Reading List
Victorian Literature (1832-1900)

Instructions

This PhD exam reading list has three parts:

I Core readings
II Genre readings
III Scholarly readings

Each student is required to read and know all selections included in Part I. In addition, each student is required to designate a genre specialization—poetry or fiction—and supplement the list provided below (in Part II) with his or her own selections. Finally, for Part III, each student is required to one scholarly cluster of his or her choosing (see p. 3 below). Students must consult with either Dr. Houston or Dr. Voskuil no later than November 1 (if exams are to be taken during the following spring semester) or April 1 (if exams are to be taken during the following fall semester).

I. Core Readings

Novels

Mary Elizabeth Braddon Lady Audley’s Secret
Charlotte Brontë Jane Eyre
Charles Dickens Bleak House
George Eliot Middlemarch
Thomas Hardy Tess of the d’Urbervilles

Poetry

Matthew Arnold “Dover Beach,” “Thyrsis,” “The Scholar Gipsy,” “The Buried Life”
E. Barrett Browning “The Cry of the Children,” “The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point,” Sonnets from the Portuguese (entire)
Robert Browning “Porphyria’s Lover,” “The Laboratory,” “Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister,” “My Last Duchess,” “The Bishop Orders His Tomb,” “Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came,” “Fra Lippo Lippi,” “Andrea del Sarto,” “A Toccata of Galuppi’s”
Gerard Manley Hopkins “God’s Grandeur,” “The Windhover,” “Pied Beauty,” “Hurrahing in Harvest,” “As Kingfishers Catch Fire,” “Carion comfort,” “No worst, there is none,” “I wake and feel the fell of death, not day”

Charles Swinburne  “The Triumph of Time,” “Ave Atque Vale”


Augusta Webster  “A Castaway,” “The Happiest Girl in the World”

*Prose*

Matthew Arnold  “The Function of Criticism”; “The Study of Poetry”; *Culture and Anarchy*, selections: Introduction, Chapter Two (“Doing as One Likes”), Chapter Four (“Hebraism and Hellenism”), Conclusion


John Stuart Mill  “Bentham”; “Coleridge”; “What is Poetry”; *The Subjection of Women*

John Ruskin  *Stones of Venice*, selections: Vol II, Chap. 6 (“The Nature of Gothic”); *Sesame and Lilies*

II. **Genre Readings**  Select *either* Option A or Option B

**A. Fiction**

Elizabeth Gaskell, *Mary Barton*
Bram Stoker, *Dracula*
William Thackeray, *Vanity Fair*

Guidelines: Choose eight additional works not already included in the core list. Two novellas or three to four short stories—by, say, writers like Doyle or Stevenson—may be grouped and considered as one work. Lists I and II combined should contain no more than three works by one author.

**B. Poetry**

E. Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh* (entire)
George Meredith, *Modern Love* (entire)
Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *The House of Life* (entire)

Guidelines: Choose eight additional longer works or clusters of poems (approximately equivalent in length to the core clusters) not already included in the core list. Lists I and II combined should contain no more than three works by one author.
III. Scholarly Readings

Everyone is required to read R. Gilmour, *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* (1993). In addition, select one of the clusters below.

A. **Social and Cultural History**
   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison* (1977)
   Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958)

B. **Gender Studies**

C. **Empire and Imperialism**

D. **Problems in Realism**
E. **Poetry and Poetics**
   Angela Leighton, *Victorian Women Poets: Writing Against the Heart* (1992)

F. **Design Your Own**
   In consultation with Dr. Voskuil or Dr. Houston, choose five books in a critical/theoretical area of your interest.

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