

**ENGL 659-M01** Special Topics in 19th C Lit: The Victorian Salon  
Monday/Thursday, 2-4:45, Padre Rubio Hall 15

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**Course Description**

In Victorian Britain, family and friends met repeatedly in each others' homes in order to converse with other political and artistic elite and to hear new literature recited aloud. In part, this community was simply continuing a well-established tradition, begun in Renaissance Italy and subsequently developed throughout the Western world. However, each salon tradition also developed distinctive qualities, and the Victorian salon was no exception. This class will theorize the nineteenth-century British salon as a space (a room) as well as an event reliant upon hostess, family, a stable group of friends and newly introduced guests. A network of salons created the sense of both a real and an imagined community that writers drew upon when thinking about an audience for their works. They also relied upon listeners' responses for their manuscript revision. Ultimately, this course aims to explore what distinguished the Victorian salon; how textuality was mediated by sociability and close listening (reading aloud elicited a new or revised manuscript); and what role elite women played in cutting-edge intellectual change. Our readings will draw from prose by Germaine de Staël, Fanny Trollope, Margaret Oliphant, Vernon Lee (Violet Paget) and Amy Levy; verse by poets such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Alfred Tennyson, A. Mary F. Robinson and Michael Field (Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper); and current scholarship. We will also consider *salonnières* Germaine de Staël (Paris), Rahel Varnhagen (Berlin), Vernon Lee (Florence), A. Mary F. Robinson (London), and Mary Gladstone (daughter of the Prime Minister, London and Wales).

Requirements: two papers (non-research), one research paper, 20-minute presentation and participation (readiness to discuss in ways that draw upon class readings).

**Course Goals**

Reading and Interpretive Practices:

Students

- Read poetry and fictional prose with attention to historical and cultural contexts and to well-articulated critical theories and methods of scholarly analysis
- Read critical works of interest to specialists in Victorian Literature
- Extend critical reading and discussion skills toward a professional level

Writing and Cognitive Practices:

Students

- Write two 2500-3000 word essays (approx 6-7 pp), exclusive of notes and bibliography
- Write one 4500-5000 word research article, exclusive of notes and bibliography
- Synthesize and evaluate primary and secondary sources
- Extend skills of presenting individual thought and research toward a professional level

**Required Critical Essays and Books:**

Germaine de Staël, *Corinne, or Italy* (Oxford World's Classics); ISBN 0199554609

Margaret Oliphant, *Miss Marjoribanks* (Penguin Classics), ISBN 0140436308

Amy Levy, *The Romance of a Shop* (Broadview), ISBN 1551115662

Additional items are found on the internet, e-reserve, or reserve at the library. For e-reserve, the password is "Salon". Please follow the link: <http://eres.slu.edu/eres/coursepage.aspx?cid=4215&page=docs>

Please print or photocopy required essays on e-reserve and e-reserve. Bring to class (required).

Grading		Grading Scale					
Abstract:	5%	A	4.0	90-100			
Paper 2:	25%	B+	3.3	89-87	C	2.0	76-73
Paper 2:	25%	B	3.0	86-83	C-	1.7	72-70
Research Paper:	35%	B-	2.7	82-80	D	1.0	69-60
Presentation:	10%	C+	2.3	79-77	F	0.0	59-below

### Assignments

All the assignments work together to teach professional skills in presenting your thoughts and research. These include (1) Papers 1 and 2 which extend your critical thinking about aspects of the reading (please use footnotes, not parenthetical citations and not endnotes), (2) a 300-word abstract of your research paper such as you would submit in response to a call for papers for a conference, (3) a research paper that develops a topic of your choosing and demonstrates significant individual thought and research. It should follow the practices and type of content found in a journal article (please use footnotes, not parenthetical citations and not endnotes). (4) A 20-minute conference-style presentation drawn from your research paper. Following the presentation will be a Question and Answer period. For this last, you might consider using PowerPoint slides or handouts with quotations or images.

### On-time/Late Assignments

Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the date assigned. We have a small class, so I do hope that you will be able to make the classes in order to best benefit yourself as well as the others. However, if you are going to miss a class for which a written assignment is due, it is your responsibility to turn in the assignment early or to make arrangements for someone to turn it in for you at class. I do not accept assignments by e-mail. You are responsible for asking a classmate for the notes when you miss class and for keeping up with the reading.

If you have extenuating circumstances and cannot complete a written assignment, please e-mail me in advance of the class and I will grant an extension for a true emergency. An assignment turned in after the due date (without an extension) will be marked down one letter grade for each weekday after the due date. It is expected that you will be at class for your class presentation. Please make your arrangements accordingly.

**Learning Accommodation Statement:** In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

- Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.
- University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to [http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning\\_resources.html](http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html).

