

**The City University of New York**

**New Course Proposal**

When completed, this proposal should be submitted to the Office of the Associate Provost for consideration by the College Curriculum Committee.

1. Department (s) proposing this course: **English**
2. Title of the course: **Topics in Nineteenth-Century Literature**  
Abbreviated title (up to 20 characters): **TPCS LIT 19C**
3. Level of this course:  
 100 Level  200 Level  300 Level  400 Level
4. Course description as it is to appear in the College bulletin:  
(Write in complete sentences except for prerequisites, hours and credits.)

Topics in Nineteenth-Century Literature will examine select major and minor literary movements, authors, and ideas at work in nineteenth-century literature with an eye to the formal features of texts as well as the social, historical, and political contexts in which they appear. The course will approach the canon for this period not as a fixed entity but as a body of work consistently open to reevaluation and critique; alternative texts, voices, and subject positions relevant to the topic(s) will be included. As a means of understanding the literature of the period, the course may focus on a literary genre or convention (e.g., lyric or narrative poetry, realist, romantic or naturalistic novels) or an important theme (e.g., industrialization, slavery, imperialism, and the romantic imagination). Each semester individual instructors will anchor the course in specific sub-topics, primary texts, cultures, historical moments, etc., depending on their own areas of specialization.

**Pre-requisite: ENG 102/201**

**Co-requisite: LIT 2XX (Introduction to Literary Study) or permission of the instructor. 3 hours, 3 credits.**

5. Has this course been taught on an experimental basis?  
 No  
 Yes: Semester (s) and year (s):  
Teacher (s):  
Enrollment (s):  
Prerequisites (s):

6. Prerequisites:

**Pre-requisite: ENG 102/201**

**Co-requisite: LIT 2XX or permission of the instructor.**

7. Number of: class hours 3 lab hours 0 credits 3

8. Brief rationale for the course:

***Topics in Nineteenth-Century Literature* is one of six historically specific topics courses. Students majoring in English are required to take four. The topics courses give students an awareness of the ways that literature is situated in history and how literary forms and concerns differ historically. Topics in the Nineteenth Century gives students insight into such literary groupings as Romanticism, Realism and Naturalism, American Transcendentalism, or the Literature of Global Conquest as forms and genres unique to their political, cultural, and aesthetic imperatives while continuing to build critical skills applicable to English majors, such as close-reading, analysis, organized thought, and effective writing.**

9a. Knowledge and performance objectives of this course:

(What knowledge will the student be expected to acquire and what conceptual and applied skills will be learned in this course?)

- **Students will become familiar with important literary texts of the nineteenth century.**
- **Students will understand the role of literary, legal, religious, scientific and political discourses in shaping the understanding of the nineteenth century literatures.**
- **By close reading of primary texts, class discussion, and writing response papers, students will develop critical reading and analytical skills.**
- **Through a series of graduated writing assignments students will sharpen their rhetorical and argumentative skills and their ability to incorporate textual evidence.**
- **By completing a term paper students will learn to perform basic, supporting research that contextualizes an author or literary idea within a larger discourse of the period studied.**

9b. Information literacy:

(Indicate what sorts of information seeking skills will be enhanced by this course, e.g., use of the internet, access to specialized data bases, literature search skills, etc.)

**Students will be required to locate primary and secondary sources germane to the topic of the course through specialized databases such as the MLA Bibliography or Gale's Literary Index on the Web as well as perform library catalogue searches for books.**

10. Recommended writing assignments:

(Indicate types of writing assignments and number of pages of each type. Writing

assignments should satisfy the College's requirements for writing across the curriculum.)

- **informal writing in class and/or on Blackboard in the form of required responses and discussion threads (10-15 pages)**
- **three 5-7 page papers (15-21 pages)**

11. Will this course be part of any major (s) or program (s)?  
 No  
 Yes. Major or program: **English**  
What part of the major? (Prerequisite, core, skills, etc.)

### **Part Two: Historical Perspectives**

**Topics in Nineteenth-Century Literature is one of six historically specific Topics courses.**

12. Is this course related to other specific courses?  
 No  
 Yes. Indicate which course (s) and what the relationship will be (e.g., prerequisite, sequel, etc.).  
**Co-requisite: LIT 2xx Introduction to Literary Study**

13. It is strongly advised to meet with a member of the library faculty before answering question 14.

If this course was taught on an experimental basis, were the existing library, computer, lab or other resources adequate for this course?

Yes

No. With whom has this been discussed?

