

**English 256n:  
The Victorian Novel: Theory and Practice**

Spring 2006

M 3-5

Barker 269

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~english/courses/english256n.html>

Professor Leah Price

Barke 271, 6-0573

[lprice@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:lprice@fas.harvard.edu)

office hours: Thu 3-5

Feb. 6: Introduction

Feb. 13 Austen, Emma (1816)

\*Dorrit Cohn, from Transparent Minds (1978; excerpted in McKeon, 493-514

\*Ian Watt, The Rise of the Novel (1957), 290-301.

\*D.A. Miller, Jane Austen, or the Secret of Style (2003), 32-56

\*Henry James, "The Art of Fiction" (1884)

\*James, review of Anthony Trollope's The Belton Estate

[Feb. 20 University holiday]

Feb. 27 Gaskell, Mary Barton (1848)

\*[Robert Lamb,] "The Manufacturing Poor" (Fraser's, January 1848)

\*Engels, Condition of the Working Class in England (1845), 53-56

\*Mrs. [Sarah] Ellis, The Daughters of England. Their Position in Society, Character and Responsibilities (1842), pp. 71-77

\*Roland Barthes, "The Reality Effect" (1968)

\*"Realism," in Williams, Keywords (1976)

\*Roman Jakobson, "The Metaphoric and Metonymic Poles" (1956)

March 6 Thackeray, Vanity Fair (1848), through chapter 33

\*M.M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel" (1934-35)

\*Simon Eliot, "The Business of Victorian Publishing" (2001)

\*Trollope, "The Higher Education of Women" (1868)

March 13 CLASS MEETING IN HOUGHTON LIBRARY

[no posting or presentation due this week]

March 20 Vanity Fair (complete)

\*Bakhtin, "Epic and Novel," pp. 3-20,

\*Lukacs, Preface to Studies in European Realism (1948)

\*Eliot, from Adam Bede (1859)

[SPRING BREAK]

April 3 Dickens, David Copperfield (1850), chapters 1-40

[no posting or presentation due this week]

(+ research methods session with Laura Farwell Blake)

\*[Walter Bagehot,] "Charles Dickens," National Review 7 (October 1858)

\*"Charles Dickens and David Copperfield," Fraser's 42 (December 1850)

\*James Fitzjames Stephen, "The License of Modern Novelists," Edinburgh Review 106 (1857): 124-56.

\*Dickens, Prospectus inserted in Dombey and Son, March 1847

April 10 David Copperfield, complete

\*Mary Poovey, from Uneven Developments: The Ideological Work of Gender in Mid-Victorian England (1988)

April 17 Eliot, Middlemarch (1872), through book 4

\*J. Hillis Miller, "Optic and Semiotic in Middlemarch" (1975)

\*Catherine Gallagher, "George Eliot, Immanent Victorian" (1996)

April 24 Middlemarch, complete

[no posting or presentation due this week]

\*Eliot, "The Natural History of German Life"

May 1 Presentation of final paper projects

## Requirements

1) Two **oral presentations** (sign-up sheets to be circulated in the second class meeting). About half of our class meetings (Feb. 13, Feb. 27, March 6, March 20, April 10, April 17) will be introduced by two oral presentations. The first (under 10 minutes) should summarize the secondary readings (concentrating on those texts that strike you as most complex or difficult), proceed to draw connections between those readings and the novel being read, and finally identify a series of questions for the seminar to discuss. For this presentation, you may well find it helpful to distribute a **handout** of quotations from the texts under discussion, or an outline of the questions that you'd like to raise. The second (under 5 minutes) should set the terms of discussion by summarizing the current week's postings to the discussion board and tracing common threads or debates among the different responses. Because these presentations function as a springboard to the discussion, both should be informal in style and spoken rather than read.

2) Weekly **postings** to the seminar listserv: a brief, informal email (around one page, single-spaced) raising questions you'd like discussed in class, drawing seminar members' attention to points in the primary or secondary readings that would repay further analysis, connecting the current week's reading with issues discussed earlier in the semester, or sketching out working hypotheses for a paper topic. At a minimum, you should post one such email to the class list at some point before 5PM Sunday (except of course in the weeks marked "no posting due"); you should also feel free to use the listserv to respond to others' postings, which you should print out and read before class. Because these papers are designed as preparation for seminar discussion, they should deal with the upcoming week's readings (not with the readings that have been discussed in the previous session); for the same reason, the 5:00 deadline is absolute. NB: You do not need to post to the listerv in the two weeks when you are presenting, although you are welcome to if you have points that can't be fit into your oral presentation.

3) A **proposal** for the final paper (1-2 double-spaced pp.), due to my box by 4:00 on April 6.

4) A 10-minute oral summary of your final paper (which will normally still be in draft at this point) to be **presented to the seminar** at the final class meeting (May 1).

