Course Description:
The Victorian period is often demarcated by the reign of the Queen for whom the period is named. Victoria took the throne in 1837 and ruled until her death in 1901. During this time, England was marked by enormous cultural, industrial, and colonial change. Its capital city expanded from roughly two million at the time Victoria was crowned to more than three times that number by her death. The period is characterized by several critical issues: its industrial growth and expansion, its large colonial holdings, an increasing demand for women’s rights, class stratification, and a crisis in faith that resulted from scientific discoveries. The goal for English 313 is for students to become knowledgeable about these and other key historical and cultural issues and themes of the Victorian Period as we study the works of many of its major and more minor literary figures.

Required Texts:
The Longman Anthology of British Literature: Volume 2B The Victorian Age (3rd Ed)
She H. Rider Haggard, Charlotte Bronte Jane Eyre, George Gissing The Nether World, Thomas Hardy’s Tess of the d’Urbervilles, Charles Dickens Hard Times

Course Requirements and Grade Breakdown:
MLA Paper 25%
Over the course of the semester, you will be assigned a time when you need to choose one of the scheduled readings to investigate further through the MLA database. Your task is to choose a reading that you want to know more about & search MLA for a journal article to review. Your paper will be part summary of the article and part your critical response: did it help you to understand the text more? Why or why not? How did it shape your understanding of the work? Did you agree with the author’s points? Is he or she leaving out important information? Would you recommend the article to readers of the text? Why or why not?

Group PowerPoint Presentations 25%
Although we will cover as much of the Longman text as possible, there is never enough time to thoroughly read every major and minor author, let alone explore the cultural and historical events that the literature reflects. To help give a more in-depth look at the period, you will give a group presentation on a major cultural/historical event or issue that will help illuminate the texts we read and provide a richer understanding of the life Victorians led. The PowerPoint should provide specific details that explain the significance of the topic and how it impacted those who lived during the period. Consider yourselves the teachers of this topic. What does the class need to know to really understand and appreciate your subject? Whenever possible, connections should also be made to the literature we read in class.
Final Research Paper 25%
The essay topics will be individualized to fit your own interests. As you read, be on the look out for pieces that are especially interesting to you that you might like to pursue further. You will need to provide literary and critical analysis—not summary. You might read other works by authors we’ve covered in class, or do further research on one of the writers, texts, or subjects that is of special interest to you. You may choose to further study Christina Rossetti or Barrett Browning or read in-depth on the Wilde trials and their significance for the time. Maybe you’d like to know more about class stratification and how the poor lived, or about women’s increasing demands for equality. The possibilities here are endless. Please touch base with me at least two weeks before the paper is due so I can check your progress and give you some feedback and possible suggestions.

Participation in Oral Discussion/Quizzes 25%
The two most important things that you bring to this class are 1) Time to read each text closely and thoroughly, and 2) A willingness to engage ideas critically and with an open mind. Come to class having completed the assigned readings. Be prepared to participate actively in rigorous discussions about the content and form of what you have read. It will help you to write down thoughts or questions you have in the margins of the text. Also be sure to bring to class a written list of several questions or points of interest you have about each piece—this will help ensure good discussions. I approach class meetings as dialogues in which we all learn from one another. Don’t look to me for “the answers.” Instead, I look forward to listening to your questions, insights, and interpretations of the texts. Please be aware that non-toleration of other people’s opinions will not be tolerated! :-) Disagreement makes for good discussions, but be respectful of other people’s differences and listen with courtesy. It is critical that those in the classroom maintain a safe space for open discussion; everyone in the class should feel comfortable voicing opinions and ideas.

For the most part, the reading quizzes, which constitute the second part of this overall grade, will test you on the readings for the day. These quizzes will be unannounced, but they are not designed to trick you, only to test that you have read the material carefully and thoroughly.

Attendance Policy:
Because so much of your total grade in this course depends upon in-class responses, activities and discussions, and participation in lecture and debate, your attendance is absolutely crucial. Your input and presence are what will make the classroom vital. You may miss only four classes before it adversely affects your grade. Repeatedly arriving late to class also counts as an absence. You must reserve these absences for those times when you really need them. I will not make decisions about whose excuses sound legitimate and whose don’t, nor allow some people “freebies” and not others. The attendance policy is not negotiable. Please do not ask me to excuse you from class, regardless of the reason. If you know in advance that you will not be in class, it is your responsibility to get the assignments from me or from someone else in the class. You are responsible for making up work that you missed because of absences. If you are absent
on a day an assignment is due, you must turn it in early or give it to a classmate to turn in for you. I will not accept late work without penalty. Contact me (or a classmate) to find out what you missed and stay on schedule. Any student who misses more than four classes will have their final grade dropped 1/3 letter grade for each additional absence.

Ethics and Plagiarism:
You have to do your own work and appropriately identify work that is collaborative, borrowed, or copied from other sources, including your own work from other classes. Obviously, when you use graphics, works, words, citations, or even ideas from other sources, including the Internet, you are under the legal and ethical obligation to identify these sources according to citation norms. You may use projects from another class as a base for projects in this class, but you must consult me first if you are doing this. If you have any questions about what constitutes plagiarism, please contact me. Using work that is not yours and not appropriately identifying it will usually result in an F for the course.

Note:
Students with disabilities (physical, learning, psychological) who may need accommodations are advised to make an appointment with the Coordinator of Services with Students with Disabilities. If anyone has a documented disability that I should be aware of, please let me know as soon as possible.