If this course was not taught on an experimental basis, are library, computer, lab or other resources necessary for this course?

Yes

No

With whom has this been discussed? What has been recommended?

**Ellen Sexton, 2/26/07**

**The English Department is and has been engaged in an ongoing dialogue with the Library regarding improving the collection to adequately support the proposed English major and the associated new courses. Money additional to the regular Library budget is being provided by the College to fund new acquisitions. The Library subscribes to many relevant serial titles already, thanks to the collaborative resource sharing of electronic materials with other CUNY libraries. However, the monograph (and other book) collections in this subject area do need to be**

**augmented. The English Department is providing the Library with lists of titles for acquisition.**

14. Syllabus and bibliography:  
Attach a sample syllabus for this course. It should be based on the College's model syllabus. The sample syllabus must include a week by week or class by class listing of topics, readings, other assignments, tests, papers due, or other scheduled parts of the course. It must also include proposed texts. It should indicate how much various assignments or tests will count towards final grades. (If this course has been taught on an experimental basis, an actual syllabus may be attached, if suitable.)

In addition, a bibliography in APA format for this course must be attached to this proposal.

**Attached**

15. This section is to be completed by the chair (s) of the department (s) proposing the course.

Name (s) of the Chairperson (s): Jon Christian Suggs

Has this proposal been approved at a meeting of the department curriculum committee?

No

Yes: Meeting **date 3/12/07**

When will this course be taught?

Every semester, starting \_\_\_\_\_

One semester each year, starting spring 2008 \_\_\_\_\_

Once every two years, starting \_\_\_\_\_

How many sections of this course will be offered?   01  

Who will be assigned to teach this course?

**Caroline Reitz**

**Allison Pease**

**Bettina Carbonell**

**Alexander Schlutz**

**John Matteson**

**Richard Haw**

Is this proposed course similar to or related to any course or major offered by any other department (s)?

No

Yes. What course (s) or major (s) is this course similar or related to?

Did you consult with department (s) offering similar or related courses or majors?  
\_X\_ Not applicable    \_No            \_Yes

If yes, give a short summary of the consultation process and results.

Will any course be withdrawn if this course is approved?

\_X\_ No

\_Yes, namely:

Signature (s) of chair of Department (s) proposing this course:

Jon-Chrsitian Suggs

Date: 3/26/07

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Revised: September 15, 2000

## **Topics in Nineteenth Century Literature LIT 3XX, Section 01**

**John Jay College of Criminal Justice** 445 West 59<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 10019

### **Model Syllabus**

Professor Caroline Reitz

Office: 1270N

Office Hours: M/W 9:45-10:45 & by appointment

(212) 237-2059

[creitz@jjay.cuny.edu](mailto:creitz@jjay.cuny.edu)

### **Course Description:**

Topics in Nineteenth Century Literature this semester will focus on urbanization as a window into some critical themes of nineteenth century literature written in English, such as poverty, crime, imperialism, the Woman Question and the changing nature of the home, and the rise of technology and the threats both to religious faith and to the environment. We will read fiction and poetry alongside a range of interdisciplinary material with an eye to aesthetic form as well as the social, historical, and political contexts in which they appeared. The central thesis of this course is that the modern city encompassed the possibilities and problems of modernity. The literature of this period illustrates how individuals shape their lives in relation to a rapidly changing society. In many important ways, the nineteenth century is the history of our present; most of these issues are still with us. This course will afford a greater sense of the historical scope of these problems while encouraging us to think about the implications of modern, urban life for ourselves today.

Pre-requisite: ENG 102/201

Co-requisite: LIT 2XX Introduction to Literary Study, or permission of the Instructor.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Students will understand the role of literary, legal, religious, scientific and political discourses in shaping the understanding of urbanization in the nineteenth century.
- Students will become familiar with important literary texts of the nineteenth century.
- By close reading of primary texts, class discussion, and writing response papers, students will develop critical reading and analytical skills.
- Through a series of graduated writing assignments students will sharpen their rhetorical and argumentative skills and their ability to incorporate textual evidence.
- By completing a term paper students will learn to perform basic, supporting research that contextualizes an author or literary idea within a larger discourse of the period studied.

