We acknowledge that we are living and working on the traditional territory of the Attawandaron (Neutral), Anishnaabeg, and Haudenosaunee peoples. The University of Waterloo is situated on the Haldimand Tract, land promised and given to Six Nations, which includes six miles on each side of the Grand River.

ENGLISH 485

ENGL 485 Topics in Literatures Romantic to Modern: Bleak House, Bleak world
Winter 2020: Mon and Wed 2:30-3:50 in SJ1 2009

Professor Kate Lawson  klawson@uwaterloo.ca  519-888-4567 ext. 33965
Student hours/office hours: Tues and Wed 1:15-2:00 pm  Hagey Hall 264

TEXTS:
All students are required to have a printed copy of Bleak House. All other readings will be posted on Learn.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:
This course focusses on Charles Dickens’ Bleak House, a novel published in twenty monthly parts:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date of publication</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>March 1852</td>
<td>1–4</td>
<td>XI</td>
<td>January 1853</td>
<td>33–35</td>
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<td>II</td>
<td>April 1852</td>
<td>5–7</td>
<td>XII</td>
<td>February 1853</td>
<td>36–38</td>
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<td>III</td>
<td>May 1852</td>
<td>8–10</td>
<td>XIII</td>
<td>March 1853</td>
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<td>IV</td>
<td>June 1852</td>
<td>11–13</td>
<td>XIV</td>
<td>April 1853</td>
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<td>V</td>
<td>July 1852</td>
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<td>XV</td>
<td>May 1853</td>
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<td>VI</td>
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<td>20–22</td>
<td>XVII</td>
<td>July 1853</td>
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<td>VIII</td>
<td>October 1852</td>
<td>23–25</td>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>August 1853</td>
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<td>IX</td>
<td>November 1852</td>
<td>26–29</td>
<td>XIX–XX</td>
<td>September 1853</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>December 1852</td>
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In the course, we will try to mimic the Victorian reading experience by reading and discussing two of the original monthly installments (“numbers”) each week for ten weeks.

One of Dickens’ most important novels, Bleak House begins in the infamous court of Chancery—a London law court that deals with a variety of matters including wills, adoptions, custody, and guardianships—and then radiates out to include slums and country houses, street sweepers and baronets, romance and murder. The novel has two narrators, a present-tense, third-person narrator and a retrospective first-person narrator—a young woman named Esther Summerson.

We will consider how our interpretative habits and strategies change when we read a novel over ten weeks. We will also discuss topics such as the novel’s representation of law and bureaucracy; family and family history; class; gender; illness and disability; politics and reform; and sentiment.

In addition, we will read other material from the Victorian period to contextualize Bleak House, along with some relevant literary and cultural criticism.
Course Learning Objectives:

- to acquire a knowledge of British history and literary history of the 1850s;
- to increase critical responsiveness to the formal aspects of the novel and to realism as a mode;
- to understand serial publication, and the importance of this mode of publication in social history;
- to critically assess ideas in social and cultural criticism;
- to identify and evaluate important themes and the interrelations between the literary works and the cultural concerns of the period;
- to increase critical awareness of the relations between the formal / aesthetic and the intellectual, ethical, and social;
- to hone critical skills in the reading, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of texts;
- to enhance written and oral communication skills.

METHOD OF EVALUATION:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Due/write</th>
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<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Diary (8 entries x 2%)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>noon on Mondays</td>
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<tr>
<td>Response paper or remediation exercise (750-1000 words)</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>February 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay (2500-3000 words)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>April 3</td>
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LATE POLICY:
Essays are due on the dates assigned above. Please email or speak to me regarding extensions. Late penalty: 2 marks per day deducted.

Format: Please post your reading diary entries on Learn. Please hand in a paper copy of the other two assignments. You may give them to me in class, or use the English department essay drop box on the second floor of Hagey Hall (make sure my name is on the assignment as well as yours).

CLASS PARTICIPATION 10%
You must read the required chapters of Bleak House for each Monday class—but don’t skip ahead! We will be discussing the specified chapters in detail, so make notes, underline important sections, use highlighter, sticky notes, whatever you find best to track your reactions/questions to the text as you read.

