

Eng 350: Parallel Lives of the Victorian Era

Course Texts

Abrams, et al. The Norton Anthology of English Literature. Vol 2B. 7th ed.
Eliot, Middlemarch (Signet) Dickens, Hard Times (Dover)

Course Description

To gain better understanding of Victorian England, one must analyze the lives and the literature of the people who lived under Victoria's rule. In this course, we will be discussing how the texts of the nineteenth century parallel not only their author's lives, but also the values and events of their time. In addition, we will draw parallels between life in our era and that of our Victorian predecessors in order to assess how knowledge of the Victorians helps us understand our own philosophic positionings.

Course Goals

1. The honing of interpretive acuity in both written and oral discourse.
2. Critical awareness of the forces shaping Christianity in the Victorian Era.
3. A sense for the historical, philosophical, and scientific issues of the nineteenth century.
4. An ability to articulate the various stages of Victorian discourse.
5. An intellectual community within the classroom through the discussion of ideas.

Course Requirements - Students are expected to

1. Attend every class period, showing up on time.
2. Read all materials, including footnotes, bringing to class the assigned text.
3. Actively participate in class discussion every session.
4. Try to understand alternate views and opinions.
5. Write 6 one-page "Parallel Papers" due the day of the reading being discussed.
6. Be ready to talk about what they wrote on the days they turn in their papers.
7. Pass a comprehensive final.

Course Grading

50% papers, 20% final, 20% quizzes, 10% discussion in class

Teacher's Pet Peeves

1. Tardiness
2. Students who start packing away their books while someone—**ESPECIALLY** another student—is speaking. It is both anti-intellectual and rude.
3. Cell phones

Requirements for Parallel Papers

- a) The typed 1-2 page paper must reflect something from the day's reading. Thus, each student is free to choose the 5 due dates of the papers.
- b) No late papers will be accepted (5 min. after class begins on the due date is late).
- c) Students are expected to share their papers' insights in class on the due date. Therefore, a paper will only be accepted from a student who is in class.
- d) Only one paper per author; however, you may parallel a new author with someone you had written about earlier.
- e) For such a short paper, don't waste time summarizing your points in the introduction; give your thesis and then support it! A conclusion is unnecessary.
- f) Quote from the readings, with page numbers, to prove the parallel discourse.
- g) Possible Parallels, in order of greatest sophistication and thus potential for an A
 - 1) ideas or values in that day's reading and a previous writer's ideas/values
 - 2) parallel between a poem's form and its content
 - 3) parallels within a text (AKA "motifs") and their significance
 - 4) different works of one writer
 - 5) writings and their historical contexts
 - 6) Victorian assumptions and those of our own time
- h) Print out 2 copies: one to turn in at start of class, the other for reference during class

Below are base points from which errors in grammar and mechanics will be subtracted. Two points will be subtracted if a student makes no contribution to class discussion.

- A (100 pts.): In a least 1.75 pgs, with no redundancy, creatively uses powerfully articulate, insightful prose to discuss specifics, relating them to the Victorian episteme, quoting at least four times to establish the parallels. Takes intellectual risks rather than just pointing out the obvious.
- B (89 pts.): Less articulate and creative, perhaps overlooks something obvious that is relevant to the thesis, but an intelligently focused discussion. Fails to quote or to give page numbers. Doesn't relate the parallel to the Victorian episteme
- C (79 pts.): Discussion is not very original or just gives generalities, failing to focus on specifics or quote the text.
- D (69 pts.): Is less than 1 page and is not unified (i.e., is a bunch of unrelated observations) or gives only one idea without support.

Quizzes: Quizzes of 3 to 6 questions will be given at the start of most classes with paper (preferably recycled) provided by students in a 8.5 by 5.5 size (a half sheet of binder paper). Students will receive an automatic ten points by turning in a sheet with each quiz question worth 2 points on top of that. There will be pop non-quizzes. Lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

Final: The final will be multiple choice, assessing how well students can identify Victorian authors with their ideas and the texts that present them. Quotations that are stylistically or philosophically representative of authors will be included for identification.

Discussion: A student will be given one point for each day she/he contributes to class discussion, whether speaking once or multiple times. Students are encouraged to discuss each other's perceptions, rather than only to respond to the teacher. Students with difficulty in this area should make an appointment with Dr. Downing before the third week of classes to make alternate arrangements.

38 pts. = A+

27 pts. = B+

17 pts. = C+

7 pts. = D+

Midterm Review: Plan on taking 2 hours on Sat. Oct 15 for a Victorian Promenade and Tea.

