

ENGLISH READING LISTS MICHAELMAS 2022

Welcome to St Peter's! We're looking forward to seeing you again in October.

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 full year); Paper 3 is Victorian and Edwardian Literature (Michaelmas Term); Paper 4 is Modern and Contemporary Literature (Hilary Term). If you are doing single-honours English, you take all four papers. If you are doing History and English, you take Papers 1 and 3.

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, so the reading list comes before the Christmas vacation. However, Paper 2 requires some introductory reading, and Dr Leneghan has included a list of recommendations at the end of this document. Paper 3 has a very demanding reading list—the full list is here—so you should **get cracking on that now!**

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Paper 3: Literature in English 1830-1910

Quick things to note about preparing for this paper over the summer:

- (1) Some Victorian novels are **enormous**, which is why you should read as many of the primary texts (listed as the 'required reading' below) as you can 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 be the hardest to manage 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/everything that strikes you as interesting.
- (3) When a week says 'tutorial', you have an essay due. 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 mastered 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). [Self-contained chapters on individual themes and contexts; not for reading all the way through!]

Karen Chase, *Middlemarch in the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006).

Kate Flint, ed., *The Cambridge History of Victorian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012). [Another not to read all the way through, but do consult the chapters most relevant to the specific

theme of your essay, and make a note of those that might be useful for later essays.]
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).

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 advance and/or complicate her treatment of that topic**: (1) vocation and/or education; (2) community and/or place; (3) social class and/or class conflict; (4) duty and/or conformity; (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 build your argument around how they intersect.

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.

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 Narratology of Victorian Fiction* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2009), 90-126. [Forbiddingly theoretical but interesting chapter on the narrative form of *Tenant*.]

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 there anything to be gained by using melodrama and sensationalism rather than the realist mode of *Middlemarch* to write about the abject civic and legal status of nineteenth-century women? Where would you place Mill's comments in relation to the three novels?

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. From one angle, you could see this technique as an effort to reinstate masculine authority over stories about women's experiences; from another, you could argue that the novels' structures encourage us instead to doubt the authority of their 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*

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', 'Bishop Blougram's Apology', 'The Laboratory', 'Andrea del Sarto', and 'Fra Lippo Lippi'

Gerard Manley Hopkins, 'To seem the stranger', 'I wake and feel the fell of dark', 'No worst, there is none', '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). [Bevis's volume also includes very useful essays on the formal/technical 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 different kinds of monologue to represent mental processes or the development of a particular emotion?

What do you make of the fact that these poems, often concerned with extreme mental states or moments of crisis, are so preoccupied by images of and ideas about the physical body? Is there anything significant or interesting about how they connect body and mind?

Week 4: Culture and Industry (class)

Required reading:

Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* *

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.

Helen Small, *The Value of the Humanities* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2013). (Chapter 2 is on Arnold and the idea of 'utility'.)

Discussion prompts:

One familiar idea in secularisation narratives about the Nineteenth Century is that 'culture' starts 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 between them?

Going by their literature, it feels as though many Victorians believed that they were living through a period of unprecedented crisis (even the clouds now augur ill, Ruskin thought). What do their works suggest was generating that sense of crisis, and how, if at all, do they imagine it might 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' (<http://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 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 Douglass's and Melville's works address the political contradictions of US 'liberty'?

'At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed' (Frederick Douglass, on abolitionist discourse). To what uses do Douglass and Melville put 'scorching irony'? In light of their differences of genre—an autobiographical narrative vs a work of fiction—are there any important differences in the kinds of irony they adopt?

Week 6: Urban Poverty and Wealth (class)

Required reading:

Henry Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor* (selections to be distributed, but you can browse the numerous volumes online on Project Gutenberg).

Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* *

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.

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 perspectives on class difference and/or poverty shared by the other nineteenth-century British writers you have read?

Mayhew was a journalist and—of course—Dickens was a novelist, but what can be described as *literary* about Mayhew's work and, conversely, what is journalistic or documentary about that of Dickens?

Week 7: Turn-of-the-Century Drama and Other Social 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. [Useful chapter on *Playboy*.]

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 men's fictions about themselves?

These plays are all by Irish authors, although only Synge's is set in Ireland. Would it be clarifying or reductive—or something in between—to see their otherwise comic concerns with identity and artifice in relation to a late-colonial context?

Week 8: Late Imperial Formation (class)

Required reading:

Joseph Conrad, *Lord Jim*.*

Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*.*

Robert Baden-Powell, *Scouting for Boys* [This is a revelation on the wider context, but 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 contradictions.]

-----, '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'.]

Discussion prompts:

'Once a Sahib, always a Sahib', a character announces in *Kim*. How does turn-of-the-century literature on empire treat cultural 'purity' and/or hybridity?

'Inobtrusively 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, writing in *The Novel and the Police* about the omniscient narrator of the Victorian novel). How do these texts treat surveillance, official or unofficial?

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

This paper will be taught across all three terms. The aim of the paper is to introduce you to the earliest English literature, from the alliterative poetry of the Anglo-Saxons to the emergence of new genres such as romance, beast fable and lyric after the Norman Conquest. We call the language of the Anglo-Saxons 'Old English'; after 1066 this comes into contact with 'Anglo-Norman', producing the phase in the language that we call 'Early Middle English'. As we move through the first 'half' of English literary history, we will encounter epics and romances, dream visions and hymns, riddles and charms, chronicles and battle poems, laments and lyrics.

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 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, by very different, verse translations by Seamus Heaney, Michael Alexander and Richard Hamer.

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 who the Anglo-Saxons were and what Old English literature is like, have a look at some of these books:

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

- *The Cambridge Companion to Old English Literature*, 2nd edition, ed. Malcolm Godden and Michael Lapidge (Cambridge, 2013)
- Barbara Yorke, *The Anglo-Saxons* (Sutton Pocket Histories, 1999).

More detailed information about the course, including a sample exam paper, reading lists and other useful resources, can be found by clicking this link on the English Faculty's webpage:

<https://weblearn.ox.ac.uk/portal/site/:humdiv:engfac:prelims-2>

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

I look forward to meeting you all in October!

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