**Faith and Doubt in Nineteenth-Century British Literature** Spring 2016

Professor Jonathan Farina

**Course Description:**

Victorian writers characterized their era as, among other things, an age of faith and doubt, and their writings consistently vacillate between or concurrently exhibit what they called “the critical spirit” and “the will to believe.” This course will discuss the forces of secularization (or apparent secularization?) confronting nineteenth-century writers, forces including the institutionalization of modern forms of science and statistics, the maturation of capitalism, and the spread of liberalism. And it will discuss the tensions and aesthetics of Anglican theology in the Oxford or Tractarian movement and in debates about and between Dissenters, Catholics, Agnostics, and Atheists. But fundamentally our questions will lead us to interrogate the roles of faith and skepticism in the literary domain: faith and doubt inflect not only narrative and lyric depictions of love, work, family, socialism, cosmopolitanism, nationhood, death, memory, materiality, and sex so on, but narrative and lyric themselves as forms. Fiction and poetry formally depend on faith and doubt, for they are forms of make believe, forms of critique, at once real and imagined. So this course ideally will get us to toe the line where religion and literature overlap not just thematically but stylistically, generically, and epistemically.

**Assessment:**

Attendance – Required. After 1 excused absence your final grade will drop one unit (A- to B+, or B+ to B) for every additional absence.

Quizzes and Informal Writing (25%)

Short Essay (25%): 5 pages; perform a literary analysis of any of the following texts: *Culture and Anarchy* (Arnold)*, Literature and Dogma* (Arnold)*, Studies in the Renaissance* (Pater), *The Christian Year* (Keble)*, Bridgewater Treatises* (Babbage or Paley)*, Tracts for the Times, Essays and Reviews*, the 39 articles, Agnosticism and Christianity (Huxley), *Christianity and Culture* (Eliot), Keble’s *Lectures on Poetry*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (Nietzsche), or another non-fictional nineteenth-century text about questions of religion. Interpret the text as you would a more familiar “literary” text, employing any critical approach/es. Spend 1-2 paragraphs (isolated or interspersed) explaining the occasion and context of the text you select.

Research Paper (35%): 10 pages, at least 4 peer-reviewed, literary-critical secondary sources; put a novel or poem/s from the course or your other readings in nineteenth-century British literature in dialogue with one of the contextual writings on faith and doubt that we’ve broached in class and generate a thesis about their mutual formal or ideological investments. Use the handout of guiding questions to direct your thesis and/or generate a research question.

Final Exam (15%), including objective questions and IDs/short answers

**Texts :**

*Required:*

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (Oxford) ISBN: 97-0-19-953700-6

George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (Penguin) ISBN: 9780140431216

John Henry Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* (Norton) ISBN: 9780393097665

Mrs. Humphry Ward, *Helbeck of Bannisdale* (Penguin English Library) ISBN: 0140431942

Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Penguin) ISBN: 9780141439846

Mark Knight and Emma Mason, *Nineteenth-Century Religion and Literature: An Introduction* (Oxford) ISBN: 9780199277117

*Recommended:*

Alfred Tennyson, *In Memoriam* (Norton) ISBN: 978-0-393-97926-8

Additional readings (poems and a few essays) will be made available on Blackboard or the web. Many of you will have the poems already in anthologies from ENGL 2112. Print copies and bring them to class.

**Schedule of Readings/Assignments:**

Tues., Jan. 12: Introductions, Concepts, and Keble; Read Knight and Mason, pp. 1-14

Thurs., Jan. 14: Read Mason, pp. 17-30, 36-45; Charlotte Brontë: “The Missionary” [<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/bronte/poems/pbc-missionary.html>]

Anne Brontë: “The Doubter’s Prayer” [<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/bronte/poems/pba-doubter.html>]

Anne Brontë: “A Reminiscence” [<http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/bronte/poems/pba-reminiscence.html>]

Tues., Jan. 19: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, stanzas I-LXXXII

Thurs., Jan. 21: Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, stanzas LXXXIII-Epilogue

Tues., Jan. 26:Knight and Mason, 52-80; Gaskell, *North and South*, pp. 3-65

Thurs., Jan. 28:Gaskell, *North and South*, pp. 65-131

Tues. Feb. 2: Gaskell, *North and South*, pp. 131-239

Thurs. Feb. 4: Gaskell, *North and South*, pp. 240-309

Tues., Feb. 9:Gaskell, *North and South*, pp. 309-436

Thurs., Feb. 11: Edward Fitzgerald, “The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám”:

[<https://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/okhym.htm>]

Matthew Arnold, “Sohrab and Rustum”:

[<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/172860>]

Tues., Feb. 16: Charles Darwin, from *Origin of Species*, Introduction, Chapters 3 and 14 (“Recapitulation and Conclusion”)

Thurs., Feb. 18: Knight and Mason, pp. 30-36 and 120-146; Eliot, *Adam Bede*, pp. 7-34

Tues., Feb. 23: Eliot, *Adam Bede*, pp. 35-133

Thurs., Feb. 25: Eliot, *Adam Bede*, pp. 134-185

Tues., Mar. 1: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Thurs., Mar. 3: SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS

Tues, Mar. 8: Eliot, *Adam Bede*, pp. 185-472

Thurs., Mar. 10: Eliot, *Adam Bede*, pp. 475-539

Tues, Ma. 15: Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, pp. 1-41

Thurs., Mar. 17: Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, pp. 42-120

Tues., Mar. 22: Newman, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, pp. 121-216

Thurs, Mar. 24: HOLY THURSDAY – NO CLASS

Tues., Mar. 29: A. G. Swinburne, “Hymn to Proserpine”: [<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/poem/174559>]

C. Rosetti, “The Thread of Life,” “The Convent Threshold”

[<https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/thread-life>]

[<http://www.poetry-archive.com/r/the_convent_threshold.html>]

Thurs., Mar. 31: Knight and Mason, pp. 152-182; Ward, *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, pp.

Tues., Apr. 5: Ward, *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, pp. 35-132 (Book 1)

Thurs., Apr. 7: Ward, *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, pp. 135-184 (Book 2)

Tues., Apr. 12: Ward, *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, at least pp. 187-236 (Book 3)

Thurs., Apr. 14: Ward, *Helbeck of Bannisdale*, pp. 241-389 (Book 4)

Tues., Apr. 19: Knight and Mason, pp. 189-212; Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 6-98 (to ch. 8)

Thurs., Apr. 21: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 99-155 (to ch. 12)

Tues., Apr. 26: Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 156-263 (to ch. 19)

Thurs., Apr. 28 (LAST CLASS): Stoker, *Dracula*, pp. 264-402 (finish)

Tues., May 10: FINAL EXAM – Period 4, 2:30-4:30