HIST/WMST 470
Victorian Culture and Customs
Professor Nicole Mares
Monday, Wednesday, Friday
1:00 PM, Hafey-Marian Room 303

Portrait of Queen Victoria (1843)
Sir Francis Grant

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Office Hours: M/W 9-10:30, T 9-12

Course Description:
When Queen Victoria took the British crown in 1837 one could argue that Britain was already in the throes of a cultural shift; her coronation gives historians a convenient way to trace the chronology. But, what were the features of this cultural shift? Was it a middle-class cultural change or was it aristocratic? Did the shift have positive or negative consequences for British society? In this class we will investigate and analyze the myths and realities of the Victorian world. We will look at how the Victorians organized their lives, through notions of class, gender, privacy, etc., in an effort to understand the Victorian era better. We will also look at how historians talk about the Victorian periods in Britain and in the United States in an effort to understand the Victorian legacy. Overall, we will investigate the stereotypes of the Victorians: stuffy, snobby, and prude.
Required Texts:
The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher, by Kate Summerscale (ISBN# 0-8027-1742-X)
The History of Sexuality Part 1: An introduction, by Michel Foucault
Pocket Guide to Writing in History, by Mary Lynn Rampolla, 031244673X (or newest edition)
Additional texts will be provided to the class, either as scans posted on the course SharePoint (https://sharepoint.kings.edu/sites/victorian), internet links, or through copies distributed in class.

Course Goals:
In this class, our goals will be:
To gain a fuller, more nuanced understanding of nineteenth-century society in America and Great Britain
To investigate how societies participate in the creation of their own legacy
To understand how historians bring their own biases to their historical studies
To understand “stereotypes” and how to challenge them
To act as historians:
  To compose concise, but detailed, analyses of the course readings
  To compose a short research essay based on original source analysis and a Clear, original thesis

Course Policies:
Syllabus: The syllabus provided to you will serve as the guide to this class. Assignments listed therein are subject to alteration or cancellation. Alternative or new assignments and readings may be added. It is your responsibility to check the online syllabus daily.

Attendance: Attendance for this class is mandatory. I expect that you will come to class every session and participate in our discussions. Excused absences generally fall into the category of: family emergencies, approved school activities, extended illness. Unexcused absences will result in the reduction of your participation grade (1 percent per unexcused absence). Please note that an unexcused absence can also affect the grades you earn on assignments if you miss a due date.

Assessment:
Participation: (10%) Daily, substantive contributions to our class discussions. That means, to earn full credit you need to: come prepared with your notes and the assigned readings (if the sources are from the SharePoint, you need to print them out); contribute at least one comment per course session; and be engaged, attentive, and alert during our class meetings.

Lead Class Discussion: Twice this semester you will, with a partner, lead class discussion of a topic. This will happen after the topic’s introductory lecture. You will be responsible for introducing the major themes of the readings and guiding the discussion of the texts through questions to your peers. Student groups will meet with me one week prior to the session which they will lead. Sign-ups for topics will happen early in the semester. (10%)
Microthemes: 2 papers, 2-3 pages each (10%). Twice this semester I will distribute microtheme questions. I ask for short, but formal responses to these questions that draw together the primary and secondary sources from the class. I will distribute guidelines in class.

Short Essay: (10%) An essay of 5-7 pages comparing The Age of Innocence and The Suspicions of Mr. Whicher. The formal assignment will be distributed in class.

Research Paper: 10 pages (40%) The major project for this course is a 10 page research paper. The topic will be of your choosing, pending approval from the instructor. The goal of this paper is to investigate and address a major issue in Victorian historiography, but one that more narrowly addresses the themes of this course. Consider topics that investigate issues of private versus public, myth versus reality, or respectable versus lurid. You have many options here, but ultimately you’ll be using primary and secondary materials to craft your own argument about Victorian society either in the US or Britain.

Paper Elements and value:
Outline 5%
Annotated Bibliography 10%
Rough Draft 5%
Final Essay 20%

Final Exam: (20%) The final exam will consist of two essay questions that will be completed during the appointed final exam hour.

Grade Calculation:
A (93% and above)     A- (90%-92%)
B+ (87%-89%)           B (83%-86%)           B- (80%-82%)
C+ (77%-79%)           C (73%-76%)           C- (70%-72%)
D+ (67%-69%)           D (63%-66)           D- (60%-62%)
F (59% or below)

Letter Grades -
A: Superior = 90 – 100% of total points. A represents exemplary work or performance that could be a model for others.
B: Excellent = 80 – 89% of total points. B represents meritorious work that meets and exceeds requirements and shows depth and originality.
C: Satisfactory = 70 – 79% of total points. C represents satisfactory work that meets all requirements and demonstrates the ability to do college level work.
D: Marginal = 60 – 69% of total points. D represents marginal work that either lacks competence or fails to meet all requirements of the assignment.
F: Failing = 59 and below of total points. F represents failing work that falls significantly short of requirements or basic competency.

