

# EUH 4521: Victorian Britain: Culture, Society and Empire RVBB-C 1208

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Office Hours: M/W 1:00-2:15

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND PURPOSE

This class focuses on central themes and questions pertaining to the history of Great Britain and the British Empire during the Victorian era (1837 – 1901). A number of topics will be explored, including politics, economics, social life, religion, warfare, democracy, and empire. We will look at how the Victorians organized their lives, through notions of class, gender, privacy, etc., in an effort to understand the Victorian mindset. We will also look at how historians talk about the Victorian era in an effort to understand its legacy. Overall, this course will delve behind the stereotypical façade of the Victorians as stuffy, snobby, and prudish to uncover the real Victorians and their world.

## COURSE OBJECTIVES

You will be equipped to critically engage with questions such as:

- What ideas and values shaped 19<sup>th</sup> century society in Great Britain and the British Empire?
- How did Victorian Britons view their colonial subjects, and vice versa?
- Why did Britain impose the opium trade on China?
- What led Britain to engage in war across the globe and what was the impact of warfare on Victorian society?
- What were the driving forces behind the Chartist movement?

By the end of the semester, you should be able to discuss why certain events and people are important and have a sense of how history shapes our contemporary world.

After completing this class, students will be able to:

- Course Objective 1 (CO1). Assess key events, central themes, and questions pertaining to British history during the Victorian era.
- CO2. Identify the major events, persons, and ideas of and about the history of the Victorian Era in British history.
- CO3. Understand the military, political, diplomatic, technological, social, and cultural interactions that affect decisions in British domestic and imperial history of 19<sup>th</sup> century.

- CO4. Gain experience reading and analyzing written arguments by engaging with a variety of types of sources.
- CO5. Learn and apply the techniques of writing an argumentative, thesis-driven and evidence-based paper.
- CO6. Demonstrate the ability to examine behavioral, social, and cultural issues from a variety of points of view.
- CO7. Demonstrate an understanding of basic social and behavioral science concepts and principles used in the analysis of behavioral, social, and cultural issues, past, present, local and global.

## GLOBAL LEARNING COURSE OUTCOMES

This is also a Discipline-specific Global Learning course that counts towards your Global Learning graduation requirement. One of the themes of this course will therefore be the ways that different groups of people interacted over the period covered by the course. Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to do the following:

- CO8. Construct an evidence-based argument demonstrating how local, regional, national, and global events shaped the interactions of two or more groups in Victorian Britain and the Empire. (Global Awareness)
- CO9. Construct an evidence-based argument that integrates multiple perspectives on an issue in Victorian Britain and the Empire. (Global Perspective)
- CO10. Consider different perspectives on a problem or controversy related to British Victorian history and attempt to reach a resolution about it. (Global Engagement)

In order to meet these requirements, you must achieve a minimum 70/100 or a grade of 'C'.

**COURSE PREREQUISITES:** There are no prerequisites for this course.

## COURSE STRUCTURE

Class assignments and discussions will help you acquire many of the habits of inquiry shared by historians and researchers. These include, but are not limited to, college-level reading comprehension, source analysis, writing skills, and academic discourse.

**Essays & Gobbet Exercises** - These assignments are thesis-based, argumentative, and evidence-based and will increase in complexity. I have designed writing assignments to give you practice and develop skills in writing about history and considering multiple perspectives from the past. Essay assignments are self-explanatory, the real question you probably have reading this is *what the heck is a "gobbet"?*

A "gobbet" (a word that also means a little piece of raw flesh) is a traditional pedagogic exercise that consists of a small excerpt of a primary source set for students to comment on and to explain the historical significance. Further details about gobbets and how to write them can be found in the Course Reader and the "Gobbets Made Easy" document in the Modules folder on Canvas. The

assessment rubrics for essays and gobbet exercises are provided in the description of each individual assignment.

