Dear offer holder,

In this pack you will find the following documents. Please read them all carefully.

1. An introduction to the Early English Literature course at Oxford.
2. An English Language and Literature Reading List.
3. An introduction to tutorials and Pembroke.
4. An introduction to the Approaches to Literature course at Oxford.
5. A reading list for Literature in English, 1830 to 1910.
6. A reading list for Literature in English, 1910 to Present Day.
Covering a period of some seven centuries, Prelims Paper 2 gives you the opportunity to study the beginnings of English literature from the time at which Christian missionaries introduced technologies of writing to the Anglo-Saxon inhabitants of Britain in the seventh century. Most of the work for this paper will focus on Old English literature produced during the Anglo-Saxon period (c. 650–c. 1100), but we shall also have the opportunity to look at the literature produced in England in the period after the Norman Conquest in 1066 and consider the effects that the Norman invasion might have had upon the history of English literature.

Work for this paper is divided between classes aimed at developing your appreciation of the language of early medieval texts and tutorials in which we shall consider thematic and contextual aspects of the literature. This structure is replicated in your end of year prelims exam, in which you will be required to write two essays on a range of topics/texts and one critical commentary on the language of an extract from the set texts. For the Old English period there are four set texts, all poems, which we shall be studying in detail over the course of the year: *The Dream of the Rood*, *The Wanderer*, *The Battle of Maldon*, and an extract from the long poem *Beowulf*. Whilst you will need to know these texts particularly well, we shall also be looking at a wider range of early medieval English texts, and you are encouraged to read as widely as possible in the literature of the period covered and to familiarize yourself with the historical contexts from which it originates.

Detailed reading lists for this paper will be provided in Michaelmas Term but it would be helpful to start thinking about the literature of this period now. Below are some starting points which you should explore:

- The most famous work of literature from the period covered by this paper is the Old English poem *Beowulf*. You should read a modern English translation of this poem as soon as possible to get a feel for the style of Old English poetry. There are many published translations (including the recently published one by Pembroke alumnus J. R. R. Tolkien), but I would recommend *Beowulf: A Prose Translation*, trans. E. Talbot Donaldson, ed. Nicholas Howe (New York: Norton Critical Edition, 2002), which contains some excellent background information and some critical perspectives on the poem, which you should certainly also read.
- A short, but valuable, introduction to the history and culture of the earlier period studied for this paper is John Blair’s *The Anglo-Saxon Age: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: OUP, 2000). Two further accessible studies of the literature of this period are Hugh Magennis’ *The Cambridge Introduction to Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011) and Mark C. Amodio’s *The Anglo-Saxon Literature Handbook* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013). It would be very useful if you could look through one or more of these in preparation for this paper. For the post-Conquest period, the best short introduction is Elaine Treharne’s *Living Through Conquest: The Politics of Early English, 1020–1220* (Oxford: OUP, 2012).
The set edition for the Old English texts that you will need is Bruce Mitchell and Fred C. Robinson, *A Guide to Old English*: Eighth Edition (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012). **You need to purchase a copy of this before the beginning of Michaelmas Term.** You may wish to begin your preparation for the language element of this paper by looking at the online ‘Introduction to Traditional Grammar’ on the University of Southampton website ([http://www.southampton.ac.uk/~wpwt/notes/grammar](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/~wpwt/notes/grammar)).
This document provides the lists of reading to be covered in preparation for your first term in Oxford. We are also attaching a separate introductory explanation of the tutorial teaching system, which outlines what is expected of you.

The English course in Year 1 consists of 4 papers (Oxford nomenclature for examined parts of the course). During your first term (Michaelmas) you will be studying Paper 3 (Literature in English from 1830 to 1910) and doing some introductory work for Paper 2 (Early Medieval Literature), as well as doing part of Paper 1 (Introduction to Language and Literature) focussing on English language in different contexts. Paper 4 (Literature in English from 1910 to the Present Day) will start in Hilary term (the second term), and will run alongside essay work for Paper 2 and the second half of Paper 1 (which focusses on literary critical methods and concepts).

