



In nineteenth-century England, the period between 1807, when the empire dissolved their participation in the slave trade, the 1833 Abolition of Slavery Act, and 1884, when the race for Africa culminated in the Berlin Conference to carve up the African continent, was a rich time for writers producing literature. Courses on Victorian literature used to focus on texts from England that imagined what imperial spaces and people were like. They tended to emphasize on canonical works, such as Alfred, Lord Tennyson's "The Lotus Eaters" or Rudyard Kipling's "The White Man's Burden"—brilliant works of literature, certainly, but they were also works that undermined, denigrated and denied the perspective of colonized and enslaved peoples.

Some of the texts we will read represent the contradictions of colonial expansion as they write for a white audience and distance themselves from their own gender and race. Others will illustrate the value of disagreement, talking back, and voicing one's own perspective. We will consider how these authors variously attempt to take home with them, and leave it behind. Along the way, we will do the work of teasing out identity from a history of compounding acts of assimilation in order to discover the multitudinous ways women writers were strengthening the British empire, and resisting it.

Professor: Dr. Amy Kahrmann Huseby  
Lecture: Mondays 2:00-4:45, Owan Ehen 105 (MMC)  
Office: DM 467B (shared with Dr. Heather Blatt)  
Office Hours: 12:30-1:30 p.m., and by appointment (email me!)

Email: [ahuseby@fiu.edu](mailto:ahuseby@fiu.edu)

**COURSE TEXTS:**

*The History of Mary Prince* (Penguin, ISBN-13: 978-0140437492)

*Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands* (Penguin, ISBN-13: 978-0140439021)

*Motichur* (Oxford UP, ISBN-13: 978-0199450374)

All other assigned texts will be available digitally and free of charge on Canvas (indicated with a C on the Course Schedule).

**TRIGGER WARNING:** The texts and viewing in this course are often disturbing and include discussions and imagery of racism, graphic violence, and sexuality. Prior to beginning a new text, I will always alert you if a potentially triggering subject is addressed. However, if this type of imagery upsets or offends you, please give thought to whether this is right course for you.

### Course Requirements

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|--|-----|
| • Group Discussion Leader                                  | 10% |
| • Attendance, short writing assignments, and participation | 15% |
| • 1 <sup>st</sup> Paper (5-6 pp.)                          | 20% |
| • Proposal for Final Paper OR Project (4-6 pp.)            | 25% |
| • Final Paper OR Project (7-8 pp.)                         | 30% |

### Learning Outcomes

- **to gain familiarity** with different genres of 19<sup>th</sup>-century writing;
- become a better **critical reader**, noticing subtle details and uses of language, connecting ideas and texts, asking questions, and identifying assumptions and values;
- become a better **critical writer**, learning to make analytical arguments that are original, persuasively argued, clear, and well written;
- become a more **active listener** by taking good lecture notes, listening to your peers in discussion sections, and asking questions;
- understand how even the most entertaining stories carry **cultural and social values that emerge out of their historical contexts**;
- become a more **thoughtful and knowledgeable citizen** by learning about the experiences of people both like and unlike you, thinking through questions of injustice and intolerance; and,
- becoming better able to **interpret, argue, and communicate ideas** about your world.

In this class, we will assume a comparative stance toward writing in the British Empire and engage with Victorian women writing around the world who were thinking about how women's bodies and lived experience represent national experiences and events.

**Together, we will consider questions including:**

- How might focalizing our exploration of this ostensibly homogeneous thing called "England" through the writing of women of color work to not only dispel the silence of their experiences but in a sense to zoom in like a microscope on the granularity of empire?
- Who has the right to write the story of colonized and enslaved people? What was the work of such writing? What was being probed?
- Were these writers engaged in some sort of cultural anthropology, looking outward at their changing society, or autobiography, representing personal experiences of colonization and slavery?
- In what ways did perspectives on the British empire differ and change around the world? What did it mean for a woman in India to be a British subject versus a woman from the Caribbean, for instance? And how did imperialism impact in their daily lives?

## PROFESSIONALISM AND PARTICIPATION POLICIES

**I emphasize and require an environment of mutual respect in our classroom. To help build an environment of mutual respect in the classroom:**

- Come to class with a positive attitude, respect for your class-mates and our discussions, a sincere desire to understand, and a willingness to work towards common goals.
- While we might address controversial, and occasionally even uncomfortable, subject matter, it is crucial that we speak to one another respectfully and endeavor to listen attentively to the ideas of others.
- Listening attentively is an active form of learning, not passive reception.