This class relies on group discussion. Please attend, be prepared for, and contribute to every class. In discussions, I hope that you will be both an independent thinker and a collaborative voice. Often the best discussions include students taking risks in stating their ideas, so please respond respectfully and thoughtfully whether you agree or disagree with someone else.

READING DIARY 15%  Mondays by noon, Jan. 13-Mar. 23
For 8 out of 10 weeks, post on Learn a 200-250 word critical reflection on that week’s chapters from Bleak House. You may comment on whatever interested you (e.g. a character, a twist in the plot, a description, an image, an illustration, etc.), whatever surprised you, whatever bored you, etc. Provide relevant page (or chapter) numbers in your post. Please read posts by your fellow students to prepare for class discussion.

Posts will not be individually graded; you will receive 2% per post, if you post an appropriate critical reflection on Learn by the due date/time.
RESPONSE PAPER or REMEDIATION EXERCISE  30%  February 3

RESPONSE PAPER (750-1000 words)
Provide a close reading of a section of Bleak House. Choose a very short section of the novel that you find particularly interesting; it could be a word, a description of a thing or a character, a brief conversation, a conflict, a landscape, an allusion, a metaphor, etc. Because close reading is a foundational skill in the construction of a larger argument, you may want to try out ideas that you could develop further in your final paper.

Suggestions for getting started on a close reading: What does the passage say? Paraphrase it. How does it say it? Why does it say it like that? What is it doing in the novel as a whole? Now go back to the first question—“What does it say?”—and see if you have a different answer. Why did this section catch your attention? What is strange here? Why were these specific words chosen?

Please indicate page number and chapter number when you refer to the text. Please do not use secondary sources; but if you do choose to use secondary sources, provide citations and a Works Cited.

OR

REMEDIATION EXERCISE
(See Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, Remediation. Assignment adapted from Nathan K. Hensley, Georgetown University; author of Forms of Empire: The Poetics of Victorian Sovereignty, 2016.)

Part 1: paragraph / “translation”:
Faithfully translate a paragraph from Bleak House into a new medium: a) pick a paragraph (or a scene of dialogue) in the novel; b) choose a destination medium (video, text message, Twitter, Facebook, poetry, drama, painting, sculpture, etc.); c) translate.

Part 2: 600-750 word reflection essay:
Critically reflect on what is lost and gained in your “translation”; what are the affordances of each medium? What did you learn about the novel form by doing a translation? What specific decisions did you make and why did you make them?

ESSAY (2500-3000 words)  45%  April 3
Essay topics will be handed out in advance of the due date, but you are also encouraged to develop your own topic. The essay is due on April 3 but you are welcome to hand it in early. I urge you to begin working on the essay in late February or early March and to develop a working thesis and a draft of the first paragraph to share with me, either in my office hours or by email. I hope that feedback early in the process will result in a stronger final essay.

Essay format
• 12-point font; 1”/2.5 cm. margins;
• double-spaced;
• printing on two sides of the page is acceptable;
• a word count at the end of the document;
• MLA format; see Owl at Purdue for information on MLA
• A title that names the work(s) under discussion and indicates your approach to the topic.
WEEK 1 January 6-8: introductions; introduction to the course; Dickens, Serial publication; the 1850s; realism

WEEK 2 January 13-15:

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Charity, Africa
_Master narratives_ [Chapter 3: “... Jarndyce and Jarndyce—the—a—in itself a monument of Chancery practice. In which (I would say) every difficulty, every contingency, every masterly fiction, every form of procedure known in that court, is represented over and over again...”]

