

Fall 8-15-2011

ENG 4300-003: Senior Seminar: Literature Of The City: London

Richard Sylvia
Eastern Illinois University

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"Town life nourishes and perfects all the civilized elements in man," declared Oscar Wilde in 1891: 'Shakespeare wrote nothing but doggerel verse before he came to London and never penned a line after he left'" (Porter, London 280).

"A wet Sunday in London: shops closed, streets almost empty; the aspect of a vast and well-kept graveyard. The few people in this desert of squares and streets, hurrying beneath their umbrellas, look like unquiet ghosts; it is horrible. A thick yellow fog fills the air, sinks, crawls on the very ground; at thirty paces a house or a steam-ship look like ink-stains on blotting paper . . . after an hour's walking one . . . can understand suicide" (Taine, Notes sur l'Angleterre).

"We get the cities we imagine. But first, in order to imagine new or better cities, we must learn to see the cities that we have. Imagination is rooted in past experience and perception. We see the city we have been taught to see, and literature teaches us to see cities" (Sizemore, A Female Vision of the City 1).

English 4300: Senior Seminar (Literature of the City: London)

TR 2:00 – 3:15 pm; CH 3159

Fall 2011

Professor Richard Sylvia

Office: CH 3775

Office Hours: TR 9:00 – 10:30 am; 3:15 – 4:00 pm; and by appt.

Phone: 581-6292 (office)

Email: rasylvia@eiu.edu

Course Description, Design, and Goals: The metropolis has attracted the attention of some of the world's greatest writers. This course is designed to give you an opportunity to read and discuss a variety of literary representations of London, one of our great cities, and to design and complete a research project on literary responses to another city of your choice. For the most part, primary reading, set in London, will come from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when urban populations in Europe began to increase dramatically, and the modern metropolis took shape. Besides literary responses we will also consider geographical, social, historical, and political background to develop context. The goal is to complicate our appreciation of London as a cultural, governmental, commercial, and political center, but also as a metaphorical "place" to which people have attached a myriad of human emotions (i.e., awe, hope, disgust, fear).

Since senior seminar is a capstone experience in the major, the course also requires that you design, develop and complete a major research project during the semester on a subject of your choice, for which conference meetings with me and oral reports to the class will be necessary. See details below.

The overall goal of the course is to increase your knowledge of an important literary development – the literature of the city – and to provide you with an opportunity to exercise your expertise as a finishing student in English studies with dependable skills in

close reading, analytical discussion of primary and secondary works, research, and writing.

Research Project Topics: You are free to design your own research project on a city of your choice, provided I determine that your project falls within the scope of the course. You may work collaboratively, with one or two others, or work alone. (For collaborative projects, everyone in the group receives the same grade.) Your project may culminate in a traditional research paper or in some other medium or form, provided I approve of your plans from the beginning. I encourage creative thinking and expression, especially since this is one of your final courses as an undergraduate.

Everyone is required to turn in a brief topic statement on **September 27**, which should leave ample time to complete a superior project. Please feel free to talk with me about your ideas before that date, however. I am always willing to help out with your search. Periodically during the semester I will ask you for an informal progress report. During the last two weeks of the semester, you will present a brief report to the class on your project. Final papers/projects are due **December 8**.

This is a writing-intensive course. You may submit a paper from this class as part of your EWP. Visit the assessment website: www.eiu.edu/~assess .

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

English Department Statement on Plagiarism: "Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism – 'The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and representation of them as one's own original work' (Random House Dictionary) – has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office."

Texts: Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*
Doyle, *The Sign of Four* [or *The Man with the Twisted Lip*]
McEwan, *Saturday*
Smith, *White Teeth*
Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
other selected material (handouts)

Course Requirements and Grading:

careful preparation of the assigned readings
participation in seminar discussions – 10%
research project oral report – 20%
research project paper – 40%
final exam – 30%

Tentative Schedule

Aug. 23: course introduction; selected London poems (handout)

Aug. 25: "Social Problems, Social Improvements: 1820-1890," *London: A Social History*, Porter (handout)

Aug. 30: Poe, "The Man of the Crowd"; Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire"; selected Baudelaire poems (handouts)

Sept. 1: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the First, chapters I - IX

Sept. 6: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the First, chapters X - XVII

Sept. 8: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the Second, chapters I - IX

Sept. 13: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the Second, chapters X - XVI

Sept. 15: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the Third, chapters I - IX

Sept. 20: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the Third, chapters X - XVII

Sept. 22: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the Fourth, chapters I - IX

Sept. 27: *Our Mutual Friend*, Book the Fourth, chapters X - POSTSCRIPT

Sept. 29: Mumford, "Paleotechnic Paradise: Coketown," *The City in History* (handout); **Research Project topic statement due**

Oct. 4: *The Sign of Four*

Oct. 6: *The Sign of Four*

Oct. 11: *Mrs. Dalloway*

Oct. 13: *Mrs. Dalloway*

Oct. 18: *Mrs. Dalloway*

Oct. 20: *Mrs. Dalloway*

Oct. 25: *Saturday*

Oct. 27: *Saturday*

Nov. 1: *Saturday*

Nov. 3: *Saturday*

Nov. 8: *White Teeth*

Nov. 10: *White Teeth*

Nov. 15: *White Teeth*

Nov. 17: *White Teeth*

Nov. 22 and Nov. 24: Thanksgiving Break

Nov. 29: *White Teeth*

Dec. 1: Research Reports

Dec. 6: Reports

Dec. 8: Reports; **Research Project due**

Dec. 12: Final Exam (2:45-4:45 pm)