

**BTP2BR\_T\_44 Poets of the Victorian Age**  
**Spring semester, 2022**

**Course syllabus**

**Format:** seminars

**Teacher:** István Rácz

**Time:** Wed 8.00-9.40

**Room:** 55.

**Office hours:** Tue 10.00-11.00, Wed 13.00-14.00 (Room 108/2)

Under the current regulations, the course is planned to be a face-to-face, classroom-based course, HOWEVER, if due to the pandemic we have to switch to remote teaching, PLEASE be prepared to use the University of Debrecen E-Learning system at [elearning.unideb.hu](http://elearning.unideb.hu).

In case of such a switch, the course evaluation methods (e.g., for class participation) and grading rules may be subject to change. You will be notified of these changes if needed.

It is our shared responsibility to observe effective hygiene rules and follow the relevant government, university and faculty regulations regarding the pandemic. If you become ill or experience any symptoms, please stay home to protect others from infection.

**Prospectus:** The aim of this course is to introduce students to the most important tendencies and poets of the Victorian era. Some of the tendencies to be discussed are the problem of religion versus agnosticism and atheism, the dramatization of first-person poems, and the multiple point of view. The poets to be read will be the most widely canonized Victorian poets: Tennyson, Browning, Barrett-Browning, Hopkins, Swinburne, Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy, and A. E. Housman. As a coda, we will read some contemporary (and near-contemporary) British poems echoing Victorian poetry.

**Note:** Students are required to read the assigned texts (poetry, essays and criticism) in advance.

**Texts:** course packet (distributed in the first class)

**Reader's journal:** Students will need to keep a reader's journal. You need to write at least one paragraph about the texts you have read for each class. Please remember that this needs to be a cohesive text, but it can contain questions that you may want to ask in class.

**Take-home essay:** Students will be required to write a take-home essay of 2,700 to 3,200 words, i.e. 8-10 typewritten pages (double-spaced). It must follow the MLA format. No plagiarizing is allowed. The topic should be one particular aspect of a poet discussed in this course, and should be based on the discussion of two or three freely chosen poems. **You must use at least two printed (non-internet) sources to support your argument.** The deadline is **18<sup>th</sup> May**. **Note:** *no late submission is possible. If you miss this deadline, you cannot get a credit for this course.*

**Note: in case you are a final year student, writing a take-home essay is an option, but not a requirement. The other option is giving two in-class presentations to make up for the essay. Final year students are kindly asked to let me know about their preference in Week 2.**

**Grading** will be based on the in-class essay in week 7 (30%), on the take-home essay or in-class presentations (35%), and regular performance in class (35%).

## **SCHEDULE**

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>TOPICS AND ASSIGNMENTS</b>
1	9/2	Introduction
2	16/2	ALFRED TENNYSON "Ulysses" <i>In Memoriam A. H. H.</i> (excerpts in the course packet) <u>Criticism</u> T. S. Eliot. "Tennyson's <i>In Memoriam</i> ." In: <i>Selected Prose</i> . Middlesex: Penguin, 1963. 166-174.
3	23/2	ROBERT BROWNING "Porphyria's Lover" "Andrea del Sarto" <u>Criticism</u> E. Warwick Slinn. "The Self as Subject." In: <i>Browning and the Fictions of Identity</i> . Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1982. 151-163.
4	2/3	ELIZABETH BARRETT-BROWNING AND THE SONNET IN THE 19 <sup>TH</sup> CENTURY Wordsworth. "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" Keats. "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" "When I Have Fears" Barrett-Browning. <i>Sonnets from the Portuguese</i> IV, VII, XV <u>Criticism</u> James Fenton. "The Sonnet." In: <i>An Introduction to English Poetry</i> . London: Viking, 2002. 77-81. Isobel Armstrong. "The Poetics of Expression." In: <i>Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics</i> . London: Routledge, 1996. 332-367.
5	9/3	GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS "The Windhover" "God's Grandeur" "The Wreck of the Deutschland" <u>Criticism</u> Romano Guardini. "Aesthetic-Theological Thoughts on 'The

Windhover’.” In: Geoffrey H. Hartman, ed. *Hopkins: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Twentieth Century Views ser. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1966. 76-79.  
 Donald E. Morse. “’The Penetration and Illumination of Life’s Experience’ in James Joyce’s *Ulysses* and Gerald Manley Hopkins’s Poetry.” *ABEI Journal* 2/2000 (June): 43-50.

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| 6  | 16/3 | ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE<br>Chorus from <i>Atalanta in Calydon</i><br>“The Garden of Proserpine”<br>“A Forsaken Garden”<br><u>Criticism</u><br>Isobel Armstrong. “Swinburne: Agonistic Republican.” In: <i>Victorian Poetry: Poetry, Poetics and Politics</i> . London: Routledge, 1996. 402-419.   |
| 7  | 23/3 | IN-CLASS ESSAY  |
| 8  | 30/3 | <i>Consultation week, no teaching</i>   |
| 9  | 6/4  | OSCAR WILDE<br>“The Sphinx”<br>“The Ballad of Reading Gaol”<br><u>Criticism</u><br>Richard Ellmann. “The Leftover Years.” In: <i>Oscar Wilde</i> . London: Penguin, 1988. 515-550.  |
| 10 | 13/4 | THOMAS HARDY<br>“Wessex Heights”<br>“The Souls of the Slain”<br>“The Man He Killed”<br>“The Oxen”<br>“The Darkling Thrush”<br>“The Voice”<br><u>Criticism</u><br>David Perkins. “Hardy and the Poetry of Isolation.” In: Albert J. Guerard, ed. <i>Hardy: A Collection of Critical Essays</i> . Twentieth Century Views ser. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1963. 143-159. |
| 11 | 20/4 | A. E. HOUSMAN<br>“1887”<br>“Bredon Hill”<br>“The Immortal Part”<br>“Eight o’Clock”<br><i>Last Poems</i> XX, XL<br>“Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries”   |

Criticism

Christopher Ricks. "The Nature of Housman's Poetry." In: Christopher Ricks, ed. *A. E. Housman: A Collection of Critical Essays*. Twentieth Century Views ser. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1968. 106-122.

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27/4

ECHOES OF VICTORIAN MONOLOGUES AND BALLADS  
IN RECENT BRITISH POETRY

Carol Ann Duffy. "Standing Female Nude"

Peter Porter. "Your Attention Please"

"Soliloquy at Potsdam"

Carol Rumens. "Outside Oswiecim"

Blake Morrison. "The Ballad of the Yorkshire Ripper"

18/5

***Deadline of submitting the take-home essay. Do not print it; please upload it in e-learning.***