Guide to Inclusive Language adapted from Martha Kolln, Understanding English Grammar

Here are some of the ways in which you can make up for the pronoun gap when you write and/or revise your own sentences:

1. **USE THE PLURAL.**
Every writer should be aware of the power of language when he chooses his pronouns.
Revision: Writers should be aware of the power of language when they choose their pronouns.
2. **USE HE OR SHE IF YOU CAN USE IT ONLY ONCE.**
Revision: Every writer should be aware of the power of language when he or she chooses pronouns.
3. **AVOID HIS AS A DETERMINER, EITHER BY SUBSTITUTING ANOTHER ONE OR, IN SOME CASES, DELETING THE DETERMINER:**
The writer of the news story should have kept his opinion out of it.
Revision: The writer of the news story should have kept (all) opinion out of it.
4. **TURN THE CLAUSE INTO A VERB PHRASE, THUS ELIMINATING THE PROBLEM SUBJECT:**
Every writer should be aware of the power of language when choosing pronouns.
5. **REWRITE THE ADVERBIAL CLAUSE AS A RELATIVE (WHO) CLAUSE:**
When a person buys a house, he should shop carefully for the lowest interest rate.
Revision: A person who buys a house should shop carefully for the lowest interest rate.

Fall 2003 (M-W-F)

Day	Date	Assignment	
Wed.	September 3	Parallel Lives	
Fri.	5	<u>Contexts</u> 1696-1711, 1333-5, 1066-70, 1110-19 A-45-6 (at book end)	
Mon.	8	<u>The Science Mill</u> 1679-96, 1166-73	
Wed.	10	<u>Hard Times</u> Book One	
Fri.	12	Reading Day	
Mon.	15	<u>Hard Times</u> Book Two	
Wed.	17	<u>Carlyle</u> 1077-1103	
Fri.	19	<u>Tennyson</u> 1076-7, 1198-1204, 1208-17, 1219-27	
Mon.	22	Finish <u>Hard Times</u>	
Wed.	24	<u>In Memorium</u> 1230-56 (pg. end)	
Fri.	26	Finish <u>In Memorium</u> (through 1280)	
Mon.	29	<u>Tennyson</u> 1204-8, 1217-19, 1280-1303	<u>Ruskin</u> 1432-43, 1425-32
Wed.	October 1	<u>Ruskin</u> 1428-32	<u>Mill</u> 1137-1165
Fri.	3	<u>The Subjected</u> 1715-39, 1055-7, 1454-69	
Mon.	6	<i>FALL RECESS</i>	

Day	Date	Assignment		
Wed.	8	<u>Gaskell</u> 1318-33	<u>Brontë</u> 1418-25	<u>Tennyson</u> 1229-30
Fri.	10	<u>Middlemarch</u> Chapters I-VIII (9-72)		
Mon.	13	<u>The Rossettis</u> 1573-1604		
Wed.	15	<u>Browning</u> 1173-98		
Fri.	17	<u>Middlemarch</u> Finish Book I (63-120)		
Mon.	20	<u>Browning</u> 1345-53, 1402-18		
Wed.	22	<u>Browning</u> 1373-1402		
Fri.	24	<u>Middlemarch</u> Chapter XIII-XVIII (121-185)		
Mon.	27	<u>Browning</u> 1358-62, 1365-73	<u>Fitzgerald</u> 1304-18	
Wed.	29	<u>Arnold</u> 1471-93, 1504-14, 1534-6		
Fri.	31	<u>Middlemarch</u> Finish Book II (185-222)	<u>Arnold</u> 1493-98	
Mon.	November 3	<u>Arnold</u> 1498-1504, 1514-34	<u>Clough</u> 1451-3	
Wed.	5	<u>Arnold</u> 1545-58	<u>Huxley</u> 1558-70	<u>Newman</u> 1119-37
Fri.	7	<u>Middlemarch</u> Chapter XXIII-XXIX (222-279)		
Mon.	10	<u>Swinburne</u> 1621-36	<u>Pater</u> 1636-48	

Day	Date	Assignment
Wed.	12	<u>Wilde</u> 1761-1805
Fri.	14	<u>Middlemarch</u> Chapter XXX-XXXVI (279-347)
Mon.	17	<u>Middlemarch</u> Finish Book IV
Wed.	19	<u>Shaw</u> 1808-56
Fri.	21	<u>Middlemarch</u> Book V
Mon.	24	<u>Middlemarch</u> Book VI
Wed.	26	<i>Thanksgiving Recess November 26-30</i> Read 30 pages per night
Fri.	28	
Mon.	December 1	<u>Middlemarch</u> Book VII
Wed.	3	<u>Kipling</u> 1863-88
Fri.	5	<u>Middlemarch</u> Chapter LXXII-LXXIX (711-760)
Mon.	8	<u>Poetic Aberrations</u> 1648-68, 1747-51, 1805-8
Wed.	10	Finish <u>Middlemarch</u>
Fri.	12	<i>Last Day of Classes</i> <u>Final Preparations</u> 1043-65
Mon.	15	<i>Semester Exams December 15-18</i>
Wed.	17	