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Office hours: W 1:30-2:30 and Th 2:00-3:00, and by appointment  
Class meets: 3:00-4:30 Tu/Th

ENGL 230/ENVI 294  
**19<sup>th</sup> century British Literature: Feasts and Famines**

This course focuses on the Victorian period in England, critically examining how food and other consumable products create shared experiences through which culture is produced and understood. Considering consumption in a wide range of ways—from dinner-party etiquette to commercial efforts to create desires for conspicuous consumption—we will discuss ideas of taste and explore the cultural meanings of food in the nineteenth century. We will read a social problem novel from the “hungry forties,” indulge in famous literary feasts that display the excesses of the booming 1860s, and consider the relationships between food, gendered ideals, and sexuality. Non-fiction from the period provides background on everything from working conditions in factories to Victorian arguments about prostitutes, all in the service of trying to regulate consumption. Theoretical analyses of industrial capitalism, literary circulation, and consumer cultures will frame some discussions; hands-on experiments with 19th century recipes will frame others.

**Required books**

*Mary Barton* (Elizabeth Gaskell): Broadview, ISBN: 1551111691  
*Our Mutual Friend* (Charles Dickens): Penguin Classics, ISBN: 0140434976  
*Brother Jacob & The Lifted Veil* (George Eliot) Oxford, 0199555052  
*Dracula* (Bram Stoker) Broadview: 1551111365  
Additional materials on Moodle, which you may print or bring to class as PDFs

**Course Policies**

**Attendance and Participation:** You may miss two classes this term, after which additional absences will affect your participation grade. Absences need not be documented or explained. There are many ways to participate in this discussion-based course: asking thoughtful questions, identifying passages for analysis, amplifying others’ ideas, responding to each other, taking active notes, looking up references, and so on. Engagement with and respect for your peers are the only mandatory elements of course participation, as we strive for collaborative development of ideas all semester.

**Lateness:** I strive to balance an understanding that everyone’s lives are busy and complex with the fact that without deadlines, it is impossible to have a course in which everyone is working through material together. To that end: papers should be submitted in the moodle dropbox, and presentations are due, on the dates listed in the syllabus. If you need to request a deadline extension, please reach out to me at least 24 hours before the due date, so that we can formulate a plan together. There is no make-up or extension available for in-class work or daily notecards.

**Electronic Devices:** Are to be used for bringing PDF/web versions of documents to class for reference, or for facilitating your reading/discussion or note-taking. Please be mindful that other uses of your devices may be distracting to other students.

**Accommodations:** I am committed to helping every student be successful in this course. Accommodations for students with documented disabilities are available through the Office of Disability Services (651-696-6974) and should be approved as soon as possible to facilitate your success. The Office of Student Affairs (651-696-6220) can help you navigate unexpected extenuating circumstances. If you are not sure whom to contact for support, please come see me in my office or reach out via email; I am always happy to help connect you with campus resources.

**Contacting me:** I love to meet with students to talk about ideas, readings, assignments, courses, papers-in-process, or anything else that would be useful or interesting. Please come to my office hours early and often. If your class schedule conflicts with my office hours, drop me an email or see me before or after class to schedule a time to meet. You can expect that I will generally answer email within 24 hours—sometimes much less than that during the week, perhaps a bit longer on the weekend.

### Assignments

**Daily:** quotation/question cards due at the start/end of each class period, 5% total

**Our Mutual Friend discussion leading:** identify a key issue for discussion, at least two relevant passages, and write a 2-page paper, plus two discussion questions. Present. 10%  
**Two** 3-4 page “Connections” papers, drawing comparisons/contrasts between two texts that were not assigned for the same day of class, 15%, 20% each

**Final “Short History Of…” paper:** 8-10 page paper which will incorporate primary and secondary research, and include discussion of at least one text from the syllabus, 25%

**Brief presentation** of your Short History, during final exam session, 5%

**Active participation,** 20%

### Course Calendar (subject to change as needs arise)

Please note: Please print out texts from moodle, or bring an electronic reading device to class so that you have copies to which you can refer during discussion. Please do NOT print whole books (such as *Mrs. Beeton’s Book of Household Management*, which is some 600+ pages) if you are only assigned to read one chapter or short section.

