

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
ENL3251 – Victorian Literature
SECTION 152D
Victorian Crime Story

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

Instructor Abra Gibson
Office tbd
Phone 352.392.6650
Office Hours Friday pd 5 (11:45-12:45) – book [here](#)
E-Mail Agibson10@ufl.edu **only**

COURSE INFORMATION

Section 152D
Time MWF Period 4: 10:40 – 11:30
Location [2333 Turlington Hall](#)

QUICK LINKS TO SECTIONS

COURSE OBJECTIVES

REQUIRED MATERIALS

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

GRADING SCALE (& GPA EQUIVALENT)

EXPLANATION OF LETTER GRADES

CLASSROOM POLICIES – Attendance and Missed Work

CLASSROOM POLICIES – Comportment and Technology

UF POLICIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

CLASS SCHEDULE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine Victorian literature that explores the era's legal and educational systems. Including literature by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Wilkie Collins, and Oscar Wilde, our readings include fictionalized depictions of real court cases, journals, letters, and other writings on actual crimes, or they may depict fictional crimes that point toward flaws in the Victorian legal system. We will read with an eye toward the representation of crimes associated with marriage, urbanization, and other social structures.

We will also discuss representations of specific crimes, court cases, and urban legends of the era in media and fiction. Students will learn to apply critical literary analysis to the way the texts represent crime across gender and class, and may also take up questions of

gender, nationalism, or race. We will analyze the documents and events in their broader historical context of industrialism and urbanization.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Successful completion of this 3-credit course is indicated by a grade of C or better. By the conclusion of the course, successful students must be able to:

- Demonstrate knowledge of the content of specific literary works and the structures and conventions of different literary genres.
- Produce original, critical readings of literary texts, using different methods of interpretation and analysis.
- Critically assess the variety of roles that literature played in the Victorian era.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Blue texts can be purchased online at the University Bookstore using our course AND SECTION numbers: ENL 3251, 152D, or through a vendor of your choosing.

Blue are links to online versions.

I will provide the rest in Canvas.

Do not purchase free versions (such as Kindle versions) of our texts from Amazon. Free versions of pre-copyright materials are often abridged without any notification from vendors and may be missing a significant amount of content.

Novels

Diana of the Crossways – George Meredith

Man and Wife – Wilkie Collins

Lady Audley's Secret – Mary Elizabeth Braddon

Excerpts from:

The Wife; and Woman's Reward – Caroline Norton

English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century – Caroline Norton

The Separation of Mother and Child by the Law of "Custody of Infants" Considered – Caroline Norton

A Plain Letter to the Lord Chancellor on the Infant Custody Bill – Caroline Norton & attorney Pearce Stevenson

"Recollections of a Police Officer" – William Russell

"London Labour and the London Poor, Vol. IV" – Henry Mayhew

The Private Rod: Marital Violence, Sensation, and the Law in Victorian Britain – Marlene Tromp

Short works

“The Case of Eliza Fenning” – court transcripts and letters from the accused
Essays "On Murder" 1 & 2 – Thomas de Quincey
“Murders in the Rue Morgue” – Edgar Allan Poe
“Mystery of Marie Roget” – Edgar Allan Poe
“My Last Duchess” and “Porphyria’s Lover” – Robert Browning
“Goblin Market” – Christina Rossetti
The Dead Alive – Wilkie Collins/*Wrongful Convictions* – Rob Warden
“The Ballad of Reading Gaol” and “Lord Savile’s Crime” – Oscar Wilde
Various penny dreadfuls, broadsides, and other ephemera

In addition to our texts, students should download the free ClassDojo app, through which participation and attendance will be recorded. ClassDojo allows students to monitor their own progress.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

Assessments and Points Possible

In-class Discussion; ~2 pts per day	75 points	7.5%
Group Panel Discussion	100 points	10%
In-class Writing; 10 days, 10 pts each	100 points	10%
Midterm – Historical Paper	200 points	20%
Proposal & Outline for Final Paper	75 points	7.5%
Final - Critical Analysis Paper	300 points	30%
Collaborative Project	150 points	15%
TOTAL	1000 points	100%

