

Fall/Winter 2017-2018

AP/EN 4003 6.0A (Y)

Urban Experience in Victorian Britain

Course Director:

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Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Thursdays 2:30-5:30pm

Description:

Urbanization and industrialization profoundly transformed the social and political landscape of Britain in the nineteenth century, and these changes were reflected in new genres of literary and journalistic writing focused on the city. In this course we will examine a variety of narratives of urban experience, in which the city figures variously, as a space of lower-class suffering and crime, as a place of social intrigue and sexual danger, or as a site for reinventing one's identity.

We will examine some of the effects of gender and class on urban experience, the kinds of opportunities and problems the city presented for urban men and women, the range of responses these works tried to elicit from readers, how they assigned blame for the city's ills, and the solutions or redemptive possibilities (if any) they offered. As well, what formal or thematic conventions were associated with writing about the city, and how did these change over the course of the nineteenth century?

Our readings include a selection of the period's literary works, popular journalism, artworks, and photographs, as well as recent critical and historical essays on the nineteenth-century city.

Course Purpose and Objectives:

This course provides an in-depth examination of the Victorian city. Students will learn to read, think, and write critically about nineteenth-century works from a range of genres. In addition, this course will enable students to contextualize their readings with relation to broad literary and artistic trends, historical events, and cultural influences of the period, as well as to develop interpretations that engage with present-day critical and historical research.

Category:

A

Area:

4.3

Period:

2

Historical Requirement:

Time Period II (1700-1900)

Requirements:

Shorter fall term paper (1500 words), 20%
Winter term final paper (3000 words), 35%
Midterm test, 10%
Seminar presentations, 15%
Participation, 15%
Response papers/short assignments, 5%

Reading List:

Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1822; Oxford)
J. P. Kay, *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes...* (1832)
Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (1848; Oxford)
Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851; selections)
Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (1837-38; Penguin)
Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1860-61; Penguin)
James Greenwood, "A Night in a Workhouse" (1866)
John Thomson, *Victorian London Street Life* (1877; Dover)
Robert Louis Stevenson, *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886; Penguin)
George and Weedon Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody* (1892; Penguin)
Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892; Oxford)
George Gissing, *The Odd Women* (1893; Penguin)
Arthur Morrison, *A Child of the Jago* (1896; Academy Chicago Publishers)
Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901; Penguin)

Open To:

Yr 4 Honours