The Victorians at Home: 19th c Britain

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Office hours: Monday 1:30-2:30 or by appointment

This course examines the domestic experience of men and women in nineteenth-century Britain. It covers both physical premises, from urban slums through suburban villas and country estates, and their inhabitants both upstairs and down. Topics include the domestic ideal, gender roles, and master/servant relations.

Students will be expected to read the Steinbach text for general background knowledge, plus at least one source from each weekly list. Reading Steinbach alone is not sufficient preparation for class and will not count toward your participation grade. We will also collectively make our way through Middlemarch. Often cited as the greatest 19th c English novel, it addresses many of the themes highlighted in academic studies of the period.

Required texts: Susie Steinbach, Understanding the Victorians (Routledge, 2012)
George Eliot, Middlemarch (1871-2; Penguin 2003)

Other readings will be available online or placed on reserve in Weldon Library.

Grading scheme:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Words</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book review (due 16 Oct.)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>1200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay (due 27 Nov.)</td>
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<td>5000</td>
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Learning outcomes

At the conclusion of this course a successful student will be able to:

• Evaluate evidence and assess historical claims.
• Assess historical approaches and methodologies.
• Articulate and defend historical ideas, arguments, and conclusions, both orally and in written prose.
• Engage with faculty and peers in discussion of both source material and the process of writing history.
• Contribute thoughtfully to debates about historical and methodological issues.
• Present historical knowledge effectively and engagingly.

Schedule

1 (11 Sept.)  Introduction

2 (18 Sept.)  Whose home is it? 19th c demographics
Steinbach, chs. 4, 6

R.J. Morris, Class, Sect and Party: The Making of the British Middle Class 1820-1850 (Manchester, 1990)
D. Cannadine, The Decline and Fall of the British Aristocracy (New Haven, 1990)

3 (25 Sept.)  Bricks and mortar: The Victorian house
Steinbach, ch. 1

J. Flanders, The Victorian House: Domestic Life from Childbirth to Deathbed (London, 2003)

4 (2 Oct.)  Queen Victoria: Wife and mother
Steinbach, ch. 8


*Thanksgiving*

5 (16 Oct.)  Keeping up appearances: The middle-class housewife
Steinbach, chs. 5, 6

Kathryn Hughes, *The Short Life and Long Times of Mrs Beeton* (London, 2005)


*Book review due*

6 (23 Oct.)  Masculinity and domesticity
Steinbach, ch. 7

A. Milne-Smith, *Clubland: A Cultural History of Gender and Class in Late Victorian Britain* (New York, 2011)
7 (30 Oct.)  Bedroom and brothel: The Victorians and sex
Steinbach, ch. 11

S. Marcus, *The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Britain* (New York, 1966)
J. Weeks, *Sex, Politics and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality since 1800* (Harlow, 2012)
R. Jennings, *A Lesbian History of Britain: Love and Sex between Women since 1500* (Oxford, 2007), introduction, chaps. 3-5
C. Upchurch, *Before Wilde: Sex Between Men in Britain’s Age of Reform* (Berkeley, c2009)

8 (6 Nov.)  Sculleries and scullery maids

P. Horn, *The Rise and Fall of the Victorian Domestic Servant* (Stroud, Gloucs, 1990)


9 (13 Nov.)  In the garden: Forcing nature … and the farmers who fed cities


10 (20 Nov.) Food and drink: The Victorian kitchen

S. Freeman, Mutton & Oysters: The Victorians and their Food (London, 1989)

Isabella Beeton, Mrs Beeton’s Book of Household Management (1861 ed.), chaps. III-XL

11 (27 Nov.) A death in the family: Victorian mourning

V. Bailey, This Rash Act: Suicide across the Life Cycle in the Victorian City (Stanford, 1998)
S. Barnard, To Prove I’m Not Forgot: Living and Dying in a Victorian City (Manchester, New York, 1990)
J.S. Curl, The Victorian Celebration of Death (Detroit, 1973)
J.-M. Strange, Death, Grief, and Poverty in Britain, 1870-1914 (Cambridge, 2005)
C. Arnold, Necropolis: London and its Dead (London, 2006)

Essay due

12 (4 Dec.) Home away from home: British Victorian India

Steinbach, ch. 3

A. Blunt and R. Dowling, Home (Abingdon, 2006), ch. 4, ‘Home, Nation and Empire’
V. Gavaskar, ‘Domesticating Empire: Figuring Womanhood at Home and Abroad’
http://www.clemson.edu/cedp/press/scr/articles/scr_46-1_gavaskar.pdf

The Englishwoman in India (1864)
F.A.W. Steel and G. Gardiner, The Complete Indian Housekeeper and Cook (2nd ed., 1890)