### **Required Texts:**

Selected poems by Blake, Wordsworth, Clough, Arnold and Tennyson on e-reserve

Thomas Carlyle, *Past and Present* (1843)

Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* (1855)

Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1860)

Selected journalism about poverty, graveyard overcrowding, the police, prostitution and pollution on e-reserve  
Short fiction by Bulwer Lytton and Wilkie Collins on e-reserve  
Selected Sherlock Holmes stories  
Robert Louis Stevenson, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886)

**Course Requirements:**

- Regular attendance and thoughtful, active participation in class discussions. Your grade in the course will drop by 1/3 of a grade (e.g., B- to C+) with four absences. After five absences you will fail the course. While I do not assign a grade for class participation, demonstration of your commitment to the goals of the course can and will affect your grade if you are “in-between” grades when it comes time to tally your final grade. If you have made a positive contribution to class discussion and/or made an effort with the course assignments, you will receive the higher grade. If you have been disruptive or made no visible effort, you will receive the lower grade.
- 4 quizzes given on the day’s reading.
- 4 one-page response papers. You will be given a set of reading questions for all of our readings. The response papers will be based on one of those questions.
- Mid-term exam. This exam will feature both multiple choice questions and sort essay questions.
- One five-page research project. This project will require internet research and will be based on our in-class “trial” of Dr. Henry Jekyll after we read Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.
- Final exam. This exam will consist of short essay questions and one longer essay question.

**Grades:**

20% of your grade is based on the 4 quizzes (5% each)  
20% of your grade is based on the 4 response papers (5% each)  
20% of your grade is based on the mid-term exam  
20% of your grade is based on the final exam  
20% of your grade is based on the research project

**Course Schedule:**

<b>date</b>	<b>reading</b>	<b>topics</b>
Class 1	Dickens, “The Streets – Morning”; “The Streets – Night”	The possibilities and problems of the modern city
Class 2	Selected poems by Blake and Wordsworth	The Romantic view of the city
Class 3	Selected poems by Clough and Arnold <b>1<sup>st</sup> Response Paper Due</b>	The Victorian view of the city
Class 4	<i>Past and Present</i>	Using history as a way of understanding the present moment
Class 5	<i>Past and Present</i>	Are we going forward or backward?
Class 6	Tennyson’s “Locksley Hall” and selected writings by Macaulay <b>2<sup>nd</sup> Response Paper Due</b>	Representing progress
Class 7	The Great Exhibition of 1851	Discourses about progress and the rise of technology and globalization
Class 8	<i>North and South</i>	Gender and urbanization
Class 9	<i>North and South</i>	Imperial nostalgia
Class 10	Journalism about prostitution	Gender and urbanization
Class 11	<i>North and South</i>	Curing the city
Class 12	<i>North and South</i>	Representing progress
Class 13	Journalism about graveyards	The City as bad parent
Class 14	<b>Mid-term Exam</b>	
Class 15	Victorian ghost stories (Lytton, Collins)	Thinking outside the box
Class 16	<i>Great Expectations</i>	Gender and urbanization
Class 17	<i>Great Expectations</i>	Criminal Justice
Class 18	<i>Great Expectations</i>	Prisoner Re-entry
Class 19	<i>Great Expectations</i> <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Response Paper Due</b>	Privatizing Justice
Class 20	Ruskin, “The Storm Cloud of the 19 <sup>th</sup> Century”	An Inconvenient Truth
Class 21	<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	The City as monster
Class 22	<i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>	The Monster as self
Class 23	The Trial of Dr. Jekyll	Internet research: good & bad sites
Class 24	Trial prep	Small group work
Class 25	Trial prep	Small group work
Class 26	The Trial of Dr. Jekyll <b>4<sup>th</sup> Response Paper Due</b>	
Class 27	Sherlock Holmes stories	Detecting the city
Class 28	Sherlock Holmes stories <b>Research Project Due</b>	Detecting the city
Class 29	<b>Final Exam</b>	

**Statement of College Policy on Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s ideas, words, or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one’s own creation. Using the ideas or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original

source.

Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism.

It is the student's responsibility to recognize the difference between statements that are common knowledge (which do not require documentation) and restatements of the ideas of others. Paraphrase, summary, and direct quotation are acceptable forms of restatement, as long as the source is cited.

Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The Library has free guides designed to help students with problems of documentation.

*(From the John Jay College of Criminal Justice Undergraduate Bulletin, p. 36)*

## BIBLIOGRAPHY: TOPICS IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

### GENERAL RESOURCES

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Tucker, Herbert, ed. *A Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. New York: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.

Williams, Raymond. *The Country and the City*. New York: Oxford U P, 1975.

Young, G. M. *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age*. New York: Oxford U P, 1936.

### BACKGROUND

Alter, Robert. *Imagined Cities: Urban Experience and the Language of the Novel*. New Haven: Yale U P, 2005.

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