

English 3720: Victorian Prostitution and Its Enemies

Dr. Scott Rogers

T/TH 11:30 - 12:45 | SS 335

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Course

The 19th century witnessed a veritable explosion in the number of prostitutes in the major metropolitan areas—especially London. As a result, evangelist clergymen, lay people, middle-class women, feminists, politicians (and even a Prime Minister!) became involved in numerous projects designed to rid England of this “Great Social Evil.” These took many forms: anti-vice leagues of vigilantes roaming the streets; clergymen walking the streets at night, encouraging prostitutes to attend Midnight Meetings; houses of reclamation that sometimes provided cover for sweatshop labor; the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, which authorized any constable in certain towns to order any suspected prostitute to submit to “inspection” for venereal disease. We will focus our attention on three problems: first, the Victorian notion of the fallen woman; second, the reclamation movement and the literature associated with it; third, the Contagious Diseases Acts and their implications.

Textbooks

Elizabeth Gaskell, *Ruth*
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Aurora Leigh*
Many, *many* handouts

Assignments

Short Paper:	20%
Long Paper:	35%
Discussion Questions (10):	10%
Position Papers (5):	20%
Final Exam:	15%

Assignments in Detail

Short Paper: 5-7 pages.

Long Paper: 10-12 pages

Presentations are designed to provide broader historical and cultural context for the novels. Keep that in mind as you prepare yours.

Discussion Questions are to be typed and turned in. You should present your question at the beginning of class, and we will use it as a way to kick off the discussion.

Position Papers are to be two typed pages exactly and should present a pointed, cogent argument. Do not try to bite off too much in these. Find something small and argue it as fully as you can in two pages.

Policies

Attendance: You may miss class 4 times without penalty. Each absence after the 4th will result in a half letter grade reduction of your final grade.

Late work: I will not accept late work unless prior arrangements have been made with me. I will not accept any submissions via email. Get your work in and get it in on time.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the attempt to claim another's work as your own. The WSU Student Code defines plagiarism as "the unacknowledged (uncited) use of any other person or group's ideas or work" (Section 6-22, part IV, subsection D). Any attempt to claim credit another's work, in whole or in part, is a violation of this policy and is regarded by the English department as a serious offense, and plagiarism may result in failure of the courses.

I reserve the right to make changes to the syllabus to accommodate the dynamics of the class.

Accommodations

Any Student requiring accommodations or services due to a disability must contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in Room 181 of the Student Service Center. SSD can also arrange to provide materials (including this syllabus) in alternative formats if necessary.

The Order Of Things

Week 1	T 1/10	Introductions; Some artwork
	TH 1/12	Acton, "The Causes of Prostitution" (1857)
Week 2	T 1/17	MLK Day
	TH 1/19	Armstrong, "Female Penitentiaries" (1848); Selected letters and advertisements
Week 3	T 1/24	Greenwell, "Christina" (1851)
	TH 1/26	Greenwell, "Hardened in Good" (1862)
Week 4	T 1/31	Gaskell, <i>Ruth</i> (1853)
	TH 2/2	Gaskell
Week 5	T 2/7	Gaskell
	TH 2/9	Gaskell
Week 6	T 2/14	EBB, Aurora Leigh (1856)

	TH 2/16	EBB
Week 7	T 2/21	President's Day
	TH 2/23	EBB
Week 8	T 2/28	Carter, "Mercy for the Fallen. Two Sermons in Aid of the House of Mercy, Clewer" (1856)
	TH 3/2	Mulock, "from <i>A Woman's Thoughts About Women</i> " (1858)
Week 9	T 3/7	Rossetti, "Goblin Market" (1859)
	TH 3/9	Rossetti; Essay #1 Due
Week 10	T 3/14	Spring Break
	TH 3/16	Spring Break
Week 11	T 3/21	Rossetti, "Noble Sisters" (1860)
	TH 3/23	—, "Sister Maude" (1860)
Week 12	T 3/28	"A Nameless Theme" (1862)
	TH 3/30	"The Dream" (1862)
Week 13	T 4/4	Selections from <i>The Magdalen's Friend and Female Home's Intelligencer</i> (1860-64)
	TH 4/6	Felicia Skene, "Penitentiaries and Reformatories" (1865)
Week 14	T 4/11	Procter, "A Legend of Provence" (1866)
	TH 4/13	Procter, cont'd
Week 15	T 4/18	Hardy, "The Ruined Maid" (1866); Greenwood, from <i>The Seven Curses of London</i> (1869)
	TH 4/20	Webster, "A Castaway" (1870)
Week 16	T 4/25	Webster, "Matrimony as a Means of Livelihood" and "Husband-Hunting and Match-Making" (1879); Essay 2 Due
	TH 4/27	Butler, "Regulation—Cure—Prevention" (1870);
Final Examination	Tuesday, May 2 at 12:00 - 2:00pm	