

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Department of History

SEMESTER I 1988-89

<u>COURSE NO.</u>	<u>COURSE TITLE</u>	<u>INSTRUCTOR</u>
572	<u>Undergraduate Seminar: Victorian England</u>	Mr. Donnelly

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The continual reinterpretation of Victorian politics, society, and culture is one good measure of the persistent fascination of that era for later generations. In this seminar we will begin our studies with a major work of synthesis, partly in order to establish some common foundation of knowledge about the period, and partly to stimulate discussion about the defining characteristics and the dynamics of this society. We will then turn to a small number of classic contemporary texts and major secondary works: to Himmelfarb, for an account of the consequences of early industrialism and the development of the class system; to Bagehot, for an analysis of how the political system worked before the coming of democracy; to Hughes, for treatment of the role of elite education and "muscular Christianity" in the culture; and to Darwin, for an appreciation of the intellectual revolution and the Victorian "crisis of faith."

LECTURES

Meetings once a week, each meeting to last two hours; all meetings to be devoted to discussion of the required readings.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS

A research proposal of about fifteen pages focusing on a question or a set of related questions needing scholarly investigation, and stating the methods and sources to be used in the search for answers.

GRADING SYSTEM

1. Research proposal (50 percent)
2. Informed participation in seminar discussions (50 percent)

REQUIRED READINGS

Bagehot, Walter, The English Constitution (Cornell University Press paperback).

Beales, Derek, From Castlereagh to Gladstone, 1815-1885 (Norton paperback).

Burnett, John, ed., Destiny Obscure (Penguin paperback).

Darwin, Charles, The Autobiography of Charles Darwin (Norton paperback).

Himmelfarb, Gertrude, The Idea of Poverty (Vintage paperback).

Hughes, Thomas, Tom Brown's School Days (Airmont paperback).

Porter, Bernard, The Lion's Share (2nd ed., Longman paperback).

Suggested Topics for Research Proposals

1. Post-1832 general parliamentary elections (choose one election and analyze it).
2. The Whigs and Ireland, 1846-52.
3. The contest for the leadership of the Liberal party in the 1850s.
4. The emergence of William Gladstone as a popular Liberal leader, 1859-68.
5. Conservative party organization, 1852-68.
6. Joseph Chamberlain and Ireland in the 1880s.
7. The politics of the Education Act of 1870.
8. The politics of trade-union legislation, 1871-75.
9. The politics of divorce reform, 1857.
10. The Irish role in Chartism.
11. English responses to the Famine immigrants, ca. 1846-55.
12. Irish immigrants in London, 1850-1900.
13. Symbolic violence: Chartist rhetoric and demonstrations.
14. Chartism and government repression, 1839-42.
15. The impact of civil-service reform in the mid-Victorian period.
16. The professionalization of medicine or of nursing.
17. The direction of the women's movement, ca. 1870-1900.
18. The occupations of working-class women in London, 1850-1900.
19. Drink, temperance, and society, 1870-1900.
21. The attitudes of British academics toward empire after 1850.
22. Imperial issues in British domestic politics in the 1870s.
23. The social composition of the British imperial administrative corps after 1850.
24. The Boer War in British domestic politics, 1899-1903.
25. The Conservatives and educational reform, 1886-1905.
26. Middle-class support for the Conservative party in the late Victorian period.