Late Assignments: If you are not in class the date an assignment is due, I strongly encourage you to turn in the assignment as soon as possible. If your absence is considered excused, you may turn in your assignment at the next class meeting. If your absence is unexcused, you must turn in a paper copy of the assignment. Every day the assignment is late, the letter grade will be reduced by one-third. For example, if the assignment earns an 87%, but
is three days late the final grade will be an 80%. Do not e-mail assignments to me unless you have previously arranged to do so.

**Academic Honesty and Integrity:** Please read and understand the college’s Student Conduct Code. Within this code is contained the college’s and therefore this class’s policies on cheating and plagiarism. [http://www.kings.edu/student_handbook/studentregulations_rights/conductcode.htm](http://www.kings.edu/student_handbook/studentregulations_rights/conductcode.htm)

Further explanation of cheating and plagiarism can be found here: [www.kings.edu/history/honesty.html](http://www.kings.edu/history/honesty.html) and here: [Help stop Plagiarism!](http://www.kings.edu/history/honesty.html).

**Wikipedia:** Don’t use it. It has been shown, time and again, that Wikipedia is a seriously flawed, often incorrect online resource. I encourage you to use real encyclopedias and other reference materials in the place of Wikipedia. Wikipedia should never be used as a source for any of your assignments.

**Communication:** If you find yourself in need of assistance, clarification, or general dialogue about the course please visit me during my office hours. My office is Hafey-Marian 312. If I am not available in my office, email me at nicolemares@kings.edu. Note, however, that I may not be able to respond to your email immediately, so do not procrastinate when it comes to getting in contact with me. You should not expect email responses after 9PM, so make sure you are clear on the parameters of assignments well in advance of the due dates.

Facebook: I will not accept friend requests from students at King’s. Please don’t take offense, it is a personal policy.

**Classroom Decorum:** We are all adults and I expect that we will all behave as such. While I hope that we are able to engage in lively conversations about the course topics and readings, please keep conversations focused on the class. Please respect the people with whom you share the class and be open to their ideas and opinions. If you’re not comfortable with a topic, or talking in class, please come talk to me at my office.

Finally, remember this is a classroom; we are all here to learn. In order to learn, we all need to be able to focus on the course materials and the lecture or discussion. Cellular phones should be turned off. If a computer is on, it should only be used to take notes for course purposes.
Schedule:

Week 1: Periodization:

Mon, 31 August: Who are the Victorians?

Wed, 2 September: The Victorian World
Reading: “The Victorian Era” on the SharePoint

Fri, 4 September: What is Victorian Studies?
Reading: “Rethinking the Victorians,” The Victorian Studies Reader pp. 1-49
“Should we Abandon the Idea of the Victorian Period?” pp. 51-65

Week 2: Defining the Victorian World

Mon, 7 September
No Class—Labor Day

Wed, 9 September: How did post-Victorian generations define “Victorian”?
G. Ratray Taylor, “Sex Denied,” Sex in History (London: Thames and Hudson, 1953), pp 204-224 (all readings on the sharepoint)

Fri, 11 September: Researching the Victorians
Class will meet in Library. Attendance is mandatory.

Section I: The Victorian “Public” World

Week 3: Victorian Institutions—Class

Mon, 14 September: How should we define “public” and “private”?
MICROTHEME 1 DUE
Reading: Judith Flanders, Inside the Victorian Home “House and Home” “The Scullery” and “The Drawing Room”, excerpt from Habermas

Wed, 16 September: How did social class define the spaces of Victorian London?
Readings: selections from London: A Pilgrimage Blanchard Jerrold and Gustave Dore

Fri, 18 September How do historians discuss Victorian notions of class?
Readings: Victorian Studies Reader, Part IV: Society and Class, pp 127-148
Victorian Studies Reader, Part V: Space, pp 151-164
Week 4: A Culture of Politics
Mon, 21 September: How did American and British Victorian political systems differ?

