**ENGLISH READING LISTS**
**MICHAELMAS TERM 2023**

Welcome aboard--we're very much looking forward to seeing you again in October!

As you might have seen when you were applying, there are four first-year English papers at Oxford: Paper 1 is Introduction to English Language and Literature (studied across the full year); Paper 2 is Early Medieval Literature (studied across the autumn ['Michaelmas'] and spring ['Hilary'] terms); Paper 3 is Victorian and Edwardian Literature (Michaelmas Term only); Paper 4 is Modern and Contemporary Literature (Hilary Term only). If you are reading single-honours English, you take all four papers. If you are studying English with another subject, you take Paper 1 and **one** of the other English papers.

Because the reading for Paper 1 is light compared to the others, it doesn't require preparation over the summer. Paper 4 is taught in the spring term, so students receive the reading list for that paper just before the Christmas vacation. However, Paper 2 requires some introductory reading, and your medieval literature tutor, Jasmine Jones, has included a list of recommendations for summer preparation at the end of this document.

Paper 3 has a very demanding reading list—the full list is here—so you should **get going on that now**.

Prof. Marina MacKay
marina.mackay@ell.ox.ac.uk

## Paper 3: Literature in English 1830-1910

Quick things to note about preparing for this paper:

(1) Some Victorian novels are enormous, so you need to read as many as possible of the primary texts (listed as the 'required reading' below) **before you arrive in Oxford**. Give priority to the books with asterisks* beside their titles, and **especially to *Middlemarch* and *Our Mutual Friend***, because these will not be manageable during term-time.

(2) You may not be able to read these works more than once, so **take detailed notes** as you go on anything that strikes you as interesting.

(3) When a week says 'tutorial', you will have an essay due the day before we meet. When it says 'class', you don't write an essay that week but must come ready to discuss the texts. The **prompts for tutorial essays and class discussions** are included below so that you can organise your thoughts as you read.

(4) It doesn't matter which editions you use, but Penguin Classics, Oxford World's Classics, and the critical editions from Norton and Broadview all have good explanatory notes.

(5) Once you've got the hang of the library search engine ('SOLO'), you'll find more specialised criticism for your essay topics, but there are suggestions below to get you started.

### Week 1: The Scope of Victorian Literature (tutorial)

Required reading:

George Eliot, *Middlemarch* *

Recommended secondary reading:

Amanda Anderson and Harry E Shaw, *A Companion to George Eliot* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). (Not for reading all the way through, but Section IV is useful on Eliot's contexts.)

Karen Chase, *Middlemarch in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006). (The Gillian Beer essay is a good place to start.)
Kate Flint, ed., *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012). [Another not for reading all the way through; consult the chapters most relevant to the specific theme of your essay, and make a note of those that might be useful later.]
Avrom Fleishman, *George Eliot's Intellectual Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010).
Margaret Harris, ed., *George Eliot in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013).
Nancy Henry and George Levine, *The Cambridge Companion to George Eliot*, second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2019).
Noa Reich, 'Victorian Inheritance, Speculation, and *Middlemarch*'s "Dead Hand"', *Law and Literature* 35, 1 (2023): 115-34. (Especially useful if you're writing on money/property/inheritance, but of surprisingly wide application.)

Essay prompt:

Please write an essay on the representation in *Middlemarch* of one of the following characteristically nineteenth-century concerns, **demonstrating along the way how Eliot's formal/narrative choices affect and/or complicate her treatment of that topic**: (1) education and/or vocation; (2) community and/or place; (3) social class and/or class conflict; (4) duty and/or obligation; (5) public life and/or institutions; (6) money and/or property; (7) domestic life and/or marriage; (8) religious belief and/or doubt; (9) inheritance and/or the past; (10) exposure and/or disgrace. If you like, you could pick two of these ten and base your argument on how they intersect with each other.