Thu., Jan. 23 Introductions. How is food individual, and what does it tell us about groups to which we belong? How do we understand food in history? What is “Victorian”? Quick primer on money in 19<sup>th</sup> c Britain.

### Food, Consumption, and Victorian Middle-Class Ideals

Tue., Jan. 28 *Our Mutual Friend*, 1. I-VI. Excerpts from *What Jane Austen Ate and Charles Dickens Knew* (moodle).

Thu., Jan. 30 William M. Thackeray, “A Little Dinner at Timmins’s,” “A Fashionable Dinner is Arranged as Follows” (Meir, moodle) **For Discussion:** What are the social imperatives that seem to be motivating the decisions about what is necessary for this “little dinner”? What exactly is the story is mocking? How does the Meir add to how your understanding?

Tue., Feb. 4 *Our Mutual Friend*, 1. VII-XI. John Ruskin, “Of Queen’s Gardens” and Yeates, “Ruskin, Women’s Reading, and Commodity Culture,” **For Discussion:** How is consuming books like consuming food? Linked to class identity? To propriety? To gendered identity?

Thu., Feb. 6 Excerpt from *All Manners of Food*, excerpt on Pierre Bourdieu and taste. Isabella Beeton, *The Book of Household Management*, read Chapters 1-2 (“The Mistress” and “The Housekeeper”) and browse chapters 3-4 (“Arrangement and Economy of the Kitchen” and “Introduction to Cookery”). Dip into the recipe and meal planning chapters sufficiently to come to class with **one** solid suggestion of a recipe we should cook during our class dinner, and a justification for your nomination. **For Discussion:** What did you expect and what surprised you about the roles of the various members of the household? How do Bourdieu’s ideas about class and taste help you think about the work of Beeton’s book? Bonus: what was the funniest recipe you came across? The most un-appetizing?

Tue., Feb. 11 *Our Mutual Friend*, 1. XII-XVII. Veblen “Conspicuous Consumption” and excerpts from *Shopping for Pleasure* and perhaps one more reading (TBA)  
\* \* \* \* \* TONIGHT: DINNER at Professor Tange’s house – 1157 Ashland Avenue (one mile east of campus) – arrival time TBA; bring an apron if you like \* \* \* \* \*

### Poverty, Hunger, and Working-Class Consumptions

Thu., Feb. 13 Kay-Shuttleworth, from *The Moral and Physical Condition of the Working Classes*, and Appendix C, “Social Commentary on Industrialization,” pages 518-565 in *Mary Barton*  
**For Discussion:** How is morality conceptualized in terms of wealth/poverty in some/any of these texts? What seem to be other registers in which morality is being assessed? What are the relationships between data/numbers/statistics and narrative in coming to these conclusions?

Tue., Feb. 18 *Our Mutual Friend*, 2. I-IV *Mary Barton*: Preface & chapters 1-4 (pp. 29-71). “Fine Fingers” (Freedgood). **For Discussion:** What are the signs of plenty or want that operate here? How is consumption being gendered here? What is the role of the shift to industrial forms of production in thinking about value?]

Thu., Feb. 20 *Mary Barton*: chapters 5-8 (pp. 72-141) Andrew Ure, “General View of Manufacturing Industry,” from *Philosophy of Manufactures*, Karl Marx, “The Factory” (excerpt from *Capital*), Friedrich Engels, from *The Condition of the Working Class in England*. **For Discussion:** What seem to you to be some of the key differences between how these writers talk about industrialization? How do their writings help you think about consumption in conceptual terms?

Tue., Feb. 25 *Our Mutual Friend*, 2. V-VIII. *Mary Barton*: chapters 9-12 (pp. 142-199) **For Discussion:** How is Mary’s love life (or, really, any love story) relevant to the development of a social problem novel? What seems to you to be significant about the comparisons of Mary to Esther? About the “competition” between Henry and Jem?

### **Connections paper #1 due**

Thu., Feb. 27 *Mary Barton*: chapters 13-19 (pp. 200-291).

Tue., Mar. 3 *Our Mutual Friend*, 2. IX-XII. *Mary Barton*: chapters 20-25 (pp. 292-354). **For discussion:** why does Mary’s emotion matter so much to the point(s) this novel is making?

