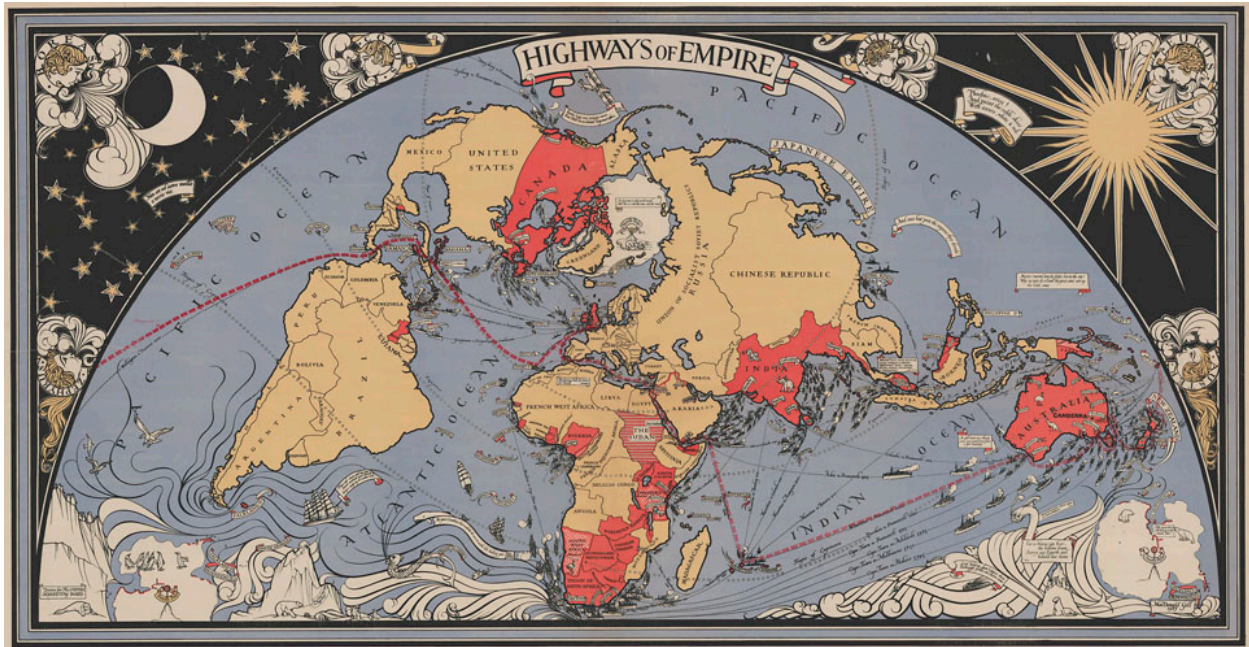


VICTORIAN LITERATURE AS WORLD LITERATURE



What does it mean to read literature in a transnational context? How are literary texts that we might regard as the expressions of distinct national cultures actually plugged into larger global systems – even systems of which those texts seem unaware? This course suggests that Victorian literature offers an excellent site for asking such questions. Classic texts by Arthur Conan Doyle and Charlotte Brontë are fondly read by many as touchstones of a quintessentially Victorian aesthetic, but in fact they were produced in the shadow of an expanding imperial infrastructure and reflect many of its preoccupations and ideologies. Over the course of the semester we will read five important novels and use them to explore five different rubrics for thinking about literature's worldly life: postcolonial theory, political formalism, network- and circulation-theory, the concept of “world literature,” and neo-Victorian studies. Students will deepen their knowledge of Victorian literature, but will also develop a vocabulary for talking about global literary culture in our own day, when new media such as YouTube and the blog have given artistic expression an international public that it could hardly have fathomed a century ago. Evaluation will be based upon participation, two essays, and a keywords exam at the end of the semester.

Texts:

- Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (1853)
- Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of the Four* (1890)
- Jamyang Norbu, *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (1999)
- Olive Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm* (1883)
- Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (1852)
- All critical readings are available via the online course pack

Requirements:

- First Essay (8-10 pages) – 30%
- Second Essay (8-10 pages) – 30%
- Keywords Exam – 20%
- Attendance and Participation – 20%

Course Schedule:**I. World Literature**

Tuesday, January 26: Introductions, and in-class selections from:
Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Johann Peter Eckermann, from *Conversations with Goethe*
Germaine de Staël, “Of the General Spirit of Modern Literature”

Thursday, January 28: Charlotte Brontë, *Villette*

Tuesday, February 2: Brontë, *Villette* (cont.)