A detailed course outline for the English degree (with specific details of the first year) can be found at http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/prospective-undergraduates/course-structure
Before you arrive you should make sure you have looked in detail at the specifications document for your course (see the web address above and click on the headings ‘First Year Course’) and then the section headed Programme Specifications http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/prospective-undergraduates/programme-specifications.html.

This gives full information on methods, objectives, and course details.

Tutorial and class teaching for the first two terms will take place mainly in college. Lectures normally take place in the English Faculty on Manor Road, but there will also be a core element – especially for Paper 1 – delivered through lectures given at the Examination Schools on the High St. Lecture lists will be given to you on your arrival in Oxford, as will information about tutorials and classes for the term. Read the Lecture List carefully to confirm the location for particular lectures or lecture series.

In preparation for your first year, you need to read in advance as many of the primary texts as you can get through from the attached reading lists. Please prioritise the first term, and then the larger texts for Hilary Term. Get into the habit now of reading critically and carefully, and of making notes on anything you read, either in the margin of the text, or the end-papers (as long as it’s not a library book!), or on a separate sheet of paper, or electronically. If you are reading electronic texts, use the note-taking function. You will find that reading rigorously and attentively during the vacations will makes the teaching term much easier.

You might at this stage find it useful to buy J. A. Cuddon’s *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* or *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms* ed. Chris Baldick. If you feel in need of brushing up on the basics of prosody (poetic form and metre), it would be a good idea to read Jeffrey Wainwright, *Poetry: The Basics*, 3rd edn (2015). It will be available freely online via the Bodleian Library once you have your Bodleian card (issued to you at the start of your first term). Malcolm Hebron’s *Mastering the Language of Literature* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004) is also a useful purchase, especially in view of the commentary element it contains (this forms part of the number of the papers which you will cover in the first year, as well as later). Ideally, we should like you to at least skim read two books about Literary Studies, Terry Eagleton’s *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (1983) and *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism, and Theory* by Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle.
Both are available in paperback.

**Note taking as you read:**

As always, you should read primary and secondary texts with a pen or pencil in your hand in order to make notes. This will not just give you material to talk about in classes or tutorials, but will help you to develop your own, independent arguments about the texts. You will find that you are particularly dependent on your annotation of long novels, because you are unlikely to have time to reread them during term. So, try to develop a way of marking your own copies up (do not write on library copies) that gives you easy access to a wide range of ways of thinking about them. One method is to use the blank pages and inside cover at the front of the edition to keep track of topics. (This has the advantage of keeping everything in the one volume.) You should have entries for major characters, for the narrator (if there is one), for significant examples of narrative technique (flashback, prolepsis, ellipsis …), and for topics. The texts themselves will to a large extent guide you in this latter category, but here are some standard examples: gender, class, race, death, marriage, servants, money, colonialism, war, pity, anger, elegy, love (of various kinds). So, you will end up with entries which look something like:

servants—51, 65, 72-4, 113. [And marks in the margin on the corresponding page.]

One last tip: don’t invest in highlighter pens for marking up the texts. It’s a waste of time juggling different pens, and impossible to rethink the prioritisation of what you’ve marked up when you go back to the passage later. A simple mark in the margin or line down the side of the text is clearer, more efficient, and more easily changed. Above all: enjoy reading. Omnivorously but critically.

You should of course get into the habit of using a good English dictionary (not a concise one). The complete *Oxford English Dictionary* will be available to you electronically and free of charge, once you are at Oxford. Do get in touch with us if you have any urgent questions—otherwise we’ll see you in October. In the meantime, we hope you have a good summer.

Best wishes,

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READING LISTS

Paper 1: Section A

This paper is an introduction to critical concepts and problems in both literature and language, and will introduce you to ways of reading and analysis which will be useful in all your subsequent work on literature and language. It has two parts: Section A: English Language; Section B: Approaches to Literature. The paper as a whole will be examined by a portfolio in your third term (Trinity). There will also be plenty of time for revision sessions early in that term before the question paper is issued.

Core texts: Michaelmas Term 2016: these texts** must be read before you arrive in Oxford


Additional background reading:

ENGLISH AT PEMBROKE

Tutorial preparation and workload

The tutorial is at the centre of an Oxford education. It requires all students to have read widely on the topic set for the week and to have produced a piece of work – in the form of an essay, commentary, or oral presentation as set by the tutor concerned -- in advance.

