

## Syllabus

English 601.01: Gender and Sexuality in the 1890s  
Spring 2015, T 4:30-7:00 pm, UH 3226

Professor: Molly Youngkin  
Office: University Hall 3852  
Office Hours: Tuesdays 3-4:15pm and Thursdays 3-5:45pm

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### Course Description and Objectives

Victorian culture (1832-1901) initially was known for its rigid attitudes toward gender and sexuality, especially through its emphasis on the separate spheres doctrine, which mandated that women remain in the domestic sphere while men worked in the public sphere. Still, as the century progressed, and Victorians encountered movements that emphasized democracy and equality, they became more open to diversity in gender and sexuality.

Literature of the 1890s offers a wide range of representations previously considered "taboo" in Victorian culture; we will look closely at Victorians' attitudes toward sex and gender at the fin de siècle, via literary works that feature an array of "dangerous" people: the New Woman, effeminate men, prostitutes, and hysterics. While our focus will be on representations of gender and sexuality, we also will look at the ways in which gender and sexuality intersect with race, class, nationality, and other social factors. In addition, we will consider the major literary developments of the late-nineteenth century--aestheticism, decadence, French naturalism, and psychological realism--and contemplate how these movements might have influenced representations of gender and sexuality in the last decade of the century.

In keeping with the goals of the graduate program in English, we will take as our objectives: studying the works of important authors in relation to the broader historical/ cultural context of the period but also through current theoretical perspectives; improving your articulation of issues of literary interpretation, both through writing and oral presentation; examining both primary and secondary sources, with emphasis on the importance of both in the discipline; and using literary research tools, with emphasis on how these tools can assist you in the production of high-quality papers and oral presentations. In achieving these goals, I will assume basic knowledge of the nineteenth century (what you learned in your undergraduate courses on this period), but I also will fill in the gaps when needed. Don't hesitate to ask questions in class—we all have more to learn about this period and how it serves as one context for understanding the literature we are reading.

### Required Texts

- Gibaldi, Joseph. *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 7th edition. New York: Modern Language Association, 2009. ISBN 9781603290241.
- Gissing, George. *The Odd Women*. 1893. Intro. Elaine Showalter. New York: Penguin, 1993. ISBN 9780140433791
- Schaffer, Talia. *Literature and Culture at the Fin de Siècle*. New York: Pearson/Longman, 2007. ISBN 9780321132178
- Schreiner, Olive. *The Story of an African Farm*. 1883. Intro. Dan Jacobson. New York: Penguin, 1987. ISBN 9780140431841
- Shaw, G. B. "Mrs. Warren's Profession." *Plays Unpleasant*. 1898. Ed. Dan Lawrence. New York: Penguin, 2001. ISBN 9780140437935
- Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. 1891. Intro. Robert Mighall. New York: Penguin, 2003. ISBN 9780141439570

Please purchase the editions I have specified here. It's very difficult to have a productive discussion if people are using a variety of editions, all with different page numbers.

You will also need to access critical articles through MyLMU Connect. You are responsible for either printing out all the items or bringing a device (laptop or tablet, not your phone) to class on the days we discuss these articles. Either way, I expect you to mark or take detailed notes about the articles, so you are prepared to discuss them thoroughly in class. It is not enough to read the articles before you come to class and work from memory while in class. If you do not bring articles and notes to class, you will be counted absent for the day and also will not receive credit for class participation.

### Grade Breakdown

Participation	20%
Oral Presentation	10%
Short Paper (4-6 pages)	15%
Historical Documents Assignment	10%
Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review	20%
Long Paper (15-20 pages)	25%

### Assignments and Expectations

*Participation:* In graduate courses, participation is an absolute must. I expect you to come ready to discuss the readings for the day with enthusiasm, and I expect everyone to contribute to the discussion. Attendance is also a must. Because this course meets only once a week, you are allowed only one absence. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences, so you should save your absence for emergencies (death in family, illness, other professional commitments). If you miss more than one class (or you come to class late or leave early more than twice), there will be a significant reduction in your participation grade. You may not miss a day on which an assignment is due. Part of the assignment is being in class to present your findings to your classmates.

*Oral Presentation:* We will use 10-minute oral presentations to get the conversation going each week. You will be expected to present the historical and theoretical contexts needed for us to understand the text assigned for the day. I also expect you to pose several questions for us to consider in our discussion for the day. Please bring a one-page handout with a brief outline of the historical and theoretical contexts you plan to discuss and the questions you would like us to consider.

*Short Paper:* You will write one short paper (4-6 pages, double-spaced), about one of the literary texts we are reading in this class. The paper will be on the same text you choose to do your oral presentation on, and it will be due the week following your presentation, so you can write your paper with the benefit of class discussion. The paper should focus on one of the themes or issues you found most interesting in the text, and it should incorporate at least one outside critical or theoretical source not assigned by me. You also are welcome to use sources I have assigned, if they are helpful to your argument.

*Historical Documents Assignment:* Since part of the purpose of this class is to understand literature from the 1890s in its historical context, I would like you to read and analyze some historical documents related to one of the novels we are reading. You can choose documents related to any of the historical/cultural issues raised by the texts, letters written by one of the authors we are reading, reviews of their work from the period, a portion of a biography or autobiography from the period, or any other historical documents you think are important. I will give you recommendations about which documents might be most helpful, but you should feel free to seek out others of interest to you. Once you have the documents, you will analyze

them in a 3-4 page paper. As the assignment due date draws closer, we will discuss this assignment in more detail. The assignment is due Tuesday, March 10, at the beginning of class.

*Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review:* The annotated bibliography is a list of 10 secondary sources, with brief summaries and analyses of the contents of those sources, on any topic related to this course. The literature review is a 2-3 page essay, summing up the materials in the annotated bibliography and analyzing how these materials can provide a framework for the seminar paper. I recommend that you choose the topic you plan to develop in your seminar paper, since annotating the sources will take significant time and effort. I'll give you more details about this assignment in class and provide samples of good annotated bibliographies and literature reviews closer to the due date. Due date: Tuesday, April 14, at the beginning of class.

*Seminar Paper:* The seminar paper is the major writing assignment for this class and acts as a capstone to the rest of the work you will do this term. Your paper should articulate a clear but complex argument about one of the texts we've read in this class, in relationship to historical and theoretical contexts of the 1890s. You should demonstrate a critical awareness of the topic you choose by incorporating a range of secondary (and possibly primary) sources; the short paper may serve as the initial inspiration for your seminar paper, and the historical documents assignment and the annotated bibliography should help you gather the research materials for your paper. You will be expected to meet with me to discuss your progress on the paper during the last week of classes, and you will need to submit an abstract with the final draft of your paper, which will be due on Tuesday, May 5 at 4:30pm.

### **Grading Scale:**

I will assign a numerical grade for all assignments. The numerical/letter grade correlation is as follows: 94-100=A, 90-93=A-, 87-89=B+, 84-86=B, 80-83=B-, 77-79=C+, 74-76=C, 70-73=C-, 60-69=D, 0-59=F. You must maintain a 3.0 GPA (B average) to maintain good standing in the graduate program.

### **Late Assignments:**

Expect deductions for late assignments. Typically, I deduct one-third of a letter grade (3.3333 points) per 24 hours; for example, a paper that earns a 92 (A-) but is a day late will drop to an 88 (B+). No papers or assignments submitted via email and no double submissions (same assignment for another class).

### **Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and may result in a failing grade for the assignment, a failing grade for the course, and/or university disciplinary action. For more details about the university's policy on this issue and other forms of academic dishonesty, see the Graduate Bulletin.

### **Electronic equipment in the classroom:**

Laptops and tablets are permitted for the purpose of referring to and discussing assigned readings. They should not be used for other purposes while in class, unless directed by me. No cell phones, pagers, tape recorders, or other electronic equipment in the classroom.

**Drop policy:**

If you do not want a “W” on your record and want a full tuition refund, you must drop the course before the end of the first week of classes. From week 2-10, you may drop, but you will receive a “W” and will not receive a full tuition refund.

**Disabled Support Services:**

Persons with disabilities are welcome in this classroom. If you have a disability and need specific accommodations, please register with DSS as soon as possible and then come talk to me. DSS is located in the Learning Resource Center, Room 224 in Daum Hall. The phone number is 338-4535.

**Class Schedule**

- T, 1/13: Introduction to Course
- T, 1/20: From MyLMU Connect: Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy*, Chapter 1, pp. 1-18  
From MyLMU Connect: Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Vol. 1, pp. 3-35  
Schaffer pp. 74-75 (Johnson), 75-77 (Symons), 77-79 (Douglas), 123-24 (Custance), Wilde (19-41)
- T, 1/27: Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Chapters 1-11
- T, 2/3: Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Chapters 12-end  
From MyLMU Connect: Sedgwick, Introduction and Chapter 1 (pp. 1-27) in *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire*  
From MyLMU Connect: Sedgwick, “Tales of the Avunculate” (pp. 191-209) in *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature*
- T, 2/10: Gissing, *The Odd Women*, Chapters 1-11
- We will meet in Special Collections, which is on the third floor of the library, to discuss the reading for the day, view rare books related to the authors we’re reading this semester, and discuss the Historical Documents Assignment.
- T, 2/17: Gissing, *The Odd Women*, Chapters 12-22  
From MyLMU Connect: Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” pp. 432-43  
From MyLMU Connect: Kaplan, “Is the Gaze Male?,” pp. 119-38
- T, 2/24: Gissing, *The Odd Women*, Chapters 23-end
- T, 3/3: From MyLMU Connect: Weedon, Chapter 1 (pp. 1-25) in *Feminism, Theory, and the Politics of Difference*  
From MyLMU Connect: Butler, Sections 1-4 in Chapter 1 (pp. 1-16) in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*  
Schaffer pp. 203-17 (Grand and Ouida), 236-39 (Meynell), 241-43 (Naden), d’Arcy (264-82), 107-10 (Field), 110-17 (Levy), 119-23 (Tomson)
- T, 3/10: **Historical Documents Assignment due at the beginning of class.** We’ll spend the first half of class sharing the results of the historical documents assignment

and discussing how to do the Annotated Bibliography/Literature Review assignment.

- T, 3/17: Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm*, Part I, Chapter 1-Part II, Chapter 2
- T, 3/24: Schreiner, *Story of an African Farm*, Part II, Chapters 3-14  
 From MyLMU Connect: Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," pp. 362-80  
 From MyLMU Connect: Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," pp. 44-50
- T, 3/31: No class—Spring Break—but work on reading for 4/11 and annotated bibliography/literature review
- T, 4/7: From MyLMU Connect: Auerbach, Chapter 5 (pp. 150-84) in *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*  
 From MyLMU Connect: Anderson, Intro (pp. 1-21) in *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces: The Rhetoric of Fallenness in Victorian Culture*  
 Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*, all four acts and the preface
- T, 4/14: **Annotated Bibliography/Literature Review is due at the beginning of class.**  
 We will spend the first half of class sharing our research findings and discussing how to proceed with the seminar paper.
- T, 4/21: Schaeffer pp. 418-40 (Freud), 328-36 (Ellis), 251-64 (Egerton)
- T, 4/28: Individual Conferences
- T, 5/5: **Seminar Papers (with Abstract) due in my mailbox by 4:30pm.**