

**Carleton University
Fall 2015
Department of English**

**ENGL 4550A: Studies in Victorian Literature I
Jailbirds: Women, Crime, and the Prison**

*Precludes: additional credit for ENGL 4501 (no longer offered)
Prerequisite(s): fourth-year standing in Honours English*

**Wednesday/ 11:35am-2:25pm
Location: Please confirm location on Carleton Central**

**Instructor: Jan Schroeder
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Office: 1924 Dunton Tower
Office Hours: TBA**

**This is a preliminary course outline. A full outline will become available later in the summer.*

Course Description

This course explores the cultural production of female criminality and practices of imprisonment in the Victorian period. As we will discover, literary and popular writing helped shape understandings of crime, violence, and criminal identity, giving social meaning to crime and incarceration statistics and policy debates on prison reform and anti-crime legislation. Questions arising from the reading material might include but are not limited to the following: How did Victorian literary texts construct the female “outlaw” and how did they participate in the normalization of emergent, “progressive” technologies of incarceration and treatment such as solitary confinement? How do neo-gothic and recent historical novels, such as *Fingersmith* and *Alias Grace*, and contemporary confinement narratives such as *Orange is the New Black* reimagine the confinements of the literary plot and the sequestered self? How and why are prisons shaped as an alternative domestic space, both in nineteenth-century and in contemporary prison narratives? How is “madness” dramatized in these texts as both a reason for and a response to crime and criminalization? How does the prison cell become a space for the narration of the self? In what ways are our readings of the texts shaped by our own era of mass incarceration, the criminalization of poverty and women of colour, and the continued use of segregation (solitary confinement) in North American penitentiaries?

One of our classes will consist of a tour of the Ottawa Jail Hostel in downtown Ottawa, a Victorian-era prison (now a youth hostel) that first opened in 1862. Our tour will provide an opportunity for a discussion of contemporary practices of “dark tourism.”

Text List

Wollstonecraft, *The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria* (Broadview)

Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (Broadview)
Brontë, *Villette* (Broadview)
Waters, *Fingersmith* (Riverhead)
Atwood, *Alias Grace* (McClelland and Stewart)
Kerman, *Orange is the New Black* (Random House)
Other required course readings will be posted on Carleton Library's ARES system.

Assignments

Oral research report on topics to be assigned in the first class (20%)
Weekly written 1-2 page commentaries & discussion groups (30%)*
Research paper proposal, due one week before the final essay deadline (5%)
10-page research essay due at the end of term (35%)
Participation and attendance (10%)
*one of these will include a short report on our class trip to the Ottawa Jail Hostel

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*" This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. For more information please go to: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>

Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to

exist. For more details see the Student Guide

<http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/students/>

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the Student Guide above.

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).