WEEK 3 January 20-24:

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Labour
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, “The Cry of the Children”
Henry Mayhew, “Boy Crossing-Sweepers and Tumblers,” *London Labour and the London Poor*

WEEK 4 January 27-29:

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<tr>
<td>VI</td>
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<td>August 1852</td>
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Law
Kafka, “Before the Law”
Excerpt from Amanda Anderson, *Bleak Liberalism*

WEEK 5 February 3-5:

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<td>October 1852</td>
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***Close Reading or Remediation exercise due***

Poverty
Excerpt from Engels, “*The Great Towns,*” *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (read from the beginning of the chapter to “Let us leave London and …”)

WEEK 6 February 10-12:

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<td>X</td>
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<td>December 1852</td>
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</table>

_The fictional world_
Excerpt from Elaine Auyoung, “Standing Outside *Bleak House*”
Excerpt from Jesse Oak Taylor, “The Novel as Climate Model”

****February 17-21: Reading Week, no classes *****
WEEK 7 February 24-26:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>XI</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>January 1853</th>
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<td>XII</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>February 1853</td>
<td>36–38</td>
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</table>

Connections and disconnections
Map of The Bleak House world
John Snow’s cholera map
Excerpt from Thomas Carlyle, Past and Present
Excerpt from Ian Duncan, “Realism” (“common humanity” “nothing in common with each other”)

WEEK 8 March 2-4:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>XIII</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>March 1853</th>
<th>39–42</th>
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<tr>
<td>XIV</td>
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<td>April 1853</td>
<td>43–46</td>
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Death, ruin, breakage
Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “Tithonus”
Christina Rossetti, “The Prince’s Progress”

WEEK 9 March 9-11:

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<th>XV</th>
<th>15</th>
<th>May 1853</th>
<th>47–49</th>
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<tr>
<td>XVI</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>June 1853</td>
<td>50–53</td>
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Detection
Wed March 11: Class visit: Dr. Mike Lesiuk. Excerpts from J. Hillis Miller; Umberto Eco, Thomas A. Sebeok, The Sign of Three: Dupin, Holmes, Peirce; Robert Douglas-Fairhurst (to be posted on Learn)

Excerpt from Robin Warhol. ‘AND DYING THUS AROUND US EVERY DAY,’ Gendered Interventions: Narrative Discourse in the Victorian Novel

WEEK 10 March 16-18:

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<th>XVII</th>
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<th>July 1853</th>
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<tr>
<td>XVIII</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>August 1853</td>
<td>57–59</td>
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</table>

Marriage
Matthew Arnold, “The Buried Life”
Excerpts from J. Hillis Miller, “Moments of Decision in Bleak House”

WEEK 11 March 23-25:

| XIX–XX 19-20 | September 1853 | 60–67 |

Reparation
Excerpts from John O. Jordan, Supposing Bleak House
Excerpt from Eve Kosovsky Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading”

WEEK 12 March 30-April 1: review, summing up, looking back
**Cross-listed course (requirement for all Arts courses)**

Please note that a cross-listed course will count in all respective averages no matter under which rubric it has been taken. For example, a PHIL/PSCI cross-list will count in a Philosophy major average, even if the course was taken under the Political Science rubric.

**Academic Integrity**

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. Check the [Office of Academic Integrity website](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity) for more information.

**Discipline**

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check the Office of Academic Integrity for more information.](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity)

A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate associate dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to [Policy 71, Student Discipline](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity).

**Grievance**

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity). When in doubt, please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

**Appeals**

A decision made or penalty imposed under [Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity) (other than a petition) or [Policy 71, Student Discipline](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to [Policy 72, Student Appeals](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity).

**Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

**Note for students with disabilities:** AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

**Mental Health Support**

All of us need a support system. Arts encourages students to seek out mental health support when needed.

### On Campus

- **Counselling Services:** [counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:counselling.services@uwaterloo.ca) / 519-888-4567 ext. 32655
- **MATES:** one-to-one peer support program offered by Federation of Students (FEDS) and Counselling Services
- **Health Services Emergency service:** located across the creek from Student Life Centre

### Off campus, 24/7

- **Good2Talk:** Free confidential help line for post-secondary students. Phone: 1-866-925-5454
- **Grand River Hospital:** Emergency care for mental health crisis. Phone: 519-749-4300 ext. 6880
- **Here 24/7:** Mental Health and Crisis Service Team. Phone: 1-844-437-3247
- **OK2BME:** set of support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning teens in Waterloo. Phone: 519-884-0000 extension 213

Full details can be found online on the Faculty of Arts website

Download [UWaterloo and regional mental health resources](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity) (PDF)

Download the [WatSafe app](https://www.ualberta.ca/academic-integrity) to your phone to quickly access mental health support information