Thursday, February 4: Brontë, *Villette* (cont.)
David Damrosch, from *What is World Literature?*
Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature”

Tuesday, February 9: Brontë, *Villette* (cont.)

Thursday, February 11: Brontë, *Villette* (cont.)

II. Postcolonial Theory

Tuesday, February 16: Arthur Conan Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet* (selections) and *The Sign of the Four*

Thursday, February 18: Doyle, *The Sign of the Four* (cont.)
Edward Said, from *Culture and Imperialism*
Saree Makdisi, from *Making England Western*

Tuesday, February 23: Doyle, *The Sign of the Four* (cont.)

Thursday, February 25: Doyle, *The Sign of the Four* (cont.)

III. Circulation and Reception

Tuesday, March 1: Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*

Thursday, March 3: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.)

Friday, March 4: **First Paper Due**

Tuesday, March 8: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.)

Thursday, March 10: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.)
Douglas Lorimer, from *Colour, Class, and the Victorians*
Amanda Claybaugh, from *The Novel of Purpose*

Monday, March 14 – Sunday, March 20: SPRING BREAK

Tuesday, March 22: Stowe, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.)

Thursday, March 24: *Uncle Tom's Cabin* (cont.)

IV. Form and Formalism

Tuesday, March 29: Olive Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm*

Thursday, March 31: Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm* (cont.)
Jed Esty, “The Colonial Bildungsroman”
G. B. Tennyson, “The *Bildungsroman* in Nineteenth-Century English Literature”

Tuesday, April 5: Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm* (cont.)

Thursday, April 7: Schreiner, *The Story of an African Farm* (cont.)

V. Neo-Victorian Studies

Tuesday, April 12: Jamyang Norbu, *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes*

Thursday, April 14: Norbu, *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (cont.)
Kristen Guest, “Norbu’s *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes*: Neo-Victorian Occupations of the Past”
Simon Gikandi “The Embarrassment of Victorianism: Colonial Subjects and the Lure of Englishness”

Tuesday, April 26: Norbu, *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (cont.)

Thursday, April 28: TBD

Friday, April 29: **Second Paper Due**

Saturday, April 30 – Tuesday, May 3: READING PERIOD

Thursday, May 5: **Keywords Exam**

About the Keywords Exam: Over the semester you will be introduced to a series of important terms from literary and cultural theory: the chronotope, the object/thing distinction, the concept of cosmopolitanism, and so forth. As these terms come up, I will designate them as “keywords,” and at the end of the semester you will take an exam that asks you to define them and then apply them, in substantial paragraphs, to some of our texts. The goal here is to help you develop a technical vocabulary that can be applied to multiple texts on and beyond our syllabus.

Grading Criteria:

1. An **A paper** makes an interesting, complex argument and supports it with well-chosen evidence; the structure is logical and engaging, the writing is clear and concise, and all aspects of the assignment are thoroughly well-executed.
2. A **B paper** addresses the assignment and demonstrates an effort to produce a complex argument but is hindered by either a lack of complexity in the thesis or by structural, analytical or stylistic problems.
3. A **C paper** has significant problems either with thesis, argument, or presentation.
4. A failing paper does not meet the minimum page requirement, does not address the assignment, plagiarizes, or does not meet standards for academic writing and argumentation.

Class Policies:

1. **Attendance and Participation:** Attendance at all class meetings is expected. Please let me know as far in advance as possible if you need to miss a day of class. (Unexcused absences will affect your grade, and more than four will cause you to fail the course.) Be sure to have done the assigned readings and be ready to share your thoughts on them. This is a discussion-based seminar, so getting everyone’s thoughts into the mix is crucial.
2. **Classroom etiquette:** Once you have arrived, please be prepared to stay for the entire class. Please turn off all cell phones and shut all laptops prior to the start of class.
3. **Paper format:** All papers should be formatted in 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, and have one-inch margins. Both the body of the essay and the Works Cited page should follow the MLA format for research papers which we will discuss.
4. **Late papers:** You must submit all papers to me via e-mail on the day they are due. You are allowed one extension of a major deadline during the term, but you must arrange this with me beforehand. Once papers have been returned to you, you are welcome to discuss your grades with me, but under no circumstances will I alter grades once they have been assigned.
5. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic ethics. All work that you submit must be your own and all sources must be fully acknowledged. Work that is plagiarized in part or in full will carry a severe sanction.