

English 481: Victorian Treasures in Special Collections: Adventures in rare books and digital tools

Instructor: Dr. Alison Chapman

Email: alisonc@uvic.ca

Phone: (250) 853 3741



Dante Gabriel Rossetti, *Monna Vanna* (oil, 1866), Tate Britain

Course description:

This course is for students interested in exploring Victorian rare books with new digital tools. We will focus on hands-on learning to discover scandals, forgeries, best-sellers, and treasures in UVic's Special Collections, using digital tools to analyze and exhibit our findings. *No specialist prior knowledge is needed.*

Through short assignments and one research project, you will learn hidden histories behind the works of well-known names (such as Charlotte Brontë, Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Christina and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Charles Dickens, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and Oscar Wilde) and non-canonical writers that shaped Victorian literary culture.

By the end of this course, you will be confident in researching primary print material in Special Collections as well as working with the latest digital tools. All students curious about literary history and digital studies are welcome, and this course will be especially useful for English majors and Honours students who want to deepen their critical approaches.

Proposed assignments:

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| • Short assignments | 20% |
| • Research Project | 40% |
| • Final Exam | 30% |
| • Participation | 10% |

Proposed reading list:

Please note that primary material is available in UVic's Special Collections and may be supplemented by modern critical editions. Information to follow.

- Tucker, Herbert, editor. *A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*. Blackwell Wiley, 2014
- Altick, Richard D. *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public*. Ohio State UP, 1998 [1957].
- Diamond, Michael. *Victorian Sensation, or The Spectacular, the Shocking, and the Scandalous in Nineteenth-Century Britain*. Antham Press, 2003.