**Week 2: The Subjection of Women (class)**

Required reading:

**Anne Brontë**, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* *
**Wilkie Collins**, *The Woman in White* *
**John Stuart Mill**, Chapter 2 (on marriage) of *The Subjection of Women* (you can read the chapter online at: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/27083/27083-h/27083-h.htm)

Recommended secondary reading:

Rachel Ablow, 'Good Vibrations: The Sensationalization of Masculinity in *The Woman in White*', *NOVEL*, 37, 1/2 (2003), 158-80.
Ann Cvetkovich, 'Ghostlier Determinations: The Economy of Sensation and *The Woman in White*', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 23, 1 (October 1989), 24-43.
Kate Flint, 'Women Writers, Women's Issues', in Heather Glen, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Brontës* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 170-91.
Isabelle Hervouet, 'Gothic Fault-Lines in Anne Brontë's Social Fiction: The Case of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', *Cahiers victoriens & édwardiens* 97 (Spring 2023). (Useful on the 'authority' question.)
Lyn Pykett, *The Nineteenth-Century Sensation Novel*, revised edition (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2011).
----------., 'Collins and the Sensation Novel', in *The Cambridge Companion to Wilkie Collins*, ed. Jenny Bourne Taylor (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007), 50-64.
Garrett Stewart, *Novel Violence: A Narratography of Victorian Fiction* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009), 90-126. [Interesting chapter on *Tenant*—don't be put off by the difficult intro.]
Marianne Thormählen, '"Horror and Disgust": Reading *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*', *Brontë Studies* 44, 1 (2019), 5-19.

Discussion prompts:

Here are another two novels about unhappy marriages, but was anything gained or lost by using melodrama and sensationalism rather than the realist mode of *Middlemarch* to write about what Mill characterises as the abject civic and legal status of nineteenth-century women?

In both *The Woman in White* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, fictional male narrators generate the 'frame' narratives for the writings of women characters. Perhaps you could see this technique as an

effort to reinstate masculine authority over stories about women's experiences, or perhaps the novels' structures encourage us instead to doubt the authority of their male narrators. Which perspective is more convincing, or is there another way of thinking about the forms these novels take?

**Week 3: Poetry and Selfhood (tutorial)**

Required reading:

**Alfred, Lord Tennyson**, *Maud: A Monodrama*
**Robert Browning**, 'Porphyria's Lover', 'Johannes Agricola in Meditation', 'My Last Duchess', 'The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church', 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister', 'Andrea del Sarto', and 'Fra Lippo Lippi'
**Gerard Manley Hopkins**, 'God's Grandeur', 'The Windhover', 'Pied Beauty', 'Spring and Fall', 'To seem the stranger', 'I wake and feel', 'No worst', 'Patience, hard thing', 'Carrion comfort', and 'My own heart'

Recommended secondary reading:

Stephanie Kuduk Weiner, 'Inner Space: Bodies and Minds', in Matthew Bevis, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013). [This volume also includes very useful essays on the formal features of nineteenth-century poetry.]
Matthew Campbell, *Rhythm and Will in Victorian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999). [Chapter 4 is on Browning's monologues; chapter 5 is on Tennyson's.]
Ekbert Faas, *Retreat into the Mind: Victorian Poetry and the Rise of Psychiatry* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1989). [Especially useful on the dramatic monologue.]
Cornelia D.J. Pearsall, 'The Dramatic Monologue', in Joseph Bristow, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000), 67-88.
Sally Shuttleworth and Jenny Bourne Taylor, eds, *Embodied Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts, 1830-1890* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
Gregory Tate, *The Poet's Mind: The Psychology of Victorian Poetry, 1830-1870* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2012), 1-58.

Essay prompts:

How do these poets use lyric form and/or the dramatic monologue (or 'monodrama') to represent psychological phenomena? Feel free to focus on a specific emotion that all three poets write about—guilt, for instance, or longing, or exhilaration—and consider any important points of difference or similarity among their treatments.

'Give us no more of body than shows soul!', Browning's Prior orders Fra Lippo Lippi. What do you make of the fact that these poems, often concerned with extreme mental states and moments of crisis, are so preoccupied by images of and ideas about the physical body? Is there anything significant or interesting about how they think about the relationship between the body and the mind?

