

Spring '99

Day session

Instructor: J. James

Hg

TTh

2-3120

✓ English 312: VICTORIAN LITERATURE

This course is an introduction to representative British writers of the Victorian Age. Taught chronologically, it will emphasize: (a) the writer and his world; (b) developments in thought and culture; and (c) the various types of poetry and prose written. In general, English 312 will be taught as a discussion course, supplemented with mini-lectures, handouts of various sorts, and student presentations or projects.

Excessive materialism and its effects, the social problems of industrialization, the loss of religious faith and values as well as new religious experiments, the identity crisis of poets, experiments in socialism and a new enlightened humanism, the development of an art for art's sake movement, and the rebellion and decadence of the 1890's--all of these areas and how they affected various writers will be touched upon.

Authors covered: Poetry--Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold and selected minor poets (Dante and Christina Rossetti, William Morris, Elizabeth Browning, Gerald Hopkins, James Thomson). Prose--Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, John Henry Newman.

Text: Trilling & Bloom, Victorian Prose & Poetry

- I. Bulletin Description: A study of selected English writers of poetry & prose from 1832-1901.
- II. Bibliography: See Victorian Prose & Poetry text, pages 737-744.
- III. General Objectives of Literature: Literature holds many values for the student. Concerned with such realities as life, death, love, the problems of good & evil, literature enriches & clarifies life by contributing to an understanding of man's relationship to society, to his physical environment, to his inner self & to God.

Other studies seek similar ends but in other ways. Perhaps the area peculiar to literature is most accurately conveyed by the concept of the "concrete universal." Philosophy & science abstract truth from experience; literature seizes truth in experience.

A good reader is one who both selects judiciously & reads discriminately. Most students are certain to invest substantial portions of their lives in reading fiction & poetry as well as in attention to the related arts of the theater, the motion pictures, & others. This means that one of the most important acquirements possible for a college student is a growing habit of active personal judgment in the selection & appraisal of what he reads & views. He can best initiate himself into a habit of valid & effective judgment by systematic, extensive practice in the critical reading of works of various kinds. The course in literature will provide this practice designed to help the student become a judicious reader of literary form.

IV. How This Course Is Related to General Objectives of University as Stated in University Bulletin:

- To develop in the student approaches to the creative & analytical understanding & appreciation of literature, specifically through the study of representative Victorian writers of poetry & prose in the English tradition.
- To open to the student the wealth of man's cultural heritage both artistic & intellectual.
- To encourage a search for truth through literature & to assist the student in forming a value system or a philosophy of life.

- V. Major Assignments: Classes will consist normally of a threefold combination: (1) presentation of key points in literary works & indepth supplements by the instructor; (2) class discussions of these points & the assigned portions of literary works; (3) student presentations on topics approved by the instructor both to encourage student research & to afford an opportunity to the student for effective oral communication. Student involvement will be emphasized in all aspects of the learning experience.

You can expect: --Three examinations
--Research report & presentation on a minor Victorian poet (or creative project)

** Specific grading breakdown will be given in class.

** Specific exam dates & oral report deadlines will be given in class.

-VI. Research Report Assignment: Starting in about ten weeks, each student will be called upon to present a 30-40 minute report on a minor Victorian poet. See the text for the list of minor poets.

The research report should include the following:

1. A review of the biographical details that may be helpful in understanding the poet's works.
2. A brief commentary on the poet's artistic & philosophical views which are reflected in his works.
3. Explication of the poet's more important works.
4. The student's appreciation & evaluation of the poet & his works.

****Each report should be limited to 30-40 minutes. The student should limit his material beforehand so that he can adequately cover it in the time allotted.**

****The student should type up or xerox his report for the other members of the class.**

****The student who is giving the presentation should be able to answer any questions raised by the other members of the class.**

VII. Tentative Schedule:

Week

1 & 2	Introduction & Tennyson
3 & 4	Browning
5 & 6	Arnold
7 & 8	Minor poets: Dante & Christina Rossetti, Meredith, Morris,
9	Carlyle Swinburne, Elizabeth Browning, Clough, (see
10	Mill list of others below).
11 & 12	Newman
13	
14 & 15 >	Reports: See list above. James Thomson, Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson.