

ENG 219 Time and Place

The City and Literature

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Office Hours: Tu 9:30-10:30, Wed 2-5, Th 9:30-10:30 (and by appointment)

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Course Description

What is the city? Is the city a place or an idea? A product of history and technology, or of the human imagination? A bastion of promise or sewers of filth? Can literature and art help us make sense of the immensity of cities, or are we merely faces in the crowd?

This course will explore these and other questions through an introduction to city literature – to the poetry, fiction, and drama of the 17th – 20th centuries devoted to the rise of the city and modern city life. The modern metropolis as we know it is a product of this period, and we will focus on the literature of its greatest exemplar, London, with brief comparisons to New York and Paris, in order to understand those cultural changes in time and place.

We will take the study of “Time” and “Place” quite literally. In the first unit of our course, we will explore “Time and Place” broadly, surveying the different genres and approaches poets have adopted to describe the city, from 1600-1900. In our second unit, we will focus on how to historicize literature in its “Place” through a careful study of London fiction in the 19th century, including the works of Charles Dickens, Edgar Allan Poe, and two late Victorian novels, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In the last unit of our course, we will work on defining “modern” gender and sexuality in the city at the turn of the 20th century, through short fiction and film.

This class is designed to push you as a reader and thinker. You are expected to read everything for this course and to complete all assignments, including a healthy dose of in-class writing quizzes on the assigned literature. You need to come to *all* classes with the assigned readings; you will be counted absent if you do not have the text or have not read.

Required Texts

Poetry and Prose Course Packet (download .pdf from Blackboard and keep in a binder)

Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Oxford World's Classics, 2006) ISBN: 9780199535989

([Amazon](#))

Robert Louis Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Norton Critical Edition, 2003) ISBN: 0393974650

Nella Larsen, *Passing* (Penguin Classics, 2003) ISBN: 0142437271 ([Amazon](#))

LEP Course Objectives

1. To learn the basic interpretive tools for reading poetry, fiction, and drama at a college level, and to become familiar with a variety of sub-genres and fictional modes – e.g., lyric, satire, the novel, detective fiction, and the modern short story. (CT, AS)
2. To learn how to place literature and works of art in their cultural and historical context, focusing especially on the changing urban landscape of London and the modern metropolis from the late 18th to early 20th century (F, VP)

3. To improve as critical writers (through in-class writing quizzes and final paper); to learn how to do basic library research (on Victorian London); and to use technological resources effectively to access scholarly materials (WC, CT, TF)

Assignments and Grading

- **Poetry Exam and Final Exam 30%**
- **Quizzes / Poetry Annotation 20%**
- **Presentation 20%**
- **Paper (5-6 pp.) 20%**
- **Participation 10%**

Poetry Exam (10%) and Final Exam (20%): The poetry exam will test your knowledge of terms, genre, and poets studied in Unit 1, as well as any secondary background readings. The final exam will be on fiction, including all readings and their historical context in Units 2 and 3.

Quizzes / Poetry Annotations (20%): A cornerstone of this course is learning how to read carefully, remembering what you read, and communicating your ideas in well-developed paragraphs. To this end, regular “writing quizzes” will be given throughout the semester on your readings. The writing quizzes will be 12-15 minutes in length and will ask you to write a well-developed paragraph, with claim, evidence, and analysis, in response to a question you can only know the answer to if you read carefully. Writing quizzes are worth 50 points each, and will be graded on a basis of four possible scores: 50, 40, 25, and 0. In weeks 2-4, online “Poetry Annotations” in Blackboard will be assigned in lieu of in-class quizzes, to help you practice.

Victorian London Presentation (20%): In groups of 2-3, you will each give a 10 minute presentation at the end of Unit 2 on an aspect of late Victorian city life and its significance for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Presentation topics might include: sewers; maps; the police; city lighting; etc. You and your partner will need to do library research for this presentation, using a combination of sources on Reserve and ones found on your own.

Final Paper (20%): A final essay (5-6 pp. in length) will be due in the last week of the term offering an analysis of Nella Larsen’s *Passing* or Elizabeth Bowen’s “Mysterious Kor” in relation to the one of the works of modern theory about the early 20th century city.

Participation (10%): In order to receive a passing grade on participation, you are expected not only to attend class but to have read the required assignments, have your texts on hand for each class, and remain actively engaged, including taking judicious notes and asking textually-informed questions. For further information on how to improve your participation, please see the “What Constitutes Good Participation?” page at the FAQ section of the course website.

Grade Scale: The essay and presentation will be awarded a letter grade, according to the grade scale below. Quizzes and Blackboard posts will be given points (see above).

Exceptional	Good	Average	Low Passing	Failure
A = 94-100%	B+ = 87-89%	C+ = 77-79%	C- = 70-72%	F = 0-59%
A- = 90-93%	B = 83-86%	C = 73-76%	D+ = 67-69%	
	B- = 80-82%		D = 63-66%	
			D- = 60-62%	

* In converting letter grades to numbers, I award the top value in each category above, unless otherwise noted on the grade sheet. (e.g., A- = 93%, B+ 89%, etc.)

Other Requirements and Policies

- *Required Texts:* Please purchase the required textbook and bring it with you to every class. *If you do not have the text, you will be marked absent.* You may not use an e-reader, cell phone, or laptop.

- *Attendance:* You are allowed 3 excused or unexcused absences in this class before your grade is lowered. At the 6th absence, you will automatically fail the course, per English Department policy.

I take attendance on my iPhone at the beginning of class; if you do not see me taking attendance when you walk in, you have been counted absent. You need to speak to me at the end of class to notify me of your presence. 3 late arrivals = 1 absence.

It is your responsibility to monitor your attendance and to get notes or updates from fellow classmates about material you may have missed. If you are experiencing a chronic illness or ongoing family emergency, please speak to me in person and to Academic Affairs about your situation.

- *Late Work:* Papers and other projects are due in hard copy at the beginning of class; *I do not accept assignments via email.* Major assignments will be reduced by ½ letter grade for each 24 hour period they are late.

- *No cell phones, texting, or screens in class:* Unless instructed otherwise, nothing about this class requires a laptop or screen. Please notify your family and friends that you will be unable to receive texts or messages during class. If you have special accommodations requiring the use of electronic devices, please let me know and I will happily oblige.

- *Email:* Responding to your emails in a timely fashion is very important to me. I respond to student emails as soon as possible during the work day (7 am – 7 pm). If you email me after 7 pm, you can expect a response from me by 7:30 am the next morning, often earlier. Let me encourage you to use our course to begin making a practice of ensuring your emails are well-written and about genuine matters of concern. Genuine inquiries or concerns include (though are not limited to) questions about the nature of an assignment, trouble accessing course materials, emergencies,

etc. Unnecessary emails include questions about what you may have missed by not attending class and lengthy explanations of flu, cold, or plague-like symptoms.

- *Plagiarism and Academic Integrity:* Do not plagiarize. All work submitted for a grade must be your own original work, in language as well as conception (your own words and ideas). Any use of published material in your written work must be fully and properly cited. Papers that engage in academic dishonesty will receive a zero and may result in automatic failure of the course and/or further university penalties.

Please feel free to speak with me if you have any questions about the proper use and citation of a source. While students are encouraged to discuss their ideas with fellow students, any act of plagiarism and violations of the school honesty policy is ground for failure in the course and even dismissal from the university. See the SCSU Student Handbook for further information on the Academic Honesty Policy.

- *Students with disabilities:* Southern Connecticut State University provides reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for students with documented disabilities on an individualized basis. If you are a student with a documented disability, the University's Disability Resource Center (DRC) can work with you to determine appropriate accommodations. Before you receive accommodations in this class, you will need to make an appointment with the Disability Resource Center located at EN C-105A. To discuss your approved accommodations with me or other concerns, such as medical emergencies or arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment to meet as soon as possible.

- *FAQ:* For answers to Frequently Asked Questions about office hours, reading quizzes, rough drafts, etc., see the FAQ section of my webpage: <http://jmdodson.com/teaching/frequently-asked-questions.html>

Course Schedule

Note: This schedule may be subject to change, based on our progress or school cancellations. Changes to the course schedule will be made in Blackboard in the Calendar.

Please print off all .pdf files from Blackboard and put them in a binder. If you do not have printed copies of the assigned readings, you will be marked absent for that day.