**Week 4: Culture and Industry (class)**

Required reading:

**Matthew Arnold**, *Culture and Anarchy* * (Skip the preface for now, read Chapters 1 to 4 inclusive ['Sweetness and Light' to 'Hebraism and Hellenism'], and then go back to the rest if you've time.)
**Elizabeth Gaskell**, *North and South* *
**John Ruskin**, 'The Storm-Cloud of the Nineteenth Century'.
(http://www.gutenberg.org/files/20204/20204-h/20204-h.htm)

Recommended secondary reading:

Urmi Bhowmik, 'Empire and the Industrial Novel: Imperial Commodities and Colonial Labor in Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*', *Nineteenth-Century Studies* 26 (2012): 117-34.

Joseph W Childers, 'Industrial Culture in the Victorian Novel', in Deidre David, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006), 77-96.
Kate Nesbit, 'Improving Ears: Elizabeth Gaskell's Charitable Listener and the Social-Problem Novel', *ELH* 87, 1 (Spring 2020), 149-78.
James Richard Simmons, 'Industrial and "Condition of England" Novels', in Patrick Brantlinger and William Thesig, ed, *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 336-52.
David Russell, 'Teaching Tact: Matthew Arnold on Education', *Raritan* 32, 3 (2013): 122-39.
Jill Matus, *Shock, Memory, and the Unconscious in Victorian Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 61-82. (Wide-ranging chapter on social/class trauma in *North and South*.)

Discussion prompts:

One familiar idea in 'secularisation' narratives about Britain in the nineteenth century is that 'culture' begins to replace Christianity as a spiritualising force, both for individuals and society at large. What does 'culture' mean to Arnold and Gaskell? Are there any important differences?

Going by their literature, it feels as though many Victorians believed that they were living through a period of unprecedented crisis—in Ruskin's essay, even the clouds augur catastrophe. What do their works suggest was generating that sense of crisis, and how do they imagine it might (if at all) be mitigated?

**Week 5: The Making of Americans (tutorial)**

Required reading:

**Frederick Douglass**, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave* *
**Ralph Waldo Emerson**, 'Self-Reliance' (https://www.gutenberg.org/files/16643/16643-h/16643-h.htm#SELF-RELIANCE)
**Herman Melville**, 'Benito Cereno'

Recommended secondary reading:

Elizabeth Duquette, 'The Fog of Tyranny in "Benito Cereno"', *Textual Practice* 35, 11 (2021), 1853-67.
Christopher Freeburg, *Melville and the Idea of Blackness: Race and Imperialism in Nineteenth-Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 93-131.
John Stauffer, 'Douglass's Self-Making and the Culture of Abolitionism', in Maurice S Lee, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Frederick Douglass* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009), 13-30.
Kenneth W Warren, 'A Reflection on the Slave Narrative and American Literature', in John Ernest, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the African American Slave Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2014), 183-95.
Ivy Wilson, *Specters of Democracy: Blackness and the Aesthetics of Politics in the Antebellum U.S.* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011). [Has chapters specifically on both Douglass and 'Benito Cereno'.]

Essay prompts:

'Liberty must either cut the throat of Slavery or have its own throat cut by Slavery' (Frederick Douglass). Or, as Douglass asked in a famous speech, 'What to the slave is the fourth of July?' How do these writers address the political and cultural contradictions of American 'liberty'?

'At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed' (Frederick Douglass, discussing abolitionist discourse). To what uses do Douglass and Melville put 'scorching irony'? Do their different genres—one an autobiographical narrative; the other a work of fiction based on historical events—allow them to put different types of irony to work?