### How will you succeed in this course?

- 1) Because **this course is reading and writing intensive**, the best route to success is to develop the habit of reading and writing a little bit each day. You will read 100-150 pages per week (that's about 1/5th the reading of graduate seminar and well within range for a 4000-level course). Reading ahead and taking notes as you read are always recommended. Our duty with what we read is to interpret, objectively, the most meaningful and valuable points *in* the text, and to then compare and evaluate differing interpretations to formulate an analytical payoff *for* the text.
- 2) **Participation is key to your learning.** Everyone contributes to the success of this course. Speaking up during class is easier for some than others. I can help out if you are unsure how to enter the conversation—talk to me after class or send me an email. If you have any concerns about participation in this course, please talk with me..
- 3) Come to class **prepared to think critically and carefully** about difficult problems. Remember that sometimes critical thinking involves making an argument that you support with evidence to convince others of what you say. Argument is not always about fighting over what you “know” is right. Rather, argument is often about explaining an important point to others, entering a conversation, or helping others *help us* to understand this point. Argumentation is a way to illuminate important ideas that we have in common, to challenge received wisdom, and to rethink a world view.

### How to think about preparing:

- **the text is your evidence** to back up your argument and claims
- prepare for discussions by **identifying specific examples** from the reading
- identifying this **textual evidence** will help you contribute to discussion, and also to help others think rigorously and responsibly through textual problems
- think of our conversations as an exercise in **critical analysis, reasoning, and persuasion.**

### Useful techniques to enhance your class participation skills:

- **prepare at least one comment or question** about the week's reading for each discussion session.
- **write your questions down** and come prepared to raise your ideas in discussion.
- when you talk, **address your comments to the whole class**, not just to me.
- **identify suggestions** for things you would like to discuss (e.g., confusing passages, key terms).
- feel free to **ask questions** if something is unclear.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What if I'm sick or miss class?

If you are feverish or come down with the flu or a nasty cold (are coughing, sneezing, or vomiting prior to class), notify me of your absence by email, and please do not attend class. The absence will count toward your **two (2) free absences**. You do not need to detail your symptoms or provide a doctor's note. If you anticipate that your illness will last longer than the **two (2) free absences**, please email me so we can consider your options. Beyond these **two (2) free absences**, FIU attendance policy will be enforced. That means you will have to provide a doctor's note, evidence of religious observance, or evidence of a death in the immediate family to have the absence excused. More than two absences in this course without an FIU-acceptable excuse can result in a failing grade for the course.

### What if I can't turn work in on time?

You will do a lot of writing in this course. All work must be turned in on the date specified. Late work penalties will be applied **unless you have spoken with me prior to the deadline**. Late assignments will earn a half grade deduction per day late (e.g. 2 days late = one full letter grade less). If you have an emergency, I understand that. Emergencies happen. Please communicate with me as soon as possible so that we can plan together how you might complete your assignment. I am always open to and generous with allowing extensions IF you contact me in advance of the deadline. Once the deadline passes, then rules for late work will be applied. You must turn in all work for this course by the last work deadline to pass the class.

### What kind of assignments should I expect to do?

There will be class discussion and short writing assignments, in addition to reading and essay assignments. For these and the longer essays, you will be informed of the expectations and instructions for the assignment well in advance of the due date. We will also work together to peer review each assignment in advance of the due date. Doing so not only helps you to think about writing as a process (not something you do the night before!), but it will also teach you to provide constructive criticism to colleagues, a valuable skill both in college and in your future professions. You are always welcome to ask me questions about assignments in class, by email, or in office hours. I'd rather have you ask a question than be confused or spend time working on the wrong assignment.

### Can I use a laptop, tablet, or cell phone in class?

In keeping with my comments above about an environment of mutual respect, the use of cellular phones is not allowed in my class without prior permission. Please turn off and put away your phone when you come to class. We have 2+ hours together each week. Let's make the most of that time! If I have to speak with you about texting, I will ask you to leave class and count you absent for the day. **Since this course involves reading many texts online, laptops or tablets needed for note taking or reading texts are allowed.** Cellular phones are not appropriate for the kind of close reading and textual analysis we will do in this course. With the devices, if I see that you are on social media or any other website not associated with our discussion, you will be asked to leave and counted absent that day.

