

Literature of London
Spring 2011

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 10:30-11:45; Thursdays 2:45-4:00 and by appointment

Course Description: This course examines the role of London in the literary imagination of nineteenth-century Britain. A vibrant multi-class and multi-ethnic jigsaw puzzle, London was a “world city” at the center of the empire, the seat of crown and Parliament, and a place of both danger and opportunity. In addition to being the economic and political center of Great Britain, some authors viewed London as the nation’s *narrative* center as well. Together, we will explore how novelists and short-story writers depicted the city, how they envisioned the relationship between urban living and modern life, how they understood London’s inhabitants and their plots, and how they placed the city in ever-larger networks of stories reaching around the world.

Course Requirements: Four short essays (3-4 p. each) (15% each), final paper (6-8 p.) (30%), participation (10%)

Course Outline

London and narrative possibility

Jan. 27: Charles Dickens, from *Sketches by ‘Boz’, Illustrative of Every-day Life and Every-day People* (1836, 1839): “Preface to the First Edition of the First Series”; “Scenes” 1-5, 7-9, 11-13, 15, 17, 20, 22-24; “Characters” 1, 7-10, 12; “Tales” 10

Urban webs

Feb. 3: Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), Part I, Chapter 1 to Part II, Ch. 3
Henry Mayhew, from *London Labour and the London Poor* (1849-50) (moodle)
Maps of London (moodle)

Feb. 10: *Our Mutual Friend*, II: 4 – III: 10
John Ruskin, “The Two Boyhoods” (1860) (moodle)
Paintings and engravings of London scenes (moodle)
Victorian illustrations of Dickens novels (moodle)

Feb. 17: *Our Mutual Friend*, III:11 – end
Essay one due

Center of the United Kingdom

Feb. 24: Anthony Trollope, *Phineas Finn* (1869), volume I
Maps of the United Kingdom (moodle)
Victorian images of Scotland and Ireland (moodle)
Paintings of horses and hunting (moodle)

Mar. 3: *Phineas Finn*, volume II
Essay two due

World City

Mar. 24: George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), books 1-3

Mar. 31: *Daniel Deronda*, books 4-6
Victorian representations of the East End and of immigration (moodle)

Apr. 7: *Daniel Deronda*, books 7-8
Essay three due

Apr. 14: Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (1907), ch. 1-7

Apr. 21: *The Secret Agent*, ch. 8-13 and Author's Note

City of Danger and Adventure

Apr. 28: Arthur Conan Doyle, *Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892)
Illustrations and stills from recent film adaptations (moodle)
Paintings by Whistler and other artists (moodle)
Maps of Holmes's London (moodle)
Essay four due

May 6: **Final paper due**