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 91 554 5858, ext. 204, send an e-mail to [counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu](mailto:counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu), or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

### Academic Integrity

Students are expected to be honest in their academic work. Please inform yourselves of SLU's Academic Standards (in Graduate Education catalogue, especially those regarding Academic Integrity/Ethical

Behavior (link to Graduate Education in on the SLU Madrid MA in English webpage). MLA Handbook also has an excellent section on plagiarism, both scholarly standards and how to avoid plagiarism through good note-taking practice.

### Course Outline

Please complete assignments for the day listed and bring assigned reading to class with you, including printed copies of any e-reserve materials. The course outline may be occasionally changed at our discretion.

- Mar 17**      **Coining the “salon”**  
• de Staël, *Corinne* (1807)
- Mar 20**      **Feminism, the Salon, and the Social Sphere**  
*Corinne* continued  
• Benhabib, “The Pariah and Her Shadow: Hanna Arendt’s Biography of Rahel Varnhagen,” *Feminist Interpretations of Hanna Arendt*, ed. Honig  
• Eley, “Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century,” *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Calhoun  
• Riley, “Am I that Name?” *Feminism and the category of “women” in history*
- Mar 24**      **Salon History**  
*Corinne* continued  
• Halsey, “Tell me of some booklings: Mary Russell Mitford’s female literary networks”  
• Brown and Dow, eds. Introduction, *Readers, Writers, Salonnières*  
• Kale, Introduction, *French Salons*
- Mar 27**      **Aesthetic Democracy and Continental Romanticism**  
**Due:** Paper 1 (2500-3000 words), engaging with reading assigned for 17-27 March  
• Fanny Trollope, *Paris and the Parisians in 1835* (1836)  
    Vol. 1. Preface, Letters I and XVIII: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/38997>  
    Vol 2. Letters XLIV, XLVIII, LXVI and LXXII :  
        <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39710/39710-h/39710-h.htm>  
• Pauk, “The Parisian Beau Monde” Frances Trollope’s representations of France  
• Dowling, chapter 1, *The Vulgarization of Art*
- Mar 31**      **Literary/Political Salons: Gladstones, Tennysons, Brownings**  
• Tennyson, *Maud*, from *Maud, and Other Poems* (1855)  
• Barrett Browning, from *Aurora Leigh* (1856), Book Fifth, lines 579-1085  
• Gladstone, TBA
- Apr 3**      **Aspiring Women and Community Government**  
• Oliphant, *Miss Marjoribanks* (1866) vols 1 & 2
- Apr 7**      • Oliphant, *Miss Marjoribanks*, vol. 3 (beginning of Chapter XXXVI)
- Apr 10**      **Anglo-Italian Salons and Vernon Lee’s Prose**  
**Due:** Paper 2 (2500-3000 words), engaging with reading assigned 31 Mar-10 April  
• Parejo Vadillo, “New Woman Poets and the Culture of the Salon at the Fin de Siècle”  
• Vernon Lee, *Miss Brown* (1884) vol 1:  
    <http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/vwwp/view?docId=VAB7107&chunk.id=d1e397&to.c.id=d1e397&brand=vwwp;query=#docView>

- Apr 21** • Vernon Lee, *Miss Brown*  
 vol 2: <https://archive.org/details/missbrownanovel01leegoog>  
 vol 3: <http://webapp1.dlib.indiana.edu/vwwp/view?docId=VAB7109.xml>
- Apr 24** **Poetesses Presenting in Aesthetic Salons**  
 • A. Mary F. Robinson, *An Italian Garden: A Book of Songs* (1886), “Nocturnes,” “A Garland of Flowers,” “Tuscan Cypress”  
<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433075794655>  
 • Parejo Vadillo, “Cosmopolitan aestheticism: the affective ‘Italian’ ethics of A. Mary F. Robinson”
- Apr 28** • Robinson, “Songs and Dreams,” “Vestigia”  
 • Hughes, “A club of their own: the ‘literary ladies’, new women writers, and fin-de-siècle authorship”
- May 1** **From Salon to Modern Urbanity: ‘Strong-Minded Women’**  
**Due:** Abstract of Research Paper (300 words)  
 • Journal entries by Michael Field, *Michael Field, The Poet*, eds Thain and Parejo Vadillo, pp 238-47.  
 • Michael Field, from *Sight and Song* (1892), “La Gioconda”  
 • In Levy, poems by Robinson, Michael Field, and Dollie Radford, (Appendix C.3-5)  
 • Levy, “Women and Club Life” (Appendix B.2)  
 • Levy, “Readers at the British Museum” (Appendix B.3)
- May 5** • Amy Levy, *The Romance of a Shop* (1888)  
 • Levy, Poetry (Appendix B.5)
- May 6-7** Individual supervision appointments: Full Draft of Research Paper
- May 12** **Class Presentations**  
**Due:** Revised Research Paper (4500-5000 words)  
 • Ponsonby, “The Role of Women in Society, II. In 19th-Century England”

### Suggested Further Reading

The topic of the mid- to late-nineteenth century salon is vastly under-researched. The following are suggestions to get you started, but by no means is this meant as a comprehensive list. In addition to the books listed (which tightly revolve around the course readings), you might consider George Sand, who had a famous and influential salon at her home, Nohant. Swinburne recited his poetry in a network of salons associated with the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. In his youth, Yeats found the London salon circle to be hugely important. Of course, the three books that you purchased all have excellent “Further Reading” suggestions and the MLA Bibliography will help you to locate additional relevant titles.