### How will I find out about assignments and changes to the syllabus?

Often assignments and instructions will be delivered via email. Reading my emails and coming prepared to class with any handouts you receive is your responsibility. Weekly assignments and coming prepared to class (this includes bringing your book or laptop for reading the texts) count toward your participation grade. If you have questions about the class, I always recommend checking your syllabus and assignment first or asking a classmate! The answers to your questions can frequently be found in this way. If you still need to email me with a question, however, feel free to do so. I'm happy to help!

## ABOUT PLAGIARISM - What is academic misconduct? How do I avoid it?

Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook.

Academic Misconduct includes: **Cheating** – The unauthorized use of books, notes, aids, electronic sources; or assistance from another person with respect to examinations, course assignments, field service reports, class recitations; or the unauthorized possession of examination papers or course materials, whether originally authorized or not. **Plagiarism** – The use and appropriation of another’s work without any indication of the source and the representation of such work as the student’s own. Any student who fails to give credit for ideas, expressions or materials taken from another source, including internet sources, is responsible for plagiarism.

In order to avoid plagiarism, please follow these procedures in all your assignments:

- If you reproduce statements verbatim, place them in quotation marks and explicitly state the author’s name and cite your source. In the case of a block quotation, forego quotation marks (per MLA guidelines) but make sure to indent the quotation and clearly cite your source.
- If you reproduce or rephrase the general idea (not verbatim), forego quotation marks but still explicitly state the author’s name and cite your source.

Learn more about the [academic integrity policies and procedures](#) as well as [student resources](#) that can help you prepare for a successful semester.

## What other resources are available to me as a student at FIU?

**Disability Resource Center:** I am committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students who I recognize may learn, participate, and engage in different ways. The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive, and sustainable.

- The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students.
- If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305/348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center (GC) 190.
- Please also notify me of any DRC accommodations as soon as possible. We can then work together to best coordinate your accommodations for this course.

Whether or not you have a DRC plan for academic accommodations, if you anticipate any issues related to the requirements, structure, or format of this course, please reach out to me so we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation and success in this course.

**Digital Accessibility Resources:** Please visit our [ADA Compliance](#) webpage for information about accessibility involving the tools used in this course. Please visit [Canvas's Accessibility Commitment](#) webpage for more information. For additional assistance please contact FIU's [Disability Resource Center](#).

**Violence and Harassment Resources:** Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, sexual orientation, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can file a complaint through FIU's Equal Opportunity Programs & Diversity Office. You may file a complaint with one of the Title IX coordinators listed below. Alternatively, you may file an anonymous complaint using our Ethical Panther Reporting Line, Convercent by calling 844-312-5358 or online at <https://compliance.fiu.edu/hotline.html>

**Crisis Resources:** You can also find the appropriate resources at the Dean of Students Office (305-348-2797). If you are in crisis, you can find the appropriate resources at Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS). Counseling & Psychological Services provides free and confidential mental health services to students that will facilitate and enhance their personal learning, emotional well-being, and academic skills development, contributing to their success at Florida International University.

CAPS Modesto Maidique  
Campus  
UHSC 270  
305-348-2277

CAPS Biscayne Bay Campus  
WUC 320  
305-919-5305

**Food insecurity resources:**

The Student Food Pantry is an initiative to address the prevalence of food insecurity on campus. This project assists students who are experiencing financial difficulty to purchase groceries. No proof of need is required and students can access the pantry once a week.

Modesto Maidique Campus  
DM 166  
305-348-6995  
Biscayne Bay Campus  
WUC 307  
305-919-5620 Ext. 4

In addition to campus programs and services, additional resources are available in the community.

**LOOKING FORWARD TO A TERRIFIC TERM!**

**Literature 4931/WST 4260: Schedule of Discussions and Readings**

**T = Text you purchase      C = Text on Canvas**

**Week 1**

Aug. 20

**DISCUSSION TODAY:**

Introduction, Syllabus, "Imperialism and Gender"  
Discussion Leader Assignment explanation and sign-ups

**READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Curse for a Nation" (poem; **C**)
- (2) Tiffany Ruby Patterson, "Unfinished Migrations" (article; **C**)
- (3) Katherine Montwieler, "Domestic Politics" (article; **C**)