Wk 1

T 8.28 Introduction: The City as Image
- syllabus, introductions, etc.
- W. H. Auden, "The Capital"

→ Download and print course packet for next class

I. What is a "City"?: English City Poetry, 1600-1900

Wk 2

T 9.2 *How to Read a (City) Poem*
Read John Donne (1572-1630), "To Mr. E.G." [CP 8]; Ezra Pound (1885-1972), "In a Station of the Metro" [CP 9-10]; and Raymond Williams' definition of "City" [CP 3-4]
Read also: *Imagery* [CP 53-54]

Choose one word that stands out to you from Donne's poem and one word from Pound's, and come to class prepared to write about the following: How does Donne's choice language portray the city as Williams defines it? How does Pound's? What differs, in your opinion, in their imagery?

Th 9.4

City Satire
Read Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), "A Description of the Morning" and "A Description of a City Shower" [CP 13-14]; Peter Ackroyd, "Into the Vortex" from *London: A Biography* [.pdf BB]
Read also: *Metaphor, Simile* [CP 57-60]
Due: Poetry Annotation #1 (Swift) (Due in Blackboard by beginning of class)

Wk 3

T 9.9 *The Country and the City*
Read William Blake (1757-1827), "London" [CP 15]; and Raymond Williams' definition of "Industry" [CP 5-7]
Due: Poetry Annotation #2 (Blake) (Due in Blackboard by beginning of class)

Th 9.11

Blake (cont.'d): Read *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (*Innocence*: "Introduction," "Ecchoing Green," "The Chimney Sweeper," "Holy Thursday"; *Experience*: "Introduction," "Holy Thursday," "Infant Sorrow," "London") [CP 16-23]
Read also: *pastoral* [CP 64]

Week Four

T 9.16 *Romantic Poetry*
Read Joanna Baillie, "London" [CP 24-25]
Read also: *romanticism, the sublime* [CP 61-2]
Due: Poetry Annotation #3 (Baillie) (Due in Blackboard by beginning of class)

Th 9.18

Romantic Poetry
Read William Wordsworth, "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge," "The Reverie of Poor Susan," and John Keats, "To one who has been long in city pent" [CP 27-8]

Due: Poetry Annotation #4 (Wordsworth or Keats) (Due in Blackboard by class)

Week Five

T 9.23

Modernist Verse

Read Charles Baudelaire “The Little Old Women,” “To a Passerby,” “Comes the Charming Evening” [CP 29-34]

Read also: *impressionism* [CP 63]

Th 9.25

Poetry Exam

II. The City as Place: Reading 19th Century London

Wk 6

T 9.30

Dickens, “Night Walks” [CP 35-40]

Read also: “The Victorian Age (1830-1901)” [pdf BB]

Th 10.2

Poe, “The Man of the Crowd” [CP 41-44]

Wk 7

T 10.7

Stevenson, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (pp. 7-19)

Read also: Walkowitz, “London in the 1880s” (pp. 141-45)

Th 10.9

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (pp. 19-47)

Wk 8

T 10.14

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (pp. 47-62)

Read also: “The Dream Origin of the Tale” (pp. 87-91)

Th 10.16

No class – Read “Literary and Scientific Contexts” in Norton, pp. 124-6, 128-34

* Complete Blackboard assignment online

Wk 9

T 10.21

Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Preface and Ch. 1-2 (pp. 3-29)

Th 10.23

Dorian Gray, Ch. 3-7 (pp. 29-80)

Wk 10

T 10.28

Dorian Gray, Ch. 8-13 (pp. 81-136)

Th 10.30

Dorian Gray, Ch. 14-end (pp. 136-88)

Wk 11

T 11.4

Victorian London Presentations

Th 11.6

Victorian London Presentations

III. The City in Time: Theorizing the “Modern” Metropolis

Wk 12

T 11.11

Simmel, “The Metropolis and Mental Life” [pdf BB]; finish presentations

Th 11.13

Larsen, *Passing*, Part One, Ch. 1-2

Wk 13

T 11.18

Passing, Part One, Ch. 3 – Part Two, Ch. 2

Th 11.20

Passing, Part Two, Ch. 3-end; and excerpts from Freud, “The Uncanny” [pdf BB]

Wk 14

T 11.25

Bowen, “Mysterious Kôr” [CP 45-52]

Th 11.27

No Class – Thanksgiving Break

Wk

T 12.2 *In-Class Film Screening*
*Paper Proposal (Introduction and Outline) due
Th 12.4 *Film* (cont.'d)

Week Sixteen

T 12.9 Course Conclusion and Evaluations
Paper Due

Final Exam (Date and Time T.B.A.)