Reading widely and allowing yourself time to think about the topic is important; you should be working, on average, an 8-hour day during term. How you organize that day is up to you. Tutorials are the non-negotiable elements in your timetable. Most – but not all -- lectures are optional, and we strongly advice attendance at c. 5-6 per week (shaping a programme that will best fit the range of topics you and your tutor plan to cover during the term).

Extra-curricular activities must fit around your primary commitments. Make sure you are not taking on more than you can handle, but equally make sure you are doing things that take you away from your desk, keep you healthy, and will give you a sufficiently rich hinterland over the course of your university career.

Writing the tutorial essay:

You should finish your reading of primary and secondary materials in time to plan, as well as to write (and read through), your essay. The first paragraph should identify the subject of the essay in sufficient detail to make it interesting to your reader; it should also isolate the primary problems of interpretation as you see them. Where a prompt question or quotation has been given, the opening paragraph should consider that prompt carefully, cross-examine it, and perhaps challenge its terms. The core of the essay should develop and, where relevant, adjudicate on those problems in clearly differentiated paragraphs.

It is generally a good idea to place the simpler matters near the start of the essay, in order to allow the argument to develop in complexity and interest. The conclusion should not be a straight summary or reiteration of what has been said (as would be valid in many Social Science and Science subjects): it should offer a stylish bringing together of the most important insights in the essay and/or a satisfying twist on the original problem. ‘Stylish’ does not mean ‘rhetorical’: well-argued, logical, informed criticism is greatly preferable to wind-baggery. A good essay is a carefully honed argument, using evidence appropriately to support and develop different aspects of the argument in relation to the question.
The essay should not summarise plot or content, and it should not seek to incorporate everything you have found out. Keep a full set of notes on your week’s reading that will be your reference point for future revision and reference. The essay should concentrate on answering the problem it has set for itself, and make use of the views of critics in so far as they serve that purpose. Only cite a critic when they are saying something you could not say on your own authority, or offering a well-worded insight that you can nuance or that you wish to contest. Critics are often most useful when they seem to you interestingly wrong, or interestingly not-quite-right.

Always attribute material and quotations and make sure that your notes differentiate between your own ideas and comments and those of critics. Plagiarism always incurs penalties, even when this is done unintentionally. Underline titles of books and journals (or put in italics).

Stretch your vocabulary, where relevant: you need to develop sufficient knowledge of technical terms to give an accurate account of language use, genre, prosody, literary theory, and so forth. You also need to develop a sense of where pithy directness of judgement is more effective than technical description. Your style should increasingly feel like (and be) your own. Avoid clichés, undue colloquialism, vague personal appreciation of a piece of literature, and ‘Therefore, it can be seen that …’

There isn’t a rigid answer to the question of length. 4-5 sides of typed A4, double or 1.5 spaced (never single line spacing please) is usually about right (c.2,000 -2,500 words), but your tutor may impose different requirements, so check if you are unsure. Some tutors will request hand-written essays on the grounds that most of you will have to hand-write your examination papers at the end of the first (and the third) year, so there are substantial benefits to ‘keeping your hand in’, in this respect. Please number all pages of the essay, write your name at the top of the page, and leave ample margins for tutor’s comments.

Your essay should conclude with a list of the books you have read. This should be reasonably professional in form, and always include author, title and (at least) date of publication. When you cite a particular work, give the publication details and the page cited in a footnote. Details of how to reference are given in the Undergraduate Handbooks. Go to www.english.ox.ac.uk -> Current Students and Staff (Undergraduates) -> Course Handbooks and Specifications, or see the essential Cite Them Right by Richard Pears and Graham Shield (10th edn, 2016).

Most tutors are happy to have essays emailed to them, though handwritten ones will need to be handed in at the Porter’s Lodge for the attention of the relevant tutor, or (by agreement) scanned.
Most tutors will want to see work before the tutorial but this can vary; some are happy for you to bring the essay to the tutorial. If in doubt, check with the tutor.

