

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3352G (001)

Am I to be the Hero of my own Life: Nineteenth-Century Fictions of the Individual and the World
Winter 2025

Instructor: Dr. Jo Devereux

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Prerequisite: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

Nineteenth-century philosophers celebrated the individual, but the period also saw the emergence of new forms of social control in politics, the market, and the workplace. This course examines the individual's relation to society and the world in nineteenth-century English literature. Looking at examples of Victorian fiction, satire, and autobiography, we will explore the problems of gender, race, and social class and will consider the effects of industrialization and the challenges faced particularly by women of colour in the racialized and colonialist society of nineteenth-century Britain.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- Write critically about nineteenth-century literary representations of the individual in his/her/their world
- Present logical and reasoned arguments with a sophisticated use of evidence
- Demonstrate familiarity with the historical context of 19th-century fiction
- Show knowledge of the reception history of the selected readings from their time to our present moment

Course Materials

Students are welcome to purchase second-hand or earlier editions of any of these textbooks or to order e-Books of this edition from their preferred e-Book provider.

Agnes Grey

By Anne Brontë

Edited by Robert Inglesfield, Hilda Marsden, and Sally Shuttleworth

Oxford World's Classics

Paperback

Published: 01 July 2010

240 Pages

ISBN: 9780199296989

\$9.95

Great Expectations

By Charles Dickens

Edited by Margaret Cardwell and Introduction and Notes by Robert Douglas-Fairhurst

Oxford World's Classics

Paperback

Published: 10 August 2008

544 Pages

ISBN: 9780199219766

\$9.95

North and South

By Elizabeth Gaskell

Edited by Angus Easson and With a new introduction by Sally Shuttleworth

Oxford World's Classics

Paperback

Published: 15 October 2008

496 Pages

ISBN: 9780199537006

\$10.95

Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales

By Robert Louis Stevenson

Edited by Roger Luckhurst

Oxford World's Classics

Paperback

Published: 15 July 2008

256 Pages

ISBN: 9780199536221

\$7.95

Methods of Evaluation

The grade for the course will be arrived at as follows:

Essay 1, due Feb.6: 15%

Essay Proposal, due March 6: 20%

Essay 2, due April 3: 25%

Attendance: 5%

Final Exam, April 2025 (date TBA): 35%

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

Gender-Based and Sexual Violence

Western is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website: https://www.uwo.ca/health/student_support/survivor_support/get-help.html. To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Statements

Academic Consideration

Students may request academic consideration in cases of extenuating circumstances – that is, personal circumstances beyond the student’s control that have a **substantial but temporary** impact on the student’s ability to meet essential academic requirements.

1. Requests for academic consideration are made to the Academic Advising office of the student’s Faculty of Registration.
2. Requests for academic consideration include the following components:
 - a. Self-attestation signed by the student;
 - b. Indication of the course(s) and assessment(s) relevant to the request;
 - c. Supporting documentation as relevant.

Requests without supporting documentation are **limited to one per term per course**.

Instructors may designate one assignment or assessment as exempt from this allowance. In this course, requests for academic consideration pertaining to essays, exam, and group performances **must** be accompanied by supporting documentation.

Assignments with flexible deadlines and any term work that does not count towards the course grade are **not** eligible for additional consideration.

Documentation for medical illness, when required, includes the completion of a Western Student Medical Certificate (SMC) or, where that is not possible, equivalent documentation, by a health care practitioner.

Requests linked to examinations scheduled by the Office of the Registrar during official examination periods as well as practice laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled in the last week of term **always** require formal supporting documentation.

Assignments

Essay 1: Due Feb.6 at 11:59 PM

Length: 1000 words

Worth: 15%

Use MLA 8 or 9 formatting.

Instructions

For this essay, you will be given a choice of three passages from *Agnes Grey* and asked to choose ONE passage and provide a close reading of this passage. Explore the imagery and other literary devices and relate the passage to the novel as a whole. Be precise and specific in your analysis. Present a clear, defensible argument about what you believe to be the most significant element in the passage. No need for secondary sources for this essay, but if you do use any you must cite them correctly using MLA format for documentation.

Submit your essay as a Word document or PDF to OWL.

Essay Proposal: Due March 6 at 11:59 PM

Length: 500 words

Worth: 20%

Use MLA 8 or 9 formatting.

Instructions

Write a 500 word proposal for a 2500-word essay on ONE of the following topics as applied to TWO of the novels (NOT *Agnes Grey*) on the course (with thanks to the British Association for Victorian Studies for the topics):

- Creation of the Self
- The Changing Self
- The Fragmented Self
- The Self in Time/Temporality
- The Double/Doubled Self
- Identity and the Supernatural
- Internal/External Worlds
- The Contextual/Historical Self
- The Gendered Self
- Imposed Identity

Your proposal should tell the reader what questions you plan to explore in your paper. You will need to do some research into your topic in order to write your proposal. We will work on this in class before the due date.

Submit your proposal as a Word document or PDF to OWL.

Essay 2 Research Paper: Due April 3 at 11:59 PM

Length: 2500 words

Worth: 25%

Use MLA 8 or 9 formatting.

Instructions

Develop your proposal into a 2500-word research essay. Use at least 4 secondary sources for your essay. Spend an equal amount of time on each of the two novels you discuss.

Submit your essay as a Word document or PDF to OWL.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

See <https://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/Student%20Information.html>

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

The use of ChatGPT or any other generative AI is NOT permitted in this course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Schedule of Classes and Assignments

Jan.7-9	Introduction: Victorian heroism
Jan.14-16	Introduction continued
Jan.21-23	Brontë, <i>Agnes Grey</i>
Jan.28-31	Brontë, <i>Agnes Grey</i>
Feb.4-6	Gaskell, <i>North and South</i> ; Essay 1 Due Feb.6
Feb.11-13	Gaskell, <i>North and South</i>
Feb.18-20	READING WEEK
Feb.25-27	Dickens, <i>Great Expectations</i> ; Proposal workshopping Feb.27
Mar.4-6	Dickens, <i>Great Expectations</i> ; Essay 2 Proposal Due Mar.6
Mar.11-13	Stevenson, <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>
Mar.18-20	Stevenson, <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i>
Mar.25-27	Essay workshopping
Apr.1-3	Review and exam prep; Essay 2 Due Apr. 3
Apr.TBA	Final Exam