**Week 2 (Group 1)**

Aug. 27 **The Middle Passage, Slavery, and the Diaspora**

**DISCUSSION TODAY:**

- (1) Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Curse for a Nation" (poem; **C**)
- (2) Tiffany Ruby Patterson, "Unfinished Migrations" (article; **C**)
- (3) Katherine Montwieler, "Domestic Politics" (article; **C**)

**READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (poem; **C**)
- (2) Michael Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* ("Transatlantic Moment" excerpt pp. 59-81, "Scope of the Trade" pp. 62-64, "Belly of the Whale" pp. 71-79) (excerpts from a book; **C**)

**Week 3**

Sept. 3 **NO CLASS MEETING TODAY – LABOR DAY OBSERVED BY FIU**

**Week 4 (Group 2)**

Sept. 10

**DISCUSSION TODAY:**

- (1) Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point" (poem; **C**)
- (2) Michael Gomez, *Reversing Sail: A History of the African Diaspora* ("Transatlantic Moment" excerpt pp. 59-81, "Scope of the Trade" pp. 62-64, "Belly of the Whale" pp. 71-79) (excerpts from a book; **C**)

**READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) Felicia Hemans, "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England" (poem; **C**)
- (2) Tricia Lootens, "States of Exile" (article; **C**)
- (3) Tricia Lootens, "Antislavery Afterlives" from *The Political Poetess* (chapter; **C**)

### Week 5 (Group 3)

Sept. 17

#### **DISCUSSION TODAY:**

- (1) Felicia Hemans, "The Landing of the Pilgrim Fathers in New England" (poem; **C**)
- (2) Tricia Lootens, "States of Exile" (article; **C**)
- (3) Tricia Lootens, "Antislavery Afterlives" from *The Political Poetess* (chapter; **C**)

#### **READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) Felicia Hemans, "Indian Woman's Death Song," "The Homes of England," "The Traveller at the Source of the Nile" (poems; **C**)
- (2) Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, "Aboriginal Mother" (poem; **C**)
- (3) Letitia Stimson, "The Homes of England" (poem; **C**)
- (4) Jason Rudy, excerpts from *Imagined Homelands*, "Circulating Sentiments: Felicia Hemans in Canada and Australia" (chapter; **C**)

### Week 6 (Group 4)

#### **Due: First Paper Thesis & Introduction for Peer Workshop (bring 2 copies to class)**

Sept. 24

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) Felicia Hemans, "Indian Woman's Death Song," "The Homes of England," "The Traveller at the Source of the Nile" (poems; **C**)
- (2) Eliza Hamilton Dunlop, "Aboriginal Mother" (poem; **C**)
- (3) Letitia Stimson, "The Homes of England" (poem; **C**)
- (4) Jason Rudy, excerpts from *Imagined Homelands*, "Circulating Sentiments: Felicia Hemans in Canada and Australia" (chapter; **C**)

#### **READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) *The History of Mary Prince* (Introduction and pp. 1-38; **T**)
- (2) Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, "Enslavement" pp. 82-106, "African Provenance" pp. 65-71 (excerpts; **C**)

### Week 7 (Group 5)

#### **Due: First Paper uploaded to Canvas by 2:00 p.m.**

Oct. 1 **Caribbean Hybridity**

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) *The History of Mary Prince* (Introduction and pp. 1-38; **T**)
- (2) Gomez, *Reversing Sail*, "Enslavement" pp. 82-106, "African Provenance" pp. 65-71 (excerpts; **C**)

#### **READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands* (Chs. 1-9; **T**)
- (2) Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Black Victorians / Black Victorian* (Introduction pp. 1-7; excerpts; **C**)
- (3) Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, "Mrs. Seacole's Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands and the Consciousness of Transit" (article; **C**)

### Week 8 (Group 6)

Oct. 8

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands* (Chs. 1-9; T)
- (2) Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina, *Black Victorians / Black Victorian* (Introduction pp. 1-7; excerpts; C)
- (3) Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert, "Mrs. Seacole's Wonderful Adventures in Many Lands and the Consciousness of Transit" (article; C)

#### **READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands* (Chs. 10-End; T)
- (2) Introduction & Appendices to *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands*
- (3) Hawthorne, "Self-Writing, Literary Traditions, and Post-Emancipation Identity: The Case of Mary Seacole" (article; C)