**The tutorial itself**

Punctuality is important. Essays must be on time, and you must be on time for your tutorial session (preferably waiting outside the door a few minutes in advance).

Most tutorials are paired (i.e. the tutor meets with two students for an hour), but there may be occasions on which students’ choices of specialist options or the teaching needs of particular individuals make it sensible to see some students in a 3 and others as ‘singletons’ for a week.

The tutorial should be a conversation between tutor and students, in the course of which all participants will develop a deeper understanding of the problems addressed in your written work—with a chance, also, to broaden out and discuss other important aspects of the subject in hand. The quality of the tutorial will be substantially affected by how much work you have done in preparation, and by how much thought you put into your essay. A good tutorial should be invigorating for all those involved.

The tutorial is not the occasion for a mini-lecture by the tutor. Obviously, the tutor will correct errors of fact and misunderstanding, and suggest ways to improve your argument or interpretation. However, tutors will also try to test the strength of your argument by asking you questions not considered in your essay, and moving the discussion in new directions. Much of the conversation is likely to be advanced (on either side) by observations in the form ‘Yes, but …’. The essential thing is to be positively engaged in the process. In most cases, the work you do for tutorials will not form part of your summative assessment (it is not examined, and in the main you will not be given a mark): it is a chance for you to try new methodological approaches, new ideas, new styles, and to receive constructive feedback—which may at times also mean appropriately robust feedback.

**Feedback:**

Tutors employ different methods and styles of teaching: some will mark all written work in advance; others will mark one of the essays for a paired tutorial and ask the other student to read their work aloud. In either model, you can expect to receive feedback on your work in written and oral form on the day of the tutorial or very soon after (certainly within a week, since the feedback should influence how you go about your next piece of work). Read the comments on essays carefully and use them to improve or extend your command of the material or essay technique.
If you are unhappy with the way in which your tutorials are progressing, or with the quality or intelligibility of the feedback you are receiving, it is vital that you try to express this to the tutor in the first instance. If there is ever a serious problem with tutorial quality (we hope there will not be) you can take your concerns to the Academic Office.

Lynda Mugglestone and Ushashi Dasgupta
Paper 1 (Introduction to English Language and Literature) is examined by coursework in the final term (Trinity) of this year. You’ll be asked to submit two essays: one, on linguistics and the history of the language, the other, on literary theory. Paper 1A (Approaches to Language) is taught when you arrive in Michaelmas Term, and you should spend your summer getting ready for this side of the course.

You’ll attend classes and tutorials across Hilary and Trinity Terms for Paper 1B (Approaches to Literature). If you do want to get some preliminary reading done for Paper 1B, start with Peter Barry’s Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory. If you can, keep an eye out for the most recent edition. This is a helpful, accessible and comprehensive guide to most of the topics you’ll cover in your classes. Many key theoretical works have been collected in anthologies: either Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan’s Literary Theory: An Anthology or David Lodge and Nigel Wood’s Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader would be good places to go.
Welcome to Pembroke. We very much look forward to seeing you in October.

Much of your attention in the first term (Michaelmas) will be focussed on Prelims Paper 3, which roughly covers the Victorian period. You’ll attend a mix of tutorials and classes in College, and go to the English Faculty for lectures. For tutorials, most of your weekly work will go towards writing an essay, which we’ll use as a starting point for our conversation; for classes, you’ll have preparatory reading to complete, and, in some weeks, a very short presentation to put together.

In this pack, you’ll find:

(1) A preliminary list of nineteenth-century novels, poems and plays, which you’ll be asked to read for the course.
(2) A list of helpful anthologies, readers, introductions, and electronic resources. You’ll have free access to many of these once you’re assigned an Oxford account.
(3) A list of reading recommendations for those of you who are interested in literary theory—specifically, the ways in which theory might illuminate Victorian fiction and poetry.

The First Year syllabus is demanding in its scope, and it’s important that you do as much preparation as possible before you join us in Oxford. Victorian novels are notoriously long and densely populated, and they reward slow and careful reading. Over the summer, you’re encouraged to read extensively, and to complete as much of the primary reading listed here as you can. When there are multiple options given, you might aim for three long works. If you’re able to arrive with a good knowledge of the primary texts, you can spend your first term revisiting them, studying supplementary pieces and critical material, clarifying your ideas, thinking, and writing.

