

EN 4573

VICTORIAN GHOSTS

FALL 2020
THURSDAYS,
4-7PM

COURSE DIRECTOR:
MATTHEW
DUNLEAVY

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Image: Hope, William. "Untitled." c. 1920.
Photograph. National Science and Media Museum

The ghost that enters Victorian fiction haunts the text and intrudes upon the reader's rational world-view. This intruder is a disruption to the norm and blurs the lines between the logical and illogical, natural and supernatural, and life and death. In a world becoming increasingly scientific and skeptical, priding itself for advancements in industry and knowledge, why did the ghost hold such a fascination for the Victorians? Just as Scrooge looked upon the ghosts of the past, present, and future, ghost stories allowed writers and readers to interrogate their history, express their anxieties of their contemporary world, and imagine what the future could look like.

In this course, students will engage with a variety of ghost stories—mostly fictional short stories from 1837-1910, in addition to early film and parascientific accounts—and examine how the figure of the ghost in the Victorian imagination intersects with nineteenth century culture more broadly. These intersections include, the spiritualist movement, technological advances (including photography and other optical technologies), the printing press and literacy, women's rights movements, and social/class anxieties.

Fall/Winter 2020-2021

AP/EN 4573 3.0A (F)	<i>Victorian Ghosts</i>
Course Director:	Name: Matthew Dunleavy e-mail: mdunlea@yorku.ca
Time:	Thursdays 4:00pm – 7:00pm
Delivery Format:	REMOTE – (synchronous delivery) – There are scheduled meeting times for this course (see above). Students should plan to be available for course-related activities during the appointed times. For more information, see the Description and/or Requirements below.
Description:	<p>The ghost that enters Victorian fiction haunts the text and intrudes upon the reader’s rational world-view. This intruder is a disruption to the norm and blurs the lines between the logical and illogical, natural and supernatural, and life and death. In a world becoming increasingly scientific and skeptical, priding itself for advancements in industry and knowledge, why did the ghost hold such a fascination for the Victorians? Just as Scrooge looked upon the ghosts of the past, present, and future, ghost stories allowed writers and readers to interrogate their history, express their anxieties of their contemporary world, and imagine what the future could look like.</p> <p>In this course, students will engage with a variety of ghost stories—mostly fictional short stories from 1837-1910, in addition to early film and parascientific accounts—and examine how the figure of the ghost in the Victorian imagination intersects with nineteenth century culture more broadly. These intersections include, the spiritualist movement, technological advances (including photography and other optical technologies), the printing press and literacy, women’s rights movements, and social/class anxieties.</p> <p>As collaborative members of the EN 4573 community, all assignments for the course will lead towards creating an edited, open-access collection of Victorian Ghost Stories. This will include—but is not limited to—writing introductory notes for short stories and authors, understanding and creating footnotes, and creating other critical apparatus that will illustrate the ways in which these stories intersect with the major themes of the course and Victorian society and culture.</p>
Category:	C
Historical Requirement:	Time Period II
Requirements:	Short Annotating Exercise (~500 words) (20%); Seminar presentation with accompanying write-up (~750 words) (25%); Final essay (2500 words) (40%); Participation (15%)

Reading List:	No assigned textbook, all readings available digitally, including selections from Ambrose Bierce, Frances Power Cobbe, Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Henry James, and W. T. Stead.
Open To:	YR 4 H