### Week 9 (Group 7)

Oct. 15

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands* (Chs. 10-End; T)
- (2) Introduction & Appendices to *Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Mary Seacole in Many Lands*
- (3) Hawthorne, "Self-Writing, Literary Traditions, and Post-Emancipation Identity: The Case of Mary Seacole" (article; C)

#### **READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) Torulata Dutt, "Our Casuarina Tree," "Jogadhya Uma," "On the Flyleaf of Erckmann Chatrian's novel entitled *Madame Thérèse*," and "France, 1870" (poems; C)
- (2) Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle's *Introduction to Theory and Criticism*, "The colony" (chapter; C)
- (3) Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak" (article; C)

### Week 10 (Group 8)

Oct. 22 **East Indian Perspectives**

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) Torulata Dutt, "Our Casuarina Tree," "Jogadhya Uma," "On the Flyleaf of Erckmann Chatrian's novel entitled *Madame Thérèse*," and "France, 1870" (poems; C)
- (2) Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle's *Introduction to Theory and Criticism*, "The colony" (chapter; C)
- (3) Gayatri Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak" (article; C)

#### **READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) Pandita Ramabai selections from *The Letters and Correspondence* (excerpts; C)
- (2) Ramabai, "Married Life" (pp. 56-75) excerpt from *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* (C)
- (3) Clementina Butler, *Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati: Pioneer in the Movement for the Education of the Child-widow of Indian* (a biography) (excerpts; C)
- (4) **Review and consider with:** Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak" (article; C)

### Week 11 (Group 9)

**Due: Proposal for Final Paper/Project uploaded to Canvas by 2:00 p.m.**

Oct. 29

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) Pandita Ramabai selections from *The Letters and Correspondence* (excerpts; **C**)
- (2) Ramabai, "Married Life" (pp. 56-75) excerpt from *The High-Caste Hindu Woman* (**C**)
- (3) Clementina Butler, *Pandita Ramabai Sarasvati: Pioneer in the Movement for the Education of the Child-widow of Indian* (a biography) (excerpts; **C**)
- (4) **Review:** Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak" (article; **C**)

#### **READ FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, selections from *Motichur*, "The Degradation of Woman," "The Better Half," "The Good Housewife," and "Sultana's Dream" (**T**)
- (2) Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism*, pp 23-52 (excerpts; **C**)

### Week 12 (Group 10)

Nov. 5

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, selections from *Motichur*, "The Degradation of Woman," "The Better Half," "The Good Housewife," and "Sultana's Dream" (**T**)
- (2) Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation: Community, Religion, and Cultural Nationalism*, pp 23-52 (excerpts; **C**)

#### **READING FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) (Rassundari Devi) Rashundari Debi's *Amar Jiban* (Introduction and pp. 1-50 [end before "Sixth Composition"]) (**C**)
- (2) Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation*, pp. 95-134 "A Book of Her Own, A Life of Her Own: The Autobiography of a Nineteenth-Century Woman" (excerpts; **C**)

### Week 13

Nov. 12 **NO CLASS MEETING TODAY – VETERANS' DAY OBSERVED BY FIU**

### Week 14

Nov. 19 **NO CLASS MEETING TODAY – DISCUSSION ONLINE ONLY**

#### **TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

- (1) (Rassundari Devi) Rashundari Debi's *Amar Jiban* (Introduction and pp. 1-50 [end before "Sixth Composition"]) (**C**)
- (2) Tanika Sarkar, *Hindu Wife, Hindu Nation*, pp. 95-134 "A Book of Her Own, A Life of Her Own: The Autobiography of a Nineteenth-Century Woman" (excerpts; **C**)

#### **READ FOR NEXT TIME:**

- (1) (Rassundari Devi) Rashundari Debi's *Amar Jiban*, pp. 50-124 (**C**)
- (2) Priya Joshi, "Circulation of Fiction in Indian Libraries" and "Readers Write Back," excerpts from *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India*

Nov. 22 **THANKSGIVING BREAK**

**Week 15**

**Due: Final Paper OR Project uploaded to Canvas by 2:00 p.m.**

Nov. 26

Presentations (if any) (C)

Course Wrap-Up, Goodbyes, and Survey

**TODAY'S DISCUSSION:**

(1) (Rassundari Devi) Rashsundari Debi's *Amar Jiban*, pp. 50-124 (C)

(2) Priya Joshi, "Circulation of Fiction in Indian Libraries" and "Readers Write Back," excerpts from *In Another Country: Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India*