You’ll receive a more detailed reading list, with a week-by-week breakdown of the course, when you arrive. Don’t worry too much about criticism, theory or essay topics for now—we’ll have time to go through everything once you’re here. Your priority this summer should be to read and enjoy the literature itself.

A quick word, too, on editions: do try to get your hands on reputable editions of your primary texts. They’ll be free from textual errors and will have a huge range of material to aid you in your understanding—introductions, appendices, extensive explanatory notes, and details of publication history. Penguin, Oxford World’s Classics, and Norton are all good, and some individual recommendations are given below.

As you’ll come to see, there’s a fair bit of flexibility built into the reading list. If you find something particularly interesting, feel free to explore further or to ask for suggestions. We’ll have plenty of opportunity to tailor your research over the eight weeks.

Happy reading. Until Michaelmas!
Classes

For most of your classes, a collection of extracts will be circulated the week before. However, you may want to get started on the primary reading for our first class, on the dramatic monologue:

Start with Augusta Webster, ‘Circe’ (1870), making sure you’ve read it closely. Alongside this, please cover as many of the following as you can: Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ‘The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point’ (1847); Robert Browning, ‘Porphyria’s Lover’, (1836), ‘My Last Duchess’ (1842), ‘Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister’ (1842), ‘Fra Lippo Lippi’ (1855), ‘Caliban Upon Setebos’ (1864); Elizabeth Campbell, ‘A Prison Cell’ (1865); Amy Levy, ‘Xantippe’ (1881), ‘A Minor Poet’ (1884); Christina Rossetti, ‘The Convent Threshold’ (1858); Dante Gabriel Rossetti, ‘Jenny’ (1870); AC Swinburne, ‘Anactoria’ (1866), ‘Hymn to Proserpine’ (1866); Alfred Lord Tennyson, ‘Locksley Hall’ (1842), ‘Ulysses’ (1842); Augusta Webster, ‘A Castaway’ (1870), ‘The Happiest Girl in the World’ (1870).

Tutorials

Tutorial 1: The Brontës

Start with Charlotte Brontë, *Villette* (1853).
Read alongside any of the following: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847); Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and/or *The Complete Poems*; Anne Brontë, *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848); the juvenilia (try, for example, the Penguin edition of Charlotte Brontë’s childhood writings, ed. Juliet Barker).

Tutorial 2: Poetry

Many of the poems for this course are collected in Francis O’Gorman’s *Victorian Poetry: An Annotated Anthology*.

You’ll have several options this week. You may choose to focus your attention on either—


Or—

The Pre-Raphaelites and their circle: DG Rossetti, ‘The Burden of Nineveh’ (1856), The House of Life (1870/1881); Christina Rossetti, ‘In an Artist’s Studio’ (composed 1856, pub. 1896), ‘An Apple-Gathering’ (1861), ‘Goblin Market’ (1862), ‘Monna Innominata’ (1881, a sonnet sequence); Elizabeth ‘Lizzie’ Siddal, ‘Lust of the Eyes’, ‘A Year and a Day’, ‘Dead Love’ (published posthumously, in the 1890s). Don’t forget to take a look at some Pre-Raphaelite art if you’re interested in studying this group; the Ashmolean has an impressive selection. For context, Robert Buchanan’s ‘The Fleshly School of Poetry’ (1871); John Ruskin’s Modern Painters (2 vols, 1843 and 1846); and Walter Pater’s Appreciations (1889) are useful reading.

You might also want to place Christina Rossetti alongside Elizabeth Barrett Browning: the key text for Barrett Browning is Aurora Leigh (1856).

Or—


**Tutorial 3: Charles Dickens**

Start with Bleak House (1852-3).