**Week 6: Urban Poverty and Wealth (class)**

Required reading:

**Charles Dickens**, *Our Mutual Friend* *
**Henry Mayhew**, *London Labour and the London Poor*. All volumes are online and worth browsing in case you spot something useful for another topic, but for this class please read: 'Of the Street-Finders or Collectors': https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/60440/pg60440-images.html; 'and 'Of the Dustmen of London': https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/60440/pg60440-images.html#i_image09

Recommended secondary reading:

Murray Baumgarten, 'Fictions of the City', in John O Jordan, *The Cambridge Companion to Charles Dickens* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001), 106-119.
Regenia Gagnier, *Subjectivities: A History of Self-Representation in Britain, 1832-1920* (New York: Oxford UP, 1991), 99-137.
Catherine Gallagher, *The Body Economic: Life, Death, and Sensation in Political Economy and the Victorian Novel* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009), 86-117. (Chapter on *Our Mutual Friend*.)
J Hillis Miller, *Others* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 2021), 43-64. (Chapter on *Our Mutual Friend*.)
Anne Humpherys, 'London', in *Charles Dickens in Context*, ed., Sally Ledger and Holly Furneaux (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012), 227-34.
Leon Litvack, 'Our Mutual Friend', in David Paroissian, *A Companion to Charles Dickens* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2008), 433-43.
Chris Vanden Bossche, 'Class and its Distinctions', in *The Oxford Handbook of Charles Dickens*, ed John O Jordan, et al (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2018), 501-516.

Discussion prompts:

How far are Dickens's and Mayhew's treatments of 'the poor'—as individuals, as a demographic category—continuous with each other and/or with those of the other nineteenth-century British writers you have read?

Mayhew was a journalist and obviously Dickens was primarily a novelist, but what can be described as *literary* about Mayhew's work and, conversely, what do you think is or definitely isn't journalistic or documentary about *Our Mutual Friend*?

**Week 7: Turn-of-the-Century Performances (tutorial)**

Required reading:

**George Bernard Shaw**, *Arms and the Man*
**John Millington Synge**, *The Playboy of the Western World*
**Oscar Wilde**, *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Recommended secondary reading:

Nicholas Grene, *The Politics of Irish Drama: Plays in Context from Boucicault to Friel* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999), 77-109. [Chapter on Synge.]
Declan Kiberd, *Inventing Ireland: The Literature of the Modern Nation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1995). [Chapters 2, 3, and 10 are on Wilde, Shaw, and Synge respectively.]
Ben Levitas, *The Theatre of Nation: Irish Drama and Cultural Nationalism, 1890-1916* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2002).
Christopher Morash, *A History of Irish Theatre, 1601-2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002), 103-38.
Shaun Richards, *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Irish Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2006). [Chapters 6, 8, and 9 are on Synge, Shaw, and Wilde respectively.]
Alan Sinfield, '"Effeminacy" and "Femininity": Sexual Politics in Wilde's Comedies', *Modern Drama* 37, 1 (Spring 1994), 34-52.

Essay prompts:

Why might it be significant that these male-authored plays are all concerned with women's fantasies about men and/or men's fictions about themselves?

Identify a problem or concept that the theatre enabled these texts to explore more successfully than non-dramatic narrative fiction (a novella, say, or a short story) might have allowed. In other words, why did these works have to be *plays*?

**Week 8: Late Imperial Formation (class)**

Required reading:

**Rudyard Kipling**, *Kim* *
**Robert Baden-Powell**, *Scouting for Boys* [This is a revelation on the wider context, but it doesn't need close concentration – just take a quick look through at https://www.gutenberg.org/files/65993/65993-h/65993-h.htm]

Recommended secondary reading:

Patrick Brantlinger, *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988).
----------, 'The Complexity of Kipling's Imperialist Politics', *English Literature in Transition* 48, 1 (2005): 88-91. [A useful review essay on Kipling's political difficulty.]
----------, 'Empire, Place, and the Victorians', in Juliet John, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Victorian Literary Culture* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2016), 233-51.
Susan Jones, 'Into the Twentieth Century: Imperial Romance from Haggard to Buchan', in Corinne Saunders, ed., *A Companion to Romance* (Maldon, MA: Blackwell, 2004), 406-23.
John A McClure, *Kipling and Conrad: The Colonial Fiction* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1981).
Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 132-62. [Section on *Kim* titled 'The Pleasures of Imperialism'.]
Alisha Walters, 'A "white boy . . . who is not a white boy": Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*, Whiteness, and British Identity', *Victorian Literature and Culture* 46, 2 (June 2018): 331-346.

