English 387- Victorian Culture and Thought  
Fall 2021  

Instructor: Alison Chapman  
Email: <alisonc@uvic.ca>  

Mary Grant, Queen Victoria, c. 1874 (picryl)  

Course Description:  

Non-fiction prose in the Victorian era (1837-1901) was a major genre for investigating, educating, influencing, entertaining, and shocking Victorian readers about the most controversial and pressing issues of their rapidly changing world. This course introduces you to a wide variety of Victorian non-fiction genres, such as the periodical essay, the public lecture, cultural criticism, investigative journalism, travel writing, and autobiography. We will cover a range of authors, including well-known figures (Carlyle, Arnold, Dickens, Norton, Marx, Mill, Darwin, Martineau, Newman, Ruskin, Cobbe, Pater, Wilde, Morris) and other voices (working-class writers, women writers, investigative journalists). The topics will include the most urgent issues of the Victorian era, such as the rise of democracy, empire, the function of the critic, the role of the university, the woman question, consumerism, prostitution, urban poverty, aestheticism and decadence.  

Proposed Assignments:  
- Short response papers (30%)  
- Research paper proposal (10%)  
- Research paper (30%)  
- Final exam (30%)  

Proposed Texts:  
The Broadview Anthology of Victorian Prose, 1832-1901, ed. Mary Elizabeth Leighton and Lisa Surridge.