After that, you have some options. If you enjoyed Bleak House and would like to read more widely from Dickens’s fiction and journalism, you could try Sketches by Boz (1833-6), Dombey and Son (1846-8), David Copperfield (1849-50), Little Dorrit (1855-7), or Great Expectations (1860-1), to name a few. If you’re interested in the literature of the city, choose from Dickens, Sketches by Boz (1833-6), and, for fascinating points of comparison, Henry Mayhew, London Labour and the London Poor (published in book form in 1851, and available in a recent selection for Oxford University Press); James Thomson, The City of Dreadful Night (1874); Amy Levy, The Romance of a Shop (1888) and A London Plane-Tree (1889); Alice Meynell, London Impressions (1898). If you want to explore the ways in which Victorian novels channeled social debates, including those about the ‘Condition of England’, try Benjamin Disraeli, Sybil (1845); Charles Kingsley, Alton Locke (1850); Elizabeth Gaskell, North and South (1854-5); George Gissing, The Nether World (1889); Arthur Morrison, A Child of the Jago (1896).

**Tutorial 4: George Eliot**

Start with Middlemarch (1871-2) and read alongside at least one other novel by Eliot: The Mill on the Floss (1860) or Daniel Deronda (1876) would be best. Supplement your reading of Eliot’s fiction with her journalism, available in the Oxford World’s Classics Selected Critical Writings. ‘Silly Novels by Lady Novelists’, published in the Westminster Review in October 1856, should be your first port of call. The poems by Constance Naden, May Kendall and Eugene Lee-Hamilton, listed above, would be useful if you’re interested in Eliot and science.
Tutorial 5: Aestheticism, Decadence, the Fin de Siècle

Start with Walter Pater, The Renaissance (first ed. 1873; of particular importance are the Preface, Conclusion, and ‘Leonardo da Vinci’). Make sure you also read at least a couple of poems from Algernon Charles Swinburne’s Poems and Ballads (1866): ‘Anactoria’ is essential, and some other suggestions include ‘Hermaphroditus’ and ‘Dolores’.

Then, either—

For an introduction to the Aesthetic Movement, read widely from: Henry James, The Portrait of a Lady (1881, with substantial revisions in 1906 – don’t forget to read the Preface); Oscar Wilde, ‘The Decay of Lying’ (1889, published with revisions in Intentions, 1891), ‘The Critic as Artist’ (1891), ‘The Soul of Man Under Socialism’ (1891), The Happy Prince and Other Tales (1888), ‘The Portrait of Mr W.H.’ (1889, collected in Lord Arthur Savile’s Crime and Other Stories, 1891). On Wilde and life-writing, see De Profundis (1897) and Robert Hichens’s The Green Carnation (1894), which contributed to Wilde’s downfall. The poetry of ‘Michael Field’ (Katharine Harris Bradley and Edith Emma Cooper) and the short stories of ‘Vernon Lee’ (Violet Paget) would also be very interesting: for Field, ‘Maids, not to you my mind doth change’ (1889), ‘La Gioconda’ (1892), ‘A Portrait’ (1892), ‘A Girl’ (1893), ‘Cyclamens’ (1893), ‘Sometimes I do dispatch my heart’ (1893), ‘It was deep April’ (1893); for Lee, Hauntings and Other Tales (1890), which is published in a Broadview Press edition.

Or—

If you want to explore Decadence and degeneration, you could choose from a number of key prose works: Henry James, The Turn of the Screw (1898), RL Stevenson’s Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde (1886), Bram Stoker’s Dracula (1897). Two anthologies of short stories – Daughters of Decadence: Women Writers of the Fin-de-Siécle (ed. Elaine Showalter) and Late Victorian Gothic Tales (ed. Roger Luckhurst) – are also useful. For poetry, try Oscar Wilde, ‘Les Ballons’ (1887) and ‘Symphony in Yellow’ (1889) and Arthur Symons, ‘The Absinthe Drinker’ (1892), ‘Javanese Dancers’ (1892), ‘Prologue [my life is like a music hall]’ (1895), ‘Paris’ (1895), ‘Hands’ (1895), ‘White Heliotrope’ (1895), ‘Stella Maris’ (1897).

Or—

The literature of colonialism in the fin de siècle: H. Rider Haggard, King Solomon’s Mines (1885) and She (1886-7), which are good examples of the imperial adventure story; Olive Schreiner, The Story of an African Farm (1883); RL Stevenson, Treasure Island (1883).