George Meredith, *Sandra Belloni*

Mrs. Humphrey Ward, *Robert Elsmere*

George du Maurier, *Trilby*

Hans Christian Andersen, *The Improvisator; Or, Life in Italy* (1835), trans Mary Howitt, new and carefully corrected edition, (London: Ward, Lock and Co., 1880), rpt Kessinger Publishings

Robinson, *The Collected Poems, lyrical and narrative:*

<https://archive.org/stream/cu31924013343581#page/n15/mode/2up>

Robert Southey, *Letters from England by don Manuel Alvarez Espriella* [precursor to Fanny Trollope]  
 Vernon Lee, *Baldwin: being Dialogues on Views and Aspirations* (1886)  
 Vernon Lee, *Althea: A Second Book of Dialogues on Views and Aspirations* (1894)  
 Austen, *Emma* [*Miss Majoribanks* has been compared to *Emma*]

Burrow, *The Crisis of Reason: European Thought, 1848-1914*  
 Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*  
 --. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*  
 Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, community and postmodernism in contemporary ethics*  
 von der heyden-Rynsche, *Salons européens*  
 Pekacz, *Conservative Tradition in Pre-Revolutionary France: Parisian Salon Women*  
 Ponsonby, "The Role of Women in Society, I. In Eighteenth-Century France," *The Nineteenth Century and After* 48.286 (1900)  
 Feldman, "The Courtesan's Voice: Petrarchan Lovers, Pop Philosophy, and Oral Traditions," *The Courtesan's Arts: Cross-Cultural Perspectives*, eds Feldman and Gordon  
 Rosenthal, *The Honest Courtesan: Veronica Franco, Citizen and Writer in Sixteenth-Century Venice*  
 Smart, *Joining the Conversation: Dialogues by Renaissance Women*  
 D'Ezio, "Literary and Cultural Intersections between British and Italian Women Writers and *Salonnières* during the Eighteenth Century," *Readers, Writers, Salonnières: Female Networks in Europe, 1700–1900*, eds Brown and Dow  
 Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism*  
 Pohl and Schellenberg (eds), *Reconsidering the Bluestockings*  
 Eger and Peltz, *Brilliant Women: 18th-century Bluestockings*  
 Eger (ed), *Bluestockings Displayed: Portraiture, Performance and Patronage, 1730-1830*  
 Courtney, *The Adventurous Thirties: A Chapter in the Women's Movement*  
 Hayward, *Lady Palmerston: A Biographical Sketch*  
 Houghton, *Monographs Personal and Social*  
 Vineta Colby, *Vernon Lee: A Literary Biography*  
 Pieri, Giuliana, *The Influence of Pre-Raphaelitism on Fin de Siecle Italy: Art, Beauty and Culture*  
 Zorn, Chrisa. *Vernon Lee : Aesthetics, History, and the Victorian Female Intellectual*  
 Pulham and Maxwell, *Vernon Lee: Decadence, Ethics, Aesthetics.*  
 Vadillo, "Immaterial Poetics: A. Mary F. Robinson and the Fin-de-Siècle Poem, *The Fin-de-siècle Poem: English Literary Culture and the 1890s*, ed. Bristow  
 Lubenow, *Liberal Intellectuals and Public Culture in Modern Britain, 1815-1914* [male club culture]  
 Moers, *Literary Women: The Great Writers*  
 Lokke, *Tracing Women's Romanticism: Gender, history and transcendence* [for *Corinne*]  
 Lokke, "'Children of Liberty': Idealist Historiography in Staël, Shelley, and Sand," *PMLA* 118.3 (2003)  
 Celenza, *Hans Christian Andersen and Music: The Nightingale Revealed* [read with Andersen, *The Improvisator*]  
 Gabriel-Paul-Othenin de Cléon, Comte d'Haussonville, *The Salon of Madame Necker*, trans. Trollope, 2 vols (Chapman and Hall, 1882)  
 Catherine Rilliet Huber, "Notes sur l'enfance de Mme. de Stael," *Occident et cahiers staëliens* 2, no. 2 (1932): 41-47.  
 Rossini's opera, *Il Viaggio a Reims* [Corinne is a character]  
 John Lehmann, *Ancestors and Friends* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1962 ) [the Lehmann salon was attended by Wilkie Collins, Dickens, George Eliot, and others. Collins's sensation novel *Man and Wife* was largely written while in residence there].