**Readings and Reading Quizzes** – There are required reading assignments for this course. The required readings are intended to provide you with important background information and to be used as reference material for your writing assignments. In order to test your reading and comprehension of the material, there will be a total of 5 reading quizzes. These quizzes will consist of 5 short-answer essay questions and you will have 60 minutes to complete them. The deadline for completing a Reading Quiz is Friday at 11:59 pm in the module week in which the Quiz is scheduled.

**Primary Source Discussions** – There will be a weekly Primary Source Discussion (PSD) forum (i.e. reddit, but constructive). These group discussions will consist of a primary source – a different type every week - that you will be working with on your academic journey at FIU and beyond. The discussions require you to analyze these primary sources, along with your fellow classmates, by replying to one another in the thread and helping each other develop a more nuanced understanding of the materials assigned and the topics in general. Discussion forums will remain open for the entire week (Monday – Sunday) and you are expected to take part in all 7 discussions for class participation credit. Before getting started, please be sure to read the **General Guide & Tips for Primary Source Discussions (PSD)** listed under Student Resources in the Modules folder.

## EXPECTATIONS OF THIS COURSE

This is an online course, which means all of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same as for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.

### Students are expected to:

- Read the syllabus!
- Review and follow the course calendar:
  - Students must stay on top of things especially in an online course. Students are responsible for completing assignments and submitting all work on time.
- Login to the course website daily to check for updates or messages
- Complete all course assignments on time:
  - All course content like readings and assignments are identified in Canvas.
- Interact online with instructor and peers in a respectful manner.
- Respond to Canvas and email messages within two days.

### The instructor will:

- Grade written assignments within 14 days.
- Respond to Canvas and email messages within two days

## REQUIRED TEXTS

Susie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Routledge, 2017). ISBN: 9781138906105

Colin Matthew, *The Nineteenth Century: The British Isles 1815-1901*, (Oxford University Press, 2000). ISBN: 9780198731436

In addition to the above text, you will be provided with readings that will help you understand the views of people who lived, loved, worked, and experienced the periods under discussion. The sources afford you multiple perspectives of historic events and give voice to those often left out of the historical narrative. These assigned readings, articles, chapters, and source material, are available on Canvas, in the Course Reader, or on the following webpages.

[IHSP - 19th Century Britain](#)

[The Victorian Dictionary](#)

[The Victorian Web](#)

The materials listed above are the core set of readings, but students are expected to **read more widely** over the course of the semester. An expanded selection of useful books and articles can be found in the Course Reader.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### WEEK 1 – Introduction

Read: *The Nineteenth Century* – Introduction; Syllabus & Course Reader; *To the Queen's Private Apartments*

- Primary Source Discussion (PSD): Open from August 24<sup>th</sup> until August 30<sup>th</sup>
  - Discussion Topic: Triumph of Steam and Electricity (1897)
- Reading Quiz #1 – August 26<sup>th</sup>

### WEEK 2 – Revolutions & Ideologies

Read: *Understanding the Victorians* – Chapter 2; *The Nineteenth Century* – Chapter 2.

- PSD: Open from August 31<sup>st</sup> until September 6<sup>th</sup>
  - Discussion Topic: Chartism - A Failed Revolution
- Reading Quiz #2 – September 2<sup>nd</sup>

**Gobbet Exercise I – Due September 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 p.m.**

### WEEK 3 – Society & Culture

Read: *Understanding the Victorians* – Chapters 5 & 6; *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe* Chapters 3 & 5.

- PSD: Open from September 7<sup>th</sup> until September 13<sup>th</sup>
  - Discussion Topic: Victorian Respectability
- Reading Quiz #3 – September 9<sup>th</sup>

#### WEEK 4 – Science & Technology

Read: *Understanding the Victorians* – Chapter 14; *Railroad Space & Railway Time*; *Victorian Technology* – Chapters 3, 4, & 6.

- PSD: Open from September 14<sup>th</sup> until September 20<sup>th</sup>
  - Discussion Topic: Railways & Time

**Essay I – Due September 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 p.m.**

#### WEEK 5 – Empire at Home and Abroad

Read: *Understanding the Victorians* – Chapters 3 & 4; *Victorian Visions of Global Order: Empire and International Relations in Nineteenth-Century Political Thought* – Chapters 1 & 2; *Queen Victoria and India*.