5) A conference-length **research paper** on a topic of your choosing, due Monday 15 May by 4:00 in my box. The paper should be between 4,00 and 5,500 words (counting endnotes), which translates into 12-16 double-spaced pp. (or, at conference tempo, 25-30 minutes); both word limit and due date are firm. The paper should be prefaced by a 300-500-word abstract; if you need a model of the genre, PMLA and Dissertation Abstracts International are good places to look.

### Books available at the Coop:

Austen, Emma, ed. Stephen Parrish (Norton)

Gaskell, Mary Barton, ed. Macdonald Daly (Penguin)

William Thackeray, Vanity Fair, ed. Peter Shillingsburg (Norton)

Dickens, David Copperfield, ed. Jeremy Tambling (Penguin)

Eliot, Middlemarch, ed. Rosemary Ashton (Penguin)

**Please buy these specific editions (unless you already own, and have heavily annotated, another copy) to ensure that everyone can refer to the same page numbers in discussion.**

Starred readings on the syllabus are contained in the **coursepack**, available at Gnomon Copy; you should buy a copy before the second class meeting.

## Some Suggestions for Further Reading

The most compendious recent anthologies of novel theory are **Dorothy Hale's The Novel: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory (London: Blackwell, 2006)** and **Michael McKeon's Theory of the Novel: A Critical Anthology (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 2000)**; both include substantial introductory material, and you should try to buy both if you plan to work on the novel as a genre. **Martin McQuillan's Narrative Reader (London: Routledge, 2000)** is worth a look if you're particularly interested in structuralist and post-structuralist narratology, but focuses more on narrative as a mode than on the novel as a genre.

Foundational texts of Victorian novel theory that you may find it interesting to browse through include:

**David Masson, British Novelists and Their Styles (Cambridge: Macmillan, 1859)**

**Alexander Bain, The Emotions and the Will (London, 1859)**

**E.S. Dallas, The Gay Science (London: Chapman and Hall, 1866).**

However, the most interesting writing on fiction in this culture tended to take the form of periodical essays, most often reviews; an intelligently structured anthology of short excerpts from Victorian reviews of novels and essays on the novel is **David Skilton, ed., The Early and Mid-Victorian Novel (London: Routledge, 1993)**, now out of print. Several collections of essays reprinted in full (also out of print) are worth browsing:

**A Victorian Art of Fiction: Essays on the Novel in British Periodicals, 1830-1900, ed. John Charles Olmstead (New York: Garland, 1979)**

**Victorian Fiction: A Collection of Essays from the Period, ed. Ira Bruce Nadel (New York: Garland, 1986)**

**Victorian Criticism of the Novel, ed. Edwin M. Eigner and George J. Worth (Cambridge UP, 1985).**

Anthologies of reviews of the individual novelists read for this course (convenient as a bibliographical starting-point, although truncated too drastically to give much sense of the genres of Victorian novel criticism) include

**Jane Austen: the Critical Heritage, ed. B.C. Southam (London: Routledge, 1968).**

**Thackeray: The Critical Heritage, ed. Geoffrey Tillotson and Donald Hawes (London, 1968).**

**Dickens: The Critical Heritage, ed. Philip Collins (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1971).**

**George Eliot: The Critical Heritage, ed. David Carroll (London: Routledge, 1971).**

Useful reference books on Victorian culture include

**Brantlinger, Patrick, and William B. Thesing. A Companion to the Victorian Novel. Oxford: Blackwell, 2002.** (panoramic and up-to-date; gives a useful taxonomy of subgenres of the novel)

**Deirdre David, ed., The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)** (fewer entries than Blackwell's, but especially strong on reading and publishing)

**Adam Roberts, Victorian Culture and Society: The Essential Glossary (London: Arnold, 2003)** (less browsable than the above, but useful for quick fact-checking, though not always reliable)

**John Sutherland's lively Companion to Victorian Fiction (Stanford UP, 1988)** remains unsurpassed for information about publication and reception of fiction, as well as highly readable plot summaries of sometimes unreadable novels.

## Some useful electronic resources on the novel and on Victorian culture

(you can link to these from this seminar's homepage:

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~english/courses/english256n.html>)

The Victoria Research Web. <http://victorianresearch.org/>

The Victorian Web. <http://www.victorianweb.org/>

Mitsuharu Matsuoka's Victorian Web Sites. <http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Victorian.html>

Alan Liu's Victorian Voice of the Shuttle <http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=2751>

The Dickens Page. <http://lang.nagoya-u.ac.jp/~matsuoka/Dickens.html>

The Dickens Project. <http://humwww.ucsc.edu/dickens/index.html>

<http://lib.harvard.edu/e-resources/details/p/poolespl.html>

    Pooles Periodical Index, available from the HOLLIS homepage (you'll need to enter a password): an index of articles in magazines 1802-1906

Literature On-line: <http://80-lion.chadwyck.com.ezpl.harvard.edu>: site linking to full text for many canonical literary works in English, plus full text of reference works including *Encyclopedia of the Novel* (ed. Schellinger) and *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (which, despite its title, is highly useful for the formal study of narrative prose).