ENGL 200C: English Literature, 1800-1914

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Course description:
As the nineteenth century began, the French Revolution loomed large in recent memory; as it closed, Queen Victoria celebrated 60 years on the throne, some middle-class homes contained electric lighting and flush toilets, and people in London commuted between their suburban homes and their city jobs by omnibus and subway. At the beginning of the century, Jane Austen’s heroines made good marriages, thereby preserving family property; at the end of the century, George Gissing’s heroines spurned marriage for free love and work. Over the course of the nineteenth century, the English population more than doubled, the middle class consolidated political and financial power, literacy rates soared, and print media exploded. What did newly literate readers choose to read and in what form did they read it? In our survey of literature of the long 19th century, we’ll pay particular attention to form and format as well as theme and undertake some hands-on analysis of original 19th-century editions.

Proposed assignments:
You will hone your close reading, analytical, and writing skills in a series of assignments that include some creative options.

Proposed reading list:
We will explore major works from the Romantic, Victorian, and Edwardian periods. We will cover important genres (lyrical ballad, ode, dramatic monologue, essay, novel, drama) and aesthetic tendencies such as romanticism, realism, and aestheticism. Authors may include Wordsworth, Coleridge, the Shelleys, Keats, Austen, Tennyson, the Brownings, the Brontës, Dickens, C. Rossetti, Hardy, Wilde, Kipling, Forster, and Owen.