Tutorial 6: African-American Literature and Responses to Slavery

Start with Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself (1845). Then, read widely from: Sojourner Truth, ‘Ain’t I a Woman’ (1851); Harriet Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl (1861); Frances Harper, Iola Leroy (1892); WEB Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk (1903).

If you’re interested in examining responses to slavery across genres, try Elizabeth Barrett Browning, ‘The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim’s Point’ (1847), ‘Hiram Powers’ Greek Slave’
Dion Boucicault, *The Octoroon* (1859); Harriet Beecher Stowe, *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* (1852) and its many stage adaptations.

**Tutorial 7: Options**

For the last tutorial of term, you’ll write an essay on any author(s) or subject(s) you choose. Some ideas might include:

Either—

Revisit a topic you didn’t cover during term.

Or—

Detective fiction. Your main text is Wilkie Collins’s *The Moonstone* (1868). Supplement this with Dickens’s *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870), Edgar Allan Poe’s three Dupin stories, or anything by Arthur Conan Doyle featuring Sherlock Holmes. Short story collections include *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1891-2) and full-length novels include *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), *The Sign of the Four* (1890) and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902). You could also think about the figure of the female detective: Joseph Kestner’s *Sherlock’s Sisters* will give you some ideas for places to look.

Or—

Melodrama and the literature of sensation. Make sure you read Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley’s Secret* (1862) and at least one of its stage adaptations: you can find CH Hazlewood’s melodramatic version (1863) in George Rowell’s *Nineteenth Century Plays*. If you want to read another novel, see Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (1859-60). For stage melodramas, choose from: any of Dion Boucicault’s ‘sensation’ melodramas of the 1850s and 60s (e.g. *Jessie Brown*); Douglas Jerrold, *Black-Ey’d Susan* (1829), a wildly successful nautical melodrama, or *The Rent-Day* (1832); Leopold Davis Lewis, *The Bells* (1871); Arthur Pinero, *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893); Tom Taylor, *The Ticket-of-Leave Man* (1863); John Walker, *The Factory Lad* (1832).

Or—

Drama. The usual suspects include George Bernard Shaw (you could try *Mrs Warren’s Profession*, 1893, or *Candida*, 1894), and Oscar Wilde (*The Importance of Being Earnest* or *An Ideal Husband*, both 1895, are possible starting points). To get a flavour of the varied nature of Victorian drama and to begin to appreciate the significance of popular theatre, it would be a good idea to read some melodramas (listed above) and farces. Try: Dion Boucicault, *London Assurance* (1841); JM Morton, *Box and Cox* (1847); John Poole, *Paul Pry* (1825); Charles Reade and Tom Taylor, *Masks and Faces* (1852), Thomas William Robertson, *Caste* (1867); WS Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan, *HMS Pinafore* (1878).

Or—

American fiction and poetry. The choices here are plentiful. If you enjoyed Henry James – the American abroad – during Aestheticism week, you could take a closer look at his prefaces, non-fiction, short stories and novels. You might consider his discussion of the complex
interactions between the United States, Britain, and Continental Europe. Or take a look at any combination of the following: Louisa May Alcott, Emily Dickinson, early Jack London, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Mark Twain, early Edith Wharton, Walt Whitman…

Or—

Children’s fiction. Possibilities include Lewis Carroll, Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland (1865); Charles Kingsley, The Water-Babies (1862-3); Oscar Wilde, The Happy Price (1888) and A House of Pomegranates (1891).

Or—

In-depth author studies. You could return to an author you looked at over the course of the term, studying them in more detail. New possibilities include Charles Darwin, Thomas Carlyle, Karl Marx and Freidrich Engels, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Hardy, WM Thackeray, early WB Yeats, early Joseph Conrad…

A List of Readers, Introductions, and Digital Resources

You may find the following resources helpful as you begin your work on the Victorian period. Feel free to use them as a starting point while familiarising yourself with this term’s topics and authors. They offer comprehensive and accessible material on context, background and key ideas; they also include detailed bibliographies that you’re encouraged to consult. They aren’t necessarily intended to be major sources of secondary criticism for your essays; however, they’ll give you a good sense of the scope of the paper.

Anthologies

Start with Francis O’Gorman (ed.), Victorian Poetry: An Annotated Anthology. This is excellent, wide-ranging, and helpfully organised. Many of the poems on the reading list are available here.