GRADING SCALE (& GPA EQUIVALENT)

A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
100-93 (4.0)	92-90 (3.67)	89-87 (3.33)	86-83 (3.0)	82-80 (2.67)	79-77 (2.33)	76-73 (2.0)	72-70 (1.67)	69-67 (1.33)	63-66 (1.0)	62-60 (0.67)	59- (0)

Note: A grade of C– is not a qualifying grade for major, minor, Gen Ed, or College Basic distribution credit. For further information on UF's Grading Policy, see:

[General Grading Regulations](#)
[Minus Grading Policies](#)

EXPLANATION OF LETTER GRADES

A: This paper fulfills the assignment at a high quality level, and your work shows originality, creativity, and critical insight. You presented a complex, argumentative thesis

statement and supported it with strong evidence from both the primary text(s) and relevant critics. Your ideas were well-organized, well-developed, and moved beyond class discussion. You have properly cited all of your sources and your paper is free of typos and grammatical or mechanical errors.

For an A in the class, students will also make consistent contributions to class discussions and have regular and punctual attendance.

B: This paper provides what the assignment asked at a high quality level. It needs some revision, but is complete in content, is well-organized, and shows special attention to professional style. B work shows excellent scholarship and some initiative. Like the A paper, it also to some degree goes beyond the “bare minimum” in quality/effort.

For a B in the class, students will also make regular contributions to class discussions and have regular and punctual attendance.

C: This paper demonstrates an adequate grasp of the subject matter and followed the instructions for the assignment. It needs significant revision, but is complete in content and the organization is logical. The style is straightforward, but unremarkable. A C paper could have been improved with more time spent refining your argument and revising your prose. You should seek help from the instructor on your next paper.

For a C in the class, students will also have a cooperative attitude toward class work, attend class, and sometimes participate.

D: This paper needs significant revision. The content is often incomplete and the organization is hard to discern. Attention to style is often nonexistent or chaotic and typos are abundant. Work is unsatisfactory and the assignment expectations are barely met. You should seek help from the instructor on your next paper.

For a D in the class, students may also fail to participate in class/group discussions or frequently miss class.

E: An E is usually reserved for people who do not complete reading assignments, prepare for class, turn in assignments, or attend class. However, if your work is careless and shows little understanding of the needs of the assignment, you will receive a failing grade.

Students may appeal a final grade through [Prof. John Cech](#), Undergraduate Coordinator. Appeals may result in a higher, unchanged, or lower final grade.

CLASSROOM POLICIES – Attendance and Missed Work

Advance Notification: Students who anticipate disruptions such as future absences, tardiness, or emergency contact (call, text) should notify me at the beginning of class or as soon as they are aware that these events may occur to avoid penalties. A brief, well-formatted email is fine.

Attendance: This course does not have excused or unexcused absences – there is no need for doctor's notes, etc., except as relates to the make-up policy as outlined below. Students may miss up to 3 classes without penalty. The fourth and fifth absence each cost one letter grade. Students with six absences automatically fail the course.

Exceptions: **Students must notify the instructor ahead of time for these absences to be excused.** UF policies permit court-mandated events (jury duty, court testimony), religious holidays, military obligation, and university sponsored events including the 12-day rule. See [UF accepted activities](#) for further details.

Tardiness: Students who are late to class without advance notice will lose their in-class discussion points for that day.

Missed Class Time: Students reason are responsible for materials covered in missed classes, and should consult the course Canvas materials and fellow classmates for assistance – not the instructor. I strongly recommend exchanging phone or email contact information with at least one other student.

Assignment Deadlines: Any assignments due during an absence are still due on that date, and will be subject to the course's standard late penalties, as described in Assignment Submission Policies in our Canvas course files.