Thu., Mar. 5 *Mary Barton*: chapters 26-33 (pp. 355-429). **For Discussion:** How does the melodramatic boat-chase/trial section of the book fit into its overall goals/messages? Is it effective? Why/why not?

Tue., Mar. 10 *Our Mutual Friend*, 2. XIII-XVI *Mary Barton*: chapters 34-end (pp. 430-483), plus Appendix B “Contemporary Reviews of the Novel.” **For Discussion:** This novel combines gritty details of intense poverty with political commentary and episodic storytelling designed to draw in a reader. Which tactic might have been more effective for getting a Victorian middle-class reader interested in the plight of the poor, and why?

### Famine and the Powers of Empire

Thu., Mar. 12 The “Irish Problem” See collection of cartoons and short 19<sup>th</sup> c. articles on Moodle, plus excerpts from *Hunger: A Modern History*. **For Discussion:** How is Irish identity defined in these documents by a relationship to food/hunger? What is thereby missed or enhanced? **Thinking about *Mary Barton* in conjunction with these materials:** To what degree do working-class people seem to be held responsible/accountable for their own fates/survival versus being presented as at the mercy of a system/forces beyond their control? Specific examples will be helpful here. How might we think about this in terms of the histories of food, hunger, and industrialization that were shaping the middle decades of the nineteenth century?

### **Connections paper #2 due**

\* \* \* \* \* Spring Break March 14-22 \* \* \* \* \*

Tue., Mar. 24 *Our Mutual Friend*, 3. I-VII (longer reading). “Victoria’s Ghosts” from *Late Victorian Holocausts* **Assign final papers**

Thu., Mar. 26 Professor Tange is away at Global DH Conference; Professor Damon will be in class to talk about the economics of famine (Reading TBA); Professor Tange will skype in

Tue., Mar. 31 *Our Mutual Friend*, 3. VIII-XI. **In class: searching for 19<sup>th</sup> c sources for your final papers.**

Thu., Apr. 2 “Introduction” and “Famine and the Reproduction of Affect” by Zahid Chaudhary. **For Discussion:** how are visual vocabularies for talking about famine and empire similar to and different from verbal ones? What do different mediums allow creators or viewers to say and/or elide? **In class: discussion of further searching, refining lists of sources.**

### Consumption and Bodily Corruptions

Tue., Apr. 7 *Our Mutual Friend*, 3. XII-XVII (longer reading). W.H. Greg “Prostitution” and William Holmon Hunt “The Awakening Conscience”. **For Discussion:** In what ways are women’s bodies represented as consumable objects in these texts? How, if at all, does either text resist that reading of women? How might we compare these representations to Esther

and the specter of the “fallen woman” in *Mary Barton*? To the representations of women in *Our Mutual Friend*? **In class: searching for secondary sources**

Thu., Apr. 9 “Brother Jacob.” “Consumption” from: *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History* (Mintz). **For discussion:** how is this chapter a model for the “Short History” papers? If you were using this material to talk about “Brother Jacob,” how would you make those connections?

Tue., Apr. 14 *Our Mutual Friend*, 4. I-V. *Dracula*, chapters 1-5 (pp. 31-94), and Appendix C. **For Discussion:** what are the various ways the novel represents East and West? How does this shape the gothic elements of the novel?

Thu., Apr. 16 *Dracula*, chapters 6-11 (pp. 95-181), excerpt from *Imperial Addictions*.

Tue., Apr. 21 *Our Mutual Friend*, 4. VI-X. *Dracula*, chapters 12-16 (pp.182-256) and appendix D

Thu., Apr. 23 *Dracula*, chapters 17-22 (pp. 257-341), and appendix G

Tue., Apr. 28 *Our Mutual Friend*, 4. XI-END, “The Age of Veneer” – **For discussion:** how can you account for the fact that this novel was, comparatively, “a flop”? What do you think of the serial reading process? How has it helped/hindered your understanding of the novel? Your enjoyment of it?

Thu., Apr. 30 *Dracula*, chapters 23-end (pp. 342-419), and appendix E and F.  
**In class: discussion of final presentations, practice**

**Final Papers due: Friday, May 8. Presentation slides due in the google slides doc by 9am. Papers due in the moodle assignment box by 3pm. Final exam session 10:30-12:30 that day: meet to share short histories: 3 minutes, one slide.**