Other anthologies, some of which are more specialised in focus, include:


John Goodridge, David Fairer, Bridget Keegan and Simon Kövesi (eds.), Nineteenth-Century English Labouring-Class Poets, 1800-1900.

Sally Ledger and Roger Luckhurst (eds.), The Fin de Siècle: A Reader in Cultural History, c.1880-1900.
Peter Scheckner (ed.), *An Anthology of Chartist Poetry: Poetry of the British Working Class, 1830s-1850s*.


Sally Shuttleworth and Jenny Bourne Taylor (eds.), *Embody Selves: An Anthology of Psychological Texts 1830-1890*.

**General**

Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman and Antony H. Harrison (eds.), *A Companion to Victorian Poetry*.


Francis O’Gorman (ed.), *The Victorian Novel*. This charts the history of critical responses to the genre.  

——— *A Concise Companion to the Victorian Novel*.

Herbert F. Tucker, *A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*.

**Cambridge Companions**

The *Cambridge Companion* series is very handy if you’re not sure where to go. Here are some titles relevant to the nineteenth century, all available electronically. You can access them as soon as you’re given an Oxford account:


**Digital Resources**

Here are some good websites you can use now: www.victorianweb.org and, for episodes on various aspects of nineteenth-century literature and culture, the *In Our Time* archive (http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qyk1).

You can find good online editions of primary texts via LION FullText and Oxford Scholarly Editions Online (OSEO). Journal articles can be accessed via JSTOR or the MLA Bibliography.
There is a huge wealth of non-fictional, ephemeral and biographical material available via OXLIP+, the platform that brings together all the databases Oxford subscribes to. Being able to relate this material to primary literature will be impressive in your tutorial work. Depending on your interests, here are some suggestions for places you could look:

*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (very handy if you want to find out more about particular authors); *The Times Digital Archive; Past Masters* (letters by Charlotte Brontë, Dickens, Synge, Tennyson, and Hardy; George Eliot’s notebooks...); *19th Century UK Periodicals; American Periodicals* (1741-1943); *British Library Newspapers; British Periodicals* (1681-1939); *Illustrated London News Historical Archive* (1842-2003); *New York Times Historical Archive* (1851-2013); *British and Irish Women’s Letters and Diaries* 1500-1950; *Defining Gender, 1450-1910; Empire On-Line; Gerritsen Collection – Women’s History Online, 1543-1945; John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera; London Low Life; Orlando: Women’s Writing in the British Isles; Science in the Nineteenth-Century Periodical (SciPer); *Victorian Popular Culture* (this is a fun resource, with sections on Spiritualism, Sensation and Magic/ Circuses, Sideshows and Freaks/Music Hall, Theatre and Popular Entertainment/Moving Pictures, Optical Entertainments and the Advent of Cinema).

**Theoretical Approaches to Victorian Literature**

Over the next three years at Oxford, you’ll have the chance to explore the world of literary theory and consider the ways in which philosophy and politics might inform your readings of primary texts. Prelims Paper 1B, studied in Hilary and Trinity Terms, is intended to introduce you to some of these approaches to literature. Paper 1 will encourage you to reflect on our methods, practices and biases as readers and critics.

Victorian literature has inspired a huge variety of theoretical readings. Over the years, scholars of the nineteenth century have drawn on structuralism, post-structuralism, psychoanalysis, feminism, postcolonial criticism, queer theory, Marxism, New Historicism, reader-response theory, affect studies, narratology, ecocriticism and spatial studies. If you’re interested in seeing how theory and text intertwine, you could take a look at the suggested titles below. This list is by no means exhaustive.


Sigmund Freud, ‘The Uncanny’ (1919).


You’ll study the Modern paper (‘Literature in English, 1910 to the Present Day’) during your second term at Oxford, but you may want to get a few of these especially long works under your belt at an earlier stage. None are compulsory, but if you do wish to write about them this year, we think it best to give you some advance notice – they may take a while to read!

James Joyce, *Ulysses* (1918-20).
EM Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924).
Derek Walcott, *Another Life* (1973) and/or *Omeros* (1990).