Make-up Policy: Students may make up missed in-class work only the case of serious documented illness, family death, or [UF accepted](#) activities.

CLASSROOM POLICIES – Comportment and Technology

Comportment: This refers to your classroom contributions, which affect participation grades. Asking questions is the best cure for ignorance. However, students should not make any rude, coarse, or offensive remarks based upon race, gender, ability, or sexual identity, either in class discussion or in written assignments. Simply put, think about how your words might be perceived before you speak, and consciously change potentially offensive language to terminology that is more neutral.

Participation: This is not a lecture, so students must complete readings and contribute to our discussions, whether with questions or ideas. Students should come to each class with two questions about reading content, assignments, or course concepts. Students who do not voluntarily participate in class discussion may be called upon to share one of

these questions.

Tech: Phones, laptops, tablets, headphones: These rules are in place to maintain a positive and productive classroom environment. Students in this class will be treated as adults and are free to make their own choices and mistakes. Of course, some of those choices and mistakes will have consequences. Be sure you understand and abide by the following classroom policies. Related point deductions are outlined above in **the GRADE DISTRIBUTION** section.

- Headphones off before entering the classroom.
- Silence tech before coming to class. Sometimes we will use our cellphones during class activities, but otherwise, students should store tech in bags or pockets during class.
- Students who are expecting emergent calls/texts should notify the instructor before class, and should move to the hall before reading/responding.
- Unauthorized tech use is prohibited, as it distracts the instructor, and often distracts other students. The second time a student uses tech for non-class activities, that student will be asked to leave for the day and will be considered absent.
- If you choose to use your tech for non-class related activities, please sit in the back of the class so that your screen does not distract other students.

UF POLICIES AND ACCOMMODATIONS

Academic Honesty

Students are required to be honest in their coursework. Students may not use notes during quizzes or exams, and must properly cite all sources that they have consulted for any research projects. Students should know that using their own work from other papers or classes is considered plagiarism, as well as any source material that is not cited. Any act of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean of Students, and may result in failure of the assignment in question and/or the course. You can read University of Florida's honor code [here](#).

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student, who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. Contact the [Disability Resources Center](#) for information about available resources for students with disabilities. **Accommodations are not retroactive and cannot be provided until the instructor receives DRC documentation, so if you qualify, please get this process started immediately!**

Counseling and Mental Health Resources

Students facing difficulties completing the course or who need counseling or urgent help should visit or call the on-campus [Counseling and Wellness Center](#) (352.392.1575). Students who find certain topics triggering or upsetting may wish to use the CWC to develop coping strategies in case such topics arise in coursework.

Online Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course based on 10 criteria. These evaluations are conducted [here](#). You will be notified when they are open, usually in the last two weeks of class. Summary results of these assessments are also available to students after the term is complete.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Students should note that the schedule is a guideline and may change. Students are responsible for all changes made to the syllabus and all changes announced in class, even if they are absent on the day of the announcement. Each student is responsible to keep up with the readings and all assignments.

Students will be expected to have read all the texts listed for each day **prior** to that day's discussion.

Term dates of note: **academic** **holidays** **due dates**

WEEK 1 8/25 Drop/add ends at midnight
8/21 Syllabus and schedule (W)
8/23 Essays "On Murder" 1 & 2 - Thomas de Quincey
8/25 "The Case of Eliza Fenning" - court transcripts and letters from the accused

WEEK 2 8/30 Fees due by 3:30
8/28 "Medea" – Amy Levy; "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" – Elizabeth Barrett Browning
8/30 "My Last Duchess" and "Porphyria's Lover" – Robert Browning (W)
 Introduce Collaborative Project
 Introduce Close Reading/Historical Paper
9/1 Murder culture - penny dreadfuls, broadsides, and pamphlets
 [Tentative Library day]

