Professor Carolyn Betensky

English 555: Nineteenth-Century British Texts

Fall 2011

betensky@mail.uri.edu

Office hours for Fall 2011: M 2-4; Tu 2-3; Th 10-12 and by appointment

**The Cultural Work of Emotion in the Victorian Novel**

The past decade has seen a dramatic uptick in scholarship on the cultural work of emotion in Victorian literature, and particularly, in the Victorian novel. This class will enter these contemporary conversations on affect and feeling through side-by-side readings of some of the most provocative novels of the period and recent critical attention paid them.

**Texts to purchase (in order of appearance):**

Alexandra Warwick and Martin Willis, *The Victorian Literature Handbook* (Continuum)  
Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Broadview)

Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (Oxford)

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (Penguin)

Anthony Trollope, *He Knew He Was Right* (Oxford)

George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (Oxford)

Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (Oxford)

H. G. Wells, *Kipps* (Penguin)

Additional texts will be available either online **[O]** or on electronic reserve **[E]**. See detailed reading schedule below.

**Course requirements:**

Preparation and participation: 20%

Presentation: 10%

Short critical paper: 20%

20-page research paper: 50%

**Readings and Assignments by Class**

Sept. 13 **Introduction**

Sept. 20 **Overview**: (Some) Contexts of Victorian Literature

Readings in *The Victorian Literature Handbook*

Sept. 27 **Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*** (1847)

Critical reading: Ivan Kreilkamp, “Petted Things: *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal.” *Yale* *Journal of Criticism: Interpretation in the Humanities*18. 1 (2005 Spring): 87-110 **[O]**

## Oct. 4 Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton* (1848)

## Critical reading: Jill Matus, “'Secrets of the Heart': Emotion, Narration, and Imaginary Minds in *Hard Times* and *Mary Barton*.” *English Language Notes* 48.1 (2010 Spring-Summer): 11-25. [O]

Oct. 11 **Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*** (1861)

Critical reading: Andrew Miller, “The Knowledge of Shame,” from *The Burdens of Perfection: On Ethics and Reading in Nineteenth-Century British Literature* (Cornell UP 2008). **[E] SHORT PAPERS DUE**

Oct. 18 **Anthony Trollope, *He Knew He Was Right*** (1869)

Oct. 25 ***He Knew He Was Right* (second half)**

Critical reading: Rachel Ablow, “Reading Sympathy” and “Anthony Trollope and the Pleasures of Alienation,” from *The Marriage of Minds: Reading Sympathy in the Victorian Marriage Plot* (Stanford UP 2007). **[E]**

Nov. 1 **Theoretical Interlude**: Suzanne Keen, “A Theory of Narrative Empathy.”  *Narrative* 14.3 (2006) 207-236 **[O]**; Carolyn Betensky, Introduction to *Feeling for the Poor* (U Virginia P 2010). **[E]** **PROPOSAL FOR FINAL PAPER DUE**

## Nov. 8 George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (1871)

## Critical readings: Audrey Jaffe, “*Middlemarch*: The Affective Life of the Average Man,” from *The Affective Life of the Average Man: The Victorian Novel and the Stock-Market Graph* (Ohio State UP 2010) [E]; Anna Kornbluh, “The Economic Problem of Sympathy: Parabasis, Interest, and Realist Form in *Middlemarch*.” *ELH* 77.4 (2010 Winter): 941-967. [O]

Nov. 15 ***Middlemarch* (second half)**

Critical reading: Alicia Christoff, The Weariness of the Victorian Novel: *Middlemarch* and the Medium of Feeling.” *English Language Notes*48. 1 (2010 Spring-Summer): 139-154**. [O]**

Nov. 22 **Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*** (1878)

Critical reading: William Cohen, “Senses: Face and Feeling in Hardy’s *The Return of the Native,*” from *Embodied: Victorian Literature and the Senses* (U Minnesota P 2009). **[E]**

## Nov. 29 H. G. Wells, *Kipps* (1905)

## Critical reading: Richard Higgins,“Feeling Like a Clerk in H. G. Wells.” Victorian Studies 50.3 (2008 Spring): 457-475. [O]

Dec. 6 **Conclusion**