Critical Study in Periods/Movements: The Victorian Era

HU 3507 – R01 MWF 1:05-1:55 Walker 145
Dr. Laura Kasson Fiss lkfiss@mtu.edu Office: Walker 333
Office Hours: Mondays 10-11:30, Thursdays 12:30-2, and by appointment.

Course Description
In this course, we will focus on the notion of “character” in its various senses. Victorian writers created legions of memorable characters: Sherlock Holmes, Heathcliff, Dracula, and Oliver Twist, to name a few. The Victorians were also concerned with the relationship between literary character and the character formation of their readers—particularly readers they viewed as impressionable. Some characters from Victorian literature seem to take on lives of their own—Sherlock Holmes and some Dickens characters, for instance. Others, like the stock characters of sensation novels, were critiqued for being “flat” or unrealistic—including in W. S. Gilbert’s play A Sensation Novel, which shows those characters coming to life to berate their author. Using various works of literary criticism to guide us through this complex yet compelling concept, we will navigate these and other issues surrounding Victorian character.

Course Learning Objectives
This course is keyed to University Learning Goal 4: Creative and Critical Thinking. For more information, see http://www.mtu.edu/assessment/program/university-learning-goals/. Course-specific learning goals include

- Studying a period in depth: understanding the relationship between literary works and history
- Using secondary texts (literary criticism) to advance one’s own thinking
- Crafting the thesis-driven analytical essay

Assignments and Grading:
Grade Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 2</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paper 4</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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</tbody>
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Assignments: This is a small class, so we can discuss in greater detail what you would like to learn and how the assignments can be structured to teach and evaluate that. Given this, the assignment percentage breakdown and scheduling of assignments is subject to change, mainly within the first few weeks of classes. That said, the essential skill you’ll be developing is the production of a thesis-based analytical essay that incorporates literary criticism.
Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Grade points/credit</th>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93% &amp; above</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>87% – 92%</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>Very good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>81% – 86%</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>77% – 80%</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>Above average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>71% – 76%</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
<td>65% – 70%</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>Below average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 64%</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>Inferior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>59% and below</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>Incomplete; given only when a student is unable to complete a segment of the course because of circumstances beyond the student’s control.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>X</td>
<td>Conditional, with no grade points per credit; given only when the student is at fault in failing to complete a minor segment of a course, but in the judgment of the instructor does not need to repeat the course. It must be made up by the close of the next semester or the grade becomes a failure (F). A (X) grade is computed into the grade point average as a (F) grade.</td>
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Course Policies

**Attendance:** Each student is granted three absences for reasons of health, scheduling, and/or alarm clock malfunctions. (It’s best if you let me know ahead if you plan to use it, but it’s not necessary.) Each additional absence will result in a 5% penalty to your participation grade. Excessive absences will incur an additional penalty. Exceptions to this policy must be mediated through the Dean of Students Office.

**Late Assignments:** Papers will be penalized 5% for each 24-hour period that they are late. Unless otherwise specified, all assignments are due at the beginning of class on the indicated day, submitted via Canvas. Quizzes and other in-class exercises cannot be made up if they are missed.

**Communication:** I will communicate with the class as a whole via Canvas announcement when I have something I need to say between classes; please make sure your settings are such that you receive notice of such announcements. Please check your email at least once a day. The best way to reach me for quick, directed questions is via email; however, I cannot guarantee an immediate reply, particularly overnight. I am happy to discuss more complicated matters, such as papers in progress, in person. If you cannot make my office hours, let me know and we can schedule an appointment. You can also request an appointment during my office hours to be sure of my availability.

**University Policies**

Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.
Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodation for or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at (906) 487-2212 or go to 
http://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructional-resources/syllabus/syllabus_policies.html

**Required Texts**

- We will watch two videos as required texts: a filmed performance of *Ruddigore* and an episode of the BBC television show *Sherlock*. Screenings will be scheduled at mutual convenience.

Additional materials will be posted on the course’s Canvas site

**Course Schedule**

**Week 1**
M 8/31 Introduction to course
W 9/2 Dickens, *Oliver Twist* pp. 1-48

**Week 2**
M 9/7 No class: Labor Day
W 9/9 *Oliver Twist* pp. 48-100
F 9/11 No Class: K-Day

**Week 3**
M 9/14 *Oliver Twist* pp. 101-55
Rosh Hanshana Observed: Alternative to class meeting TBA
W 9/16 *Oliver Twist* pp. 155-207
F 9/18 *Oliver Twist* pp. 207-63

**Week 4**
M 9/21 *Oliver Twist* pp. 263-321
W 9/23 *Oliver Twist* pp. 321-77
Yom Kipper Observed: Alternative to class meeting TBA
F 9/25  *Oliver Twist* pp. 377-415

**Week 5**
M 9/28  *Oliver Twist* to end (440)
W 9/30  **Paper 1 Due**

**Week 6**
M 10/5  Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* pp. 1-55
W 10/7  *Wuthering Heights* pp. 56-105

**Week 7**
M 10/12  *Wuthering Heights* pp. 106-166
W 10/14  *Wuthering Heights* pp. 167-215
F 10/16  *Wuthering Heights* pp. 214-264

**Week 8**
M 10/19  *Wuthering Heights* pp. 265-312 (to end, plus Appendix 1)
F 10/23  *Hints on Etiquette* (Google Books; follow link on Canvas)

**Week 9**
M 10/26  **Paper 2 due**
F 10/30  Gilbert and Sullivan, *Ruddigore* (scheduled screening)

**Week 10**
W 11/4  Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* Part II
F 11/6  Doyle, “A Scandal in Bohemia,” “The Adventure of Black Peter”

**Week 11**
Bret Harte, “The Stolen Cigar Case”
F 11/13  Stephen Moffat and Mark Gatiss, *Sherlock: A Study in Pink* (scheduled screening)

**Week 12**
M 11/16  **Paper 3 due**
W 11/18  *Dracula* pp. 1-53
F 11/20  *Dracula* pp. 53-103

**Thanksgiving Recess: No Class**
**Week 13**
M 11/30 *Dracula* pp. 103-152
W 12/2 *Dracula* pp. 152-203
F 12/4 *Dracula* pp. 203-255

**Week 14**
M 12/7 *Dracula* pp. 255-305
W 12/9 Finish *Dracula*
F 12/11 Draft workshop

**Exam Week**
12/16 (11:59pm) **Paper 4 due**