WEEK 3
9/4 LABOR DAY - NO CLASS
9/6 Victorian Divorce: The Norton Case
 Excerpts from [English Laws for Women in the Nineteenth Century](#) –
 [Caroline Norton](#) and *The Wife; and Woman's Reward* – Caroline Norton
9/8 *Diana of the Crossways* – Books I-X

WEEK 4
9/11 *Diana of the Crossways* – Books XI-XX
9/13 *Diana of the Crossways* – Books XXI-XXX (W)
9/15 *Diana of the Crossways* – Books XXXI-XL

WEEK 5
9/18 *Diana of the Crossways* – finish

9/20 Overview of British legal reform: Married Women's Property Acts, Matrimonial Causes Act
Critical excerpts from *The Private Rod: Marital Violence, Sensation, and the Law in Victorian Britain* (W)

9/22 Panel 1

WEEK 6

9/25 Close Reading/Historical paper workday: Overview of resources on critical, analytical schools (such as feminism, critical race theory, gender studies, economics, psychoanalysis) (W)

9/27 *Man and Wife* – Wilkie Collins

9/29 *Man and Wife* – Wilkie Collins

Midterm Close Reading/Historical Paper due midnight Sunday 10/1 to Canvas

WEEK 7

10/2 *Man and Wife* – Wilkie Collins

10/4 *Man and Wife* – Wilkie Collins

10/6 **HOMECOMING - NO CLASS**

WEEK 8

Midterm

10/9 *Man and Wife* – Wilkie Collins

10/11 *Man and Wife* – Wilkie Collins (W)

10/13 Panel 2

WEEK 9

10/16 The Victorian Imagination: Short readings on spiritualism and folklore around crime: spring-heeled Jack, black swine of Hampstead, "[Goblin Market](#)" – Christina Rossetti

10/18 *Sweeney Todd* – Fred Hazleton; [The Man from Ironbark](#) – A. B. "Banjo" Patterson (W)

10/20 Ripperology and intro to Detective Fiction
Excerpts from "Recollections of a Police Officer" – William Russell

WEEK 10

10/23 Panel 3

Discuss Critical Analysis Paper Proposal and Outline (W)

10/25 [The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde](#) – Robert Louis Stevenson

10/27 "[Murders in the Rue Morgue](#)" and "[Mystery of Marie Roget](#)" – Edgar Allan Poe

Proposal and Outline for Critical Analysis Paper due by midnight Friday, 10/27

WEEK 11

- 10/30 Panel 4
- 11/1 Sensation Fiction and Fin de Siècle [Potential Library day]
- 11/3 *Lady Audley's Secret* Vol. 1, Chapters 1 - 12

WEEK 12

- 11/6 *Lady Audley's Secret* Vol. 1, finish
- 11/8 *Lady Audley's Secret* Vol. 2, Chapters 1 - 10
- 11/10 **VETERAN'S DAY - NO CLASS**

WEEK 13

- 11/13 *Lady Audley's Secret* finish Vol. 2
- 11/15 *Lady Audley's Secret* Vol. 3
- 11/17 Panel 5

WEEK 14

- 11/20 Progress Statements on Critical Analysis Paper
Discussion of Collaborative Project Progress (W)
- 11/22 **THANKSGIVING - NO CLASS**
- 11/24 **THANKSGIVING - NO CLASS**

WEEK 15

- 11/27 *The Dead Alive* – Wilkie Collins
Collaborative Project closed for grading at midnight 11/29
- 11/29 *Wrongful Convictions* – Rob Warden; **“Lord Savile's Crime”** and **“The Ballad of Reading Gaol”** – Oscar Wilde (W)
Final discussion/questions about Critical Analysis Paper
- 12/1 Panel 6

Collaborative Project due (closed for grading) midnight Wednesday 11/29

WEEK 16

- 12/4 Victoriana in contemporary pop culture – video clips and new ephemera
- 12/6 Course evaluations and analysis

Final Critical Analysis Paper due midnight Monday, 12/11

- 12/18 **Grades posted by midnight**