RESEARCH TOPICS DUE
Lecture

Wed, 23 September How did different voices contribute to Victorian politics?
Reading: Reader Part VI: Politics High and Low, pp 165-206
John Plunkett, “Restoring the Popularity of the Monarchy,” Reader pp 397-410

Fri, 25 September: Paper Workshop, mandatory attendance
Reading: Rampolla

Week 5: What institutions influenced the Victorian sense of identity?
Mon, 28 September: Where did notions of identity come from before the Victorian period?
Lecture

Wed, 30 September: How did religion influence the daily lives of the Victorians?
Reading: Reader, Part IX: Religion, pp 233-251

Fri, 2 October: What impact did science have on notions of the “self” in the Victorian world?
Reading: Reader, Part X: Science, pp 253-303

Week 6: How did the Victorians create a culture of economic and imperial dominance?
Mon, 5 October: Victorian Britain as the Workshop of the World
Lecture
MICROTHEME II DUE

Wed, 7 October: What were the economic institutions that defined and guided Victorian success?
Reading: Reader, Section II, “Economy”

Fri, 9 October: What were the consequences and benefits of the Victorian empire?
Reading: Reader, Section 14, “Race, Empire, and National Identity”
Week 7: A Culture of Inquiry: What happens when the public invades the private?
Mon, 12 October: What can capture the imagination of a nation?
   Reading: Mr. Whicher, pp xi-146

Wed, 14 October: How did the media influence private lives?
   Reading: Mr. Whicher, pp 147-314

Fri, 16 October
   No Class—Fall Break

Section II: The Victorian “Private” World

Week 8: How separate are the Victorian public and private worlds?
Mon, 19 October: How does public perception influence private reality?
   Reading: The Age of Innocence, Part I, pp vii-143

Wed, 21 October: How is society policed in Victorian New York?
   Reading: The Age of Innocence, Part II, pp 147-298

Fri, 23 October
   No Class Meeting. Research Day.

Week 9: How did the middle class shape notions of Victorian morality?
Mon, 26 October: What was considered “moral” before the Victorians came along?
   ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Wed, 28 October: Who were major influences on Victorian notions of morality?
   Reading: Hannah More, “On dissipation and the modern habits of fashionable life”
   Edward J. Bristow, “The Vice society and the Fear of the Obscene”

Fri, 30 October: How did the Victorians create their own sense of morality?
   Reading: Harold Perkin, “The Moral Revolution”
   Gertrude Himmelfarb, “Marriage and Morals among the Victorians”

Week 10: What was the Victorian romantic world like?
Mon, 2 November: What are the stereotypes about Victorian romance?
   SHORT PAPER DUE
   Lecture
Wed, 4 November: What was the Victorian dating scene like?
**Reading:** selection from Ronald Pearsall, *The Worm in the Bud* pp 123-165

Fri, 6 November: Was it always happily ever after?

Week 11: What was the Victorian experience of marriage?

Mon, 9 November:
**OUTLINE OF ESSAY DUE**

Wed, 11 November: If no one was having sex, why were the Victorians so worried about it?
**Reading:** Michael Mason, “Codes and Classes” from *The Making of Victorian Sexuality* (1994)

Fri, 13 November: How did middle-class Victorians think about sexuality?
**Reading:** Nancy Cott, “Passionlessness,” from *A Heritage of Her Own: Toward a New Social History of American Women* (1979)
SECTION III: THE VICTORIAN “UNDERWORLD”

Week 12: What interest did the Victorian middle class have in the urban “underworld?”

Mon, 16 November: How were Victorians introduced to the realities of the urban poor?


Wed, 18 November: In such a moral society, why was prostitution so common?

Reading: Judith Walkowitz, “The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon”

Fri, 20 November: How did the Victorians try to regulate illicit sexuality?

Readings: William Acton, “Prostitution considered in its social and sanitary aspects,” pp 1-8/pp 42-56
Donald Thomas, “Modern Babylon,” from The Victorian Underworld (1998)

Week 13: Research Papers

Mon, 23 November
ROUGH DRAFT OF ESSAY DUE
Peer-review session

Wed, 25 November
No Class—Happy Thanksgiving

Fri, 27 November
No Class—Happy Thanksgiving
Week 14: What behaviors were deemed outside the bounds of normalcy?
Mon, 30 November: How did the medical profession try to regulate sexuality in the privacy of one’s own home?
   M. Jeanne Peterson, “Dr. Acton’s Enemy: Medicine, Sex, and Society in Victorian England” Victorian Studies 29:4 (Summer 1986), 569-590

Wed, 2 December: How did the Victorians treat homosexuality?
   Reading: Ronald Pearsall, selection from The Worm in the Bud, pp 448-516

Fri, 4 December: What was deemed “perverse” in Victorian society?
   Reading: Ronald Pearsall, selection from The Worm in the Bud, pp 314-363

Week 15: Evaluating the Victorians: What did they leave for the next generation?
Mon, 7 December
   FINAL ESSAY DUE IN CLASS
   Lesley Hall, “The Other in the Mirror: Sex, Victorians, and Historians,”

Wed, 9 December: What is the Victorian legacy?
   Reading: Foucault, The History of Sexuality, pp 1-73

Fri, 11 December: Evaluating the Victorian legacy, continued.
   Reading: Foucault, pp 77-159

Final Exam