- PSD: Open from September 21<sup>st</sup> until September 27<sup>th</sup>
  - Discussion: Victoria's India Proclamation - 1858
- Reading Quiz #4 – September 23<sup>rd</sup>

**Gobbet Exercise II – Due September 25<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 p.m.**

#### WEEK 6 – International Relations

Read: *The Nineteenth Century* Chapter 5; *Victorian England: Aspects of English and Imperial History* pp. 331-396.

- PSD: Open from September 28<sup>th</sup> until October 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Discussion Topic: The Trent Affair
- Reading Quiz #5 – September 30<sup>th</sup>

#### WEEK 7 – Conclusions: The Victorian Mythos

Read: *Understanding the Victorians* – Chapter 12; *Vice & the Victorians* – Chapters 1 & 2; *The Nineteenth Century – Conclusion*.

- Discussion Board: Open from October 5<sup>th</sup> until October 11<sup>th</sup>
  - Discussion Topic: Rude Britannia Documentary

**Essay II – Due October 9<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 p.m.**

#### DATES TO REMEMBER:

- **Week 2** – Gobbet Exercise Due (September 4)

- **Week 4** – 1<sup>st</sup> Essay Due (September 18)
- **Week 5** – Gobbet Exercise Due (September 25)
- **Week 7** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Essay Due (October 9)

## COURSE COMMUNICATION

Canvas Inbox is a private and secure text-based communication system which occurs within a course among its Course members. Users must log on to send, receive, or read messages. **It is required that students check their messages routinely to ensure up-to-date communication.**

### Communication Courtesy:

It is good practice to check Canvas and your FIU email account at least once within a 24-hour period. All members of the class are expected to follow rules of common courtesy in all email messages, threaded discussions and chats.

### Zoom Meetings:

Zoom is a video conference tool that you can use to interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, chatting, broadcasting live video/audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities. We will be utilizing this tool to conduct roundtables and office hours.

### [Zoom Test Meeting Room](#)

**Use the link above to access the Zoom Test Meeting Room.** This meeting room is available to test out the software before joining an actual session.

Reference the links below to access Zoom student tutorials to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting room, and share your screen.

- [Download Zoom](#)
- [Joining a Zoom meeting](#)
- [Enabling and Testing Audio & Webcam](#)
- [Chat \(Professors\)- Students look at attendees section for instructions](#)
- [How Do I Share My Screen](#)

## GRADING POLICY

Students must ensure that **all assignments** are typed or word-processed. Essays and Gobbet Exercise must be submitted via Canvas.

**Essays** – Each essay should answer a question chosen from the list provided in the Course Reader. Essays should be 1500 to 2000 words in length (footnotes are included in the word count, but the bibliography is not).

The **bibliography** must contain a minimum of six items and should normally include: works from the course reader, the set texts, and at least one primary source. Essays with a weak bibliography will be penalized. Please check with me for appropriate internet sources approved for the course. Essays without footnotes and a bibliography will earn an automatic fail mark.

- For tips on Essays see the *Writing an Essay* document (Student Resources)

**Gobbet Exercises** – Two gobbet commentaries are to be submitted.

- Gobbet topics can be found at the end of the Course Reader.
- Each of the gobbet commentaries must be in the range of 500-800 words in length (no more or fewer).
- For tips on Gobbets see the *Gobbets Made Easy* document (Student Resources).

The final word count includes footnotes but excludes the bibliography. Students need to adhere to the world limit for each assignment and each piece of written work to be submitted with a clear indication of the word count.

