

Fall 8-15-2005

ENG 5005-001: Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature "Victorian Secrets: Domesticity, Detection, and Disclosure"

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Bredesen, Dagni, "ENG 5005-001: Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature "Victorian Secrets: Domesticity, Detection, and Disclosure"" (2005). *Fall 2005*. 138.

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5005-001

English 5005
Studies in Nineteenth-Century British Literature
"Victorian Secrets: Domesticity, Detection, and Disclosure"
Autumn 2005

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Office Hours: M 1.30-2.30; T 1.30-3.30; Th/Fr by appointment

Course Description:

The rise of detective fiction in the mid-nineteenth century coincides with the hey-day of domestic fiction, a type of novel that celebrates the everyday and the familial. At first glance, the very ordinariness of the domestic sphere stands in opposition to the extraordinary and sensational behaviors of criminals and their victims. We find, however, that in nineteenth-century British fiction, detectives first make their appearances probing beneath the veneer of respectability to expose the secrets at the heart of the every home. In this course, we will investigate the overlap of private and public spheres, the legal contexts and social history that gave rise to the detective in fact and in fiction, as well as theories of narrative that will provide a framework for reading the novels and short stories we will be reading. In addition to examining the dark underside of home, family, and community, we will also find the detective serving as a model for the processes of interpretation and exposition that we ourselves use when we read and write about fiction.

Primary Texts:

Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*
Mary E. Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secrets*
Wilkie Collins, *The Moonstone*
Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four*
Two Course Packets available at Copy Express that include primary texts by Poe, Forster, Hayward, Doyle and others.

Guidelines for requirements and grading

25% for overall in-class work, including

1 Historical Brief at 10 minutes with 1 page handout see sign up sheet.

1 Leading discussion of a primary work at 20 minutes

*Attendance is mandatory, discussion advisable.

20% An annotated critical bibliography of the primary text on which you will be leading discussion. (should include 5 articles/chapters that differ from the required reading). Each annotation should summarize the critic's argument(s) and may include some critical assessment of those arguments as well. Please email copies of your bibliography to each of your classmates and to me on the Monday prior to your discussion leading.

- 15% a one page single-spaced no margin essay (11-12 point font) that analyzes the way one of the asterisked **assigned** critical essays either directly engages with or else extends your understanding of that primary text or context. Although you will need to briefly summarize the argument, you may assume we have read the critical essay/chapter and the focus should shift from summary to critical analysis involving such questions as: What approach does the critic take and how useful/appropriate does that seem for the text at hand? How effective (persuasive, thorough, insightful) is the article? What are its limits? What does it leave out? This paper will be due ten days following your presentation.
- 40% A final research-informed (10-15 page, double spaced) literary critical analysis of any text by the authors we have covered in this class. Given the length of this paper, this can hardly be a complete interpretation of that text, but it should try to sketch both the main lines of such an interpretation and to signal which passages or features of the text would be most important for that interpretation. This paper can, if you wish, deal with the same primary text that you presented on, but it need not do so.

Provisional Course Schedule

Week One (8/24)

Introduction to course, sign up sheet.

Poe "Murders in the Rue Morgue"

Week Two: (8/31)

Poe "The Purloined Letter" and *Barthes "Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narratives". Poe "The Mystery of Marie Roget."

Week Three (9/07)

Bleak House chapters 1-22

Patmore, excerpts from "The Angel in the House."

Trodd, "Introduction: The Guilty Home"

*Miller, "Discipline in Different Voices: Bureaucracy, Police, Family, and *Bleak House*"

Week Four (9/14)

Bleak House chapters 23-45

*Hutchings, "Spectacularizing crime, ghost-writing the law"

Thomas, "Photographic Memories in *Bleak House*"

Week Five (9/21)

Bleak House chapters 46-67

*Bigelow, "Market Indicators: Banking and Domesticity in Dickens' *Bleak House*"

Week Six (9/28) The Sensation Novel

Lady Audley's Secret (1862) Scholarly introduction and volumes One and Two

Hartman, "Introduction" and chapters one and three of *Victorian Murderesses*

Week Seven (10/05)

Lady Audley's Secret volume Three

*Voskuil "Acts of Madness: Lady Audley and the Meanings of Victorian Femininity."

Week Eight (10/12) The First Professional Female Detectives in British Fiction

Kestner, "The Female Detective in Britain."

"Introduction," "Tenant for Life" and "Child Found Dead: Murder or No Murder" from *The Female Detective*

"The Mysterious Countess" and "The Secret Band" from *Revelations of a Lady Detective*

*Cobbe "Criminals, Idiots, Women and Minors: Is the Classification Sound?"

Week Nine (10/19) First Detective Novel

The Moonstone Prologue and First Period

*Miller "From roman policier to roman-police Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*"

Week Ten (10/26),

The Moonstone Second Period

*Gruner "Family Secrets and the Mysteries of *The Moonstone*"

Week Eleven (11/02)

The Moonstone Second Period completed, Epilogue

*Roy, "The Fabulous Imperialist Semiotic of Wilkie Collins' *The Moonstone*"

Week Twelve (11/09)

Sign of Four

Holmes, "A Scandal in Bohemia"

Thomas, "Negative Images in "A Scandal in Bohemia"

*Hutchings, "The Feminine Phantom: Women, crime, and fantasy."

Thomas, "Foreign Bodies in *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*"

Week Thirteen (11/16) Next Generation Female Detectives

Pirkis, "The Murder at Troyte's Hill"

Orzcy, "The Man in the Inverness Cape"

Christie, "The Four Suspects"

Other reading TBA

Thanksgiving Recess / No Class (11/23)

Week Fourteen (11/30)

Presentations Begin

Week Fifteen (12/07)

Presentations Final Research Paper due: Monday, December 12th

NO EXTENSIONS