

**Carleton University  
Winter 2011**

**English 5501/4550B: The Victorian Schoolroom  
Instructor: Jan Schroeder**

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**Office Hours:** Mondays 2:00-3:30 or by appointment

**Course Description:**

One of the hottest arguments in Victorian culture concerned questions about the moral and social implications of educating people. Would mass literacy lead to anarchy? What kinds of training could transform boys into men? Did strenuous mental activity weaken a woman's reproductive capacities? These types of questions were at the surface of a deeper set of concerns about how the state should, or shouldn't involve itself in educating and training middle- and working-class men and women.

This course examines the Victorian education debates as they were shaped in the literature of the period. Victorian writers like Charles Dickens and Matthew Arnold were influential voices in the formation of public opinion about education, and we will look at what their writing added to the conversation. But the literary text was also a key space for imagining new kinds of social relations embodied in emergent teacher/student models. Of particular interest will be the ways in which narratives construct the "uneducated" as needful of a particular set of skills and desires, to be administered by another source already in possession of them. We will look at classroom narratives as fantasies of disciplinary power, in which desires for a particular kind of trained selfhood are invented, practiced, and contested. The course reading list will bring together popular fiction, memoir, popular journalism, government reports, children's stories, and political treatises, so as to familiarize us with the debates about education, and the ways in which they were dramatized across a range of narrative modes.

**Required Texts:**

**Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (Oxford)**

**Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (Knopf)**

**Hughes, *Tom Brown's Schooldays* (Oxford)**

**Brontë, *Agnes Grey* (Oxford)**

**Hughes, selections from *A London Girl of the 1880s* (Carleton Library reserve)**

**Doughty, ed. *Selections from The Girl's Own Paper, 1880-1907* (Broadview)**

- Meade, *A Sweet Girl Graduate* (<http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/4989>)
- Sharp, *The Making of a Schoolgirl* (Carleton Library reserve)
- Choose one of these two texts

**Coursepack**

**Books will be available for purchase at Mother Tongue Books/Femmes de Parole, 1067 Bank Street, at Bank and Sunnyside.**

**The coursepack will be available for purchase at Allegra Print and Imaging, next door to Mother Tongue Books on Bank.**

### **Course Assignments:**

- Conference paper proposal & presentation (35%) (20-30 minutes), schedule to be decided
- Research paper (40%) (18-20 pages for graduate students; 10 pages for honours students), due at the end of term)
- “Archive corner” and class participation: (25%)

Late assignments will be penalized **one grade per day**. Extensions on essays will be granted only under extreme circumstances, and must be negotiated with me well before the deadline. If you cannot meet the deadline because of illness, an extension will be granted, but you must negotiate the extension with me *ahead of time* and arrange to provide me with a doctor’s note. In extreme emergencies, extensions at the end of term may need to be negotiated with administration.

### **Plagiarism:**

Carleton University’s *Undergraduate Calendar* defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentional or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own” (56). This also applies to material from books, articles, websites, etc. I am required by the University to report all cases of plagiarism. Do not hesitate to come to me with any questions about how to cite material in your written work. Please consult Page 56-58 of the *Undergraduate Calendar* for more details on instructional offences.

### **Assignments**

The following assignments are mandatory. You must complete all of them in order to receive a grade for the course.

**Conference paper presentation (Value: 35%)**

**Due Dates: Please see class schedule**

A 350-500 word proposal and list of works cited will be required **one week prior** to your presentation. The proposal should indicate the principal texts the paper will speak to, the line of argument, and give some idea of the relation of the paper to existing scholarship on the topic. I will not grade the proposal, but failure to submit one will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Late proposals will affect your final grade on the paper by one grade point for every day the proposal is late.

In keeping with the usual practice of the academic conference, your paper should take no longer than **20 minutes** to deliver, and you should be prepared to lead class discussion for 10 more. Twenty minutes isn't a lot of time (it's about 8 or 9 double-spaced pages of writing), so choose a manageable topic.

For the sake of your listeners, please try your best to write your presentation in a **listener-friendly style**. That means using straightforward syntax, clear language, signposting (guiding the listener), and summarizing your main points. A **handout** outlining your paper's thesis, key arguments, significant quotations and/or illustrations can often be an effective way of keeping your listeners engaged, but this is not a requirement of the assignment.

It is also your responsibility to **engage meaningfully with the ideas presented in your peers' papers**. That is, conference presentations are not your chance to drift off. Engaged, active listening and response to each other's papers will factor into your participation grade in the course.

### **Research paper (Value: 40%)**

**Length: 18-20 pages for graduate students; 10 pages for honours students**

**Due date: TBA**

Again, you will devise the topic.

*Honours students* must write on a different text from the one they choose for their presentation.

*Graduate students* may write on a topic different from their conference paper, or they may choose to expand on the ideas, research and feedback gathered in the conference paper assignment. If you choose the latter, the research paper must demonstrate substantial revision of the conference version of the paper. That is, you are not permitted to simply reprint the conference paper and add ten pages of new writing.

The reason for this discrepancy is because of the different length requirements for graduate and undergraduates, and because graduate students may want to start identifying an area of research focus.

### **Essay Format:**

Please prepare and submit your essays as follows:

- No duotangs or covers;

- Single-sided pages, stapled in left corner;
- Double spacing, 1” margins, 12 point, Times New Roman font;
- All pages numbered;
- No separate title page; heading information on page 1 of essay;
- Use MLA citation style;
- Provide Works Cited section according to MLA guidelines;
- Please keep a copy of your paper;
- Electronic submissions will not be accepted.