- **1 point** will be deducted for pieces of coursework that are above (or below) 10% of the word limit e.g. 150 – 200 words.
- **1 point** will be deducted per additional 10% over (or under) the word limit e.g. 150 – 200 words.
- **10 points** will be deducted from all late work submitted past the due date and **5 points** will be deducted **per subsequent day**. Late assignments will not be accepted after the 6<sup>th</sup> day and will receive a zero.
- **Extensions** – If you are unable to meet the assignment deadlines, due to unforeseen circumstances, you **MUST** make a formal extension request via email.
  - Assignment extension requests should be submitted as early as possible (as soon as you know that you will not be able to finish the assignment in time) but at the latest by 11:59pm of the original due date of the assignment.
  - **Acceptable** reasons for an extension are:
    - Medical or mental health grounds
    - Unforeseen work commitments, e.g. work not part of usual duties, or that is unexpected or unavoidable
    - Other extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control, e.g. death in the family, victim of crime.
  - **Unacceptable** reasons for an extension are:
    - Inability to have an assignment word processed by the due date
    - Other assignments due on or about the due date
    - Disk or IT failure, unless publicly documented (Remember to back up your work and to back up often)
    - Foreseeable work commitments
  - **Supporting documentation required**
    - You must provide a scanned copy of supporting documentation with your application for an extension.

- If you do not have the documentation at the time when you make your application, you should include a note to this effect in your application.
- You should forward your documentation as soon as possible.
- **Please note:** Repeated application for assignment extensions is an indication of not being able to cope with the workload.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT**

The overall semester grade students receive for the course will be calculated as follows:

- 70% derives from analytical assignments: *Essays = 50%; Gobbets = 20%*
- 30% derives from class participation: *Reading Quizzes = 20%; PSD = 10%*

**Grading Scale:**

Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%	Letter	Range%
A	95 or above	B	83 - 86	C	70 - 76
A-	90 - 94	B-	80 - 82	D	60 - 69
B+	87 - 89	C+	77 - 79	F	59 or less

**Rounding:**

The final course grade will not be automatically rounded, so an 89.9 is still a B+. However, if a clear effort has been made during the semester (e.g. completing assignments in a timely manner, class participation, good attendance etc.) and the grade difference is equal to .5 or greater, I will consider rounding the final grade up to the next whole number.

**Resources that can help you excel in this class:**

*Writing in History program:* provides assistance with papers and other written assignments. Note that tutors have specialized knowledge of writing for History classes. For more info: [Link](#)

*Center for Excellence in Writing:* tutors students in composition skills, including grammar, organization, style, spelling, punctuation, and editorial requirement (footnotes, bibliography, etc.). Appointments required. For more info: [Link](#)

*Center for Academic Success:* provides free tutoring for homework assignments, ongoing class work, mid-terms, and finals. For more info: [Link](#)

**CLASS GUIDELINES**

**Scheduling Conflicts:**

Please notify me in writing by the second week of the term about any known or potential extracurricular conflicts (such as religious observances, graduate or medical school interviews, or

team activities). I will try my best to help you with making accommodations, but I cannot promise them in all cases.

### **Accommodations for students with disabilities:**

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-548-3732 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190.

Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course.

For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

*Please see me as soon as possible if you need particular accommodations, and we will work out the necessary arrangements.*

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES**

### **University policy on Academic Misconduct:**

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

### **Academic Integrity and Ethics**

Cheating on exams and plagiarism are examples of violations in the realm of ethics and integrity. Honesty, integrity, and ethical behavior are of great importance in all facets of life. They are so important that it is generally assumed that one has learned and internalized these qualities at an early age. As a result, these issues rarely get explicitly addressed by the time one gets to be a university student. However, it cannot be overstated just how important honesty is to the academic enterprise.

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

**Academic Misconduct includes:**

- **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not.
- **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. A student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism. Using writing and research that is not your own without properly quoting or citing it is a serious academic offense, which could earn you a failing grade for this class, a permanent note on your academic record, and expulsion from the university. It is not worth the risk. See [FIU’s Standards of Conduct](#) for more details. Also, feel free to contact me if you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

DO NOT COPY

### **Disclaimer**

This syllabus represents my current plans and objectives. As we go through the semester, those plans may need to change to enhance the class learning opportunity. Such changes, communicated clearly, are not unusual and should be expected.

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