may want to ease your in-semester workload ahead of time either by reading the longer Victorian novels (Gaskell and Eliot) over the winter break, or the shorter novels that occur during a generally busy time of semester (Jefferies, Hardy, Wells).

This course counts towards the following distribution requirement(s) for students who registered at the University prior to the Fall of 2018:  
N/A

Information about mode of delivery (synchronous/asynchronous/other details):

In person (dependant on current public health conditions)

\*Students who registered at the University of Guelph after Fall 2018 must fulfill the “new” major and minor requirements. Students who registered at the University of Guelph prior to Fall 2018 must fulfill the requirements of the Calendar in effect when they first enrolled unless they have filed a Schedule of Studies Change Request to change to the 2018-2019 calendar. For more information, please consult the major and minor checklists at <https://www.uoguelph.ca/arts/sets/undergraduate/english/current-student-information>.