### **Class participation (Value 10%)**

Class participation will be evaluated as follows:

- Did you attend class regularly?
- Have you read the assigned texts?
- Did you respond to or engage with other students in class discussion?
- Did other students and/or the professor learn from your contributions?

### **Archive Corner (Value 15%)**

Each week we will designate a portion of class time to the discovery and discussion of resources relevant to “The Victorian Classroom” and to Victorian studies generally. These may include scholarly websites, blogs, databases of primary nineteenth century material, nineteenth century news coverage, academic and popular websites on a particular author on the course reading list, Victorian scholarly journals, and reference sources for Victorianists, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, (print and electronic) and so on. On a separate handout I will provide a list of possibilities to choose from to get you started. You are asked to choose one or two areas to focus on (Victorian studies blogs, or scholarly journals in Victorian studies, or “Dickens on the web,” for example) and provide regular updates on your findings. Cast a wide net and allow your curiosity to guide your exploration.

As you are discovering, assessing and sifting through material, you might consider the following questions:

1. What kinds of resources have you found this week and what kind of window does it open onto the course themes, and/or onto nineteenth century British literature and culture generally?
2. How useful is this as a resource? Is it popular, scholarly, authoritative, dodgy, user-friendly, interesting, amusing?

Each student will get a chance to provide an update every other week or so. Links to online material that you think is particularly useful, relevant, or just plain interesting should be posted on WebCT and you should *briefly* summarize your findings for us there as well. If you are discussing a print source, you can post the bibliographic information on WebCT. If, in preparing your seminar presentation, you find yourself using one of the

resources discussed in Archive Corner, let us know, either in your presentation or in Archive Corner!

This is not intended to be a formal presentation assignment. A full-blown “report” on your findings is not required or even welcomed. The purpose of the assignment is for you to do more independent investigation into the period beyond the reading list requirements, and to introduce your findings to the class in an informal way—this is about information exchange, not about having a polished presentation. Please bring at least one resource with you to class, or you may mention a few, but remember to keep your remarks *brief*, so as to give everyone a chance to contribute.

I hope that the assignment will both enrich our understanding of the course readings and themes, and expose us to the wealth of information, documents, research, and opinion on the Victorian period available online and in libraries.

**You will not be required to contribute to Archive Corner on the day on which you present your seminar, unless you want to do so.**

Archive Corner participation will be evaluated in much the same way as I evaluate general class participation: did you contribute regularly and creatively in Archive Corner? Did other students and the professor learn from your contributions to this assignment? Did you respond to/engage with other students by asking questions about their findings and their process of discovery?

**A word about attendance:**

I take attendance seriously, especially in a course that meets only once a week. I accept only illness or extreme family emergency as justifications for absence. Deadlines, workload, and assignments for your other courses are not valid reasons for missing this seminar, or for handing in work late. If you cannot make it to class because of illness or family emergency, please inform me ahead of time, if possible, and provide documentation (a doctor’s note, death certificate, etc.). Frequent absences will have a significant impact on your grade for Participation and Archive Corner.

**The Victorian Classroom  
Reading Schedule\***

\*Note that on days when multiple readings are assigned, they are each fairly short. You are responsible for all of the readings for every class.

**January 5**

Introduction and Orientation

**January 12**

Cobbe, “School and After” from *The Life of Frances Power Cobbe*  
(coursepack)

Altick, “Elementary Education and Literacy” and “Secondary Education” in *The English Common Reader* (coursepack)

Arnold, “Discipline in Public Schools” in *The Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Arnold*.  
(coursepack)

Ian Hunter, “Introduction” to *Rethinking the School* (coursepack)

Gargano, Elizabeth “Introduction” to *Reading Victorian Schoolrooms* (coursepack)

### **January 19**

Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” Ed. Latimer. *Contemporary Critical Theory* (coursepack)

Freire, Chapter 2, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (coursepack)

### **January 26**

Foucault, “Docile Bodies”; “The Means of Correct Training”; “Panopticism” from *Discipline and Punish*

Foucault, “Politics and Reason” from *Politics, Philosophy, Culture*. Ed. Kritzman  
(coursepack)

Goodlad, “Beyond the Panopticon” from *Victorian Literature and the Victorian State*  
(coursepack)

Carpenter, “Chapter 1” from *Reformatory Schools* (coursepack)

### **February 2**

Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*

### **February 9**

Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*

### **February 16**

Arnold, “Sweetness and Light,” (coursepack)

Arnold, "The Revised Code" (coursepack)

Arnold, "Reports on Elementary Schools" 1852-1882 (*Defining Gender* database  
Carleton Library catalogue)

**or**

"Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education" (*House of Commons Parliamentary Papers* Carleton Library catalogue)

**No Archive Corner today**

### **February 23**

Reading Week

### **March 2**

*Agnes Grey*

### **March 9**

"A Working Life," *The Governess* (coursepack)

Davies, *The Higher Education of Women* (coursepack)

Hughes, selected chapters from *A London Girl of the 1880s* (Carleton Library reserve)

### **March 16**

Maudsley, "Sex in Mind and in Education" (coursepack)

Anderson, "Sex in Mind and Education: A Reply" (coursepack)

Selections from the *Girls' Own Paper* Ed. Doughty

### **March 23**

*Tom Brown's Schooldays*

### **March 30**

Selections from *The Boy's Own Annual* (Carleton Library Special Collections)

Meade, *A Sweet Girl Graduate* (Project Gutenberg)

**or**

Sharp, *The Making of a Schoolgirl* (Carleton Library reserve)