Discussion prompts:

'Once a Sahib, always a Sahib', declares a character in *Kim*—but Kim is an Indian-born Irish orphan. How does *Kim* treat ideas of cultural 'purity' and hybridity, and how far does Baden-Powell, who turns the novel into an educational text for juveniles, follow Kipling in this?

'Inobtrusively [*sic*] supplying the place of the police in places where the police cannot be, the mechanisms of discipline seem to entail a relative *relaxation* of policing power. No doubt this manner of passing off the regulation of everyday life is the best manner of passing it on' (D. A. Miller, discussing the omniscient narrator of the Victorian novel). How does *Kim* treat surveillance at the level of theme and narrative style?

**Paper 2: Early Medieval English Literature (650-1350)**

This paper will introduce you to the very roots of English Literature. You will read the earliest surviving writings in the English language, from Old English alliterative poetry in the 600s to the emergence of new genres such as romance, beast fable and lyric after the Norman Conquest. We call the language spoken in England between the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in the fifth century and the Norman Conquest 'Old English'. After 1066, this language comes into contact with 'Anglo-Norman', producing the phase in the language that we call 'Early Middle English'. As we move through this first period of English literary history, we will encounter epics and romances, dream visions and hymns, riddles and charms, chronicles and battle poems, laments and lyrics.

This paper will be taught across all three terms. In Michaelmas and Hilary terms, we will focus mainly on the Old English period (650-*c.* 1100). Then, in Trinity Term we will look at some Early Middle English texts. The set texts we will translate are the Old English poems known as *The Wanderer*, *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Battle of Maldon* and an extract from *Beowulf* (the fight with Grendel). All of these texts are included in this edition, which you must get hold of before Michaelmas:

- *A Guide to Old English*, 8th edition, ed. Bruce Mitchell and Fred Robinson (Oxford, 2012).

You will probably find the section on Old English language challenging. A more user-friendly book on the same topic is:

- Mark Atherton, *Complete Old English: A Comprehensive Guide to Reading and Understanding Old English, with Original Texts (Teach Yourself)* (London, 2019).

Before you come to Oxford for Michaelmas Term you should read a selection of Old English texts in translation. In particular, you MUST read a translation of *Beowulf* before you get to

Oxford, as this is the best introduction to the themes and styles of Old English verse. For a good verse translation, try this:

- Roy Liuzza, *Beowulf*, 2nd edition (Broadview, 2012).

You could also read the excellent, but very different, translations by Seamus Heaney and J. R. R. Tolkien.

Please also buy a copy of this book, which provides Old and Early Middle English texts with facing-page, prose translation:

- Elaine Treharne, *Old and Middle English c.890-c.1400: An Anthology*, 3rd edition (Oxford, 2009)

Further recommendations include:

- *Old English Shorter Poems II: Wisdom and Lyric*, trans. Robert Bjork (Harvard, 2014) [part of the very useful Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library series, with facing-page Old English and modern English translation]

- *A Choice of Anglo-Saxon Verse*, transl. Robert Hamer (Faber, 2006) (facing page verse translations of major short poems; very cheap on Amazon)

- *Anglo-Saxon Prose*, ed. and transl. Michael Swanton (Everyman, 1993)

In order to get a sense of what Old English literature is like, please have a look at some of these books:

- *Beowulf and Other Stories: A New Introduction to Old English, Old Icelandic and Anglo-Norman Literatures*, 2nd edition, ed. Richard North and Joe Allard (London, 2012).

- *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 2nd edition, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 2013)

- Hugh Magennis, *The Cambridge Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge, 2011)

- Barbara Yorke, *The Anglo-Saxons* (Sutton Pocket Histories, 1999).

If you have any questions about the course, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

We look forward to meeting you all in October!

Jasmine Jones
jasmine.jones@ell.ox.ac.uk