EN 8543: Studies in English Literature
1832-1900
Dr. Shalyn Claggett

VICTORIAN CRIME

Charlotte Brontë, Jane Eyre (ISBN#: 978-0393975420)
Thomas Hardy, Tess of the D’Urbervilles (ISBN#: 978-0393959031)
Wilke Collins, No Name (ISBN#: 978-0140433975)
Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Lady Audley’s Secret (ISBN#: 978-0199537242)
Charles Dickens, Barnaby Rudge (ISBN#: 978-0199538201)

*N.B. You are required to use the editions specified (by ISBN#) above.

During the Victorian Period, crime and its detection were defined, for the first time, as concerns of the state. The Police Act of 1829, the emergence of detectives, and the burgeoning of forensic science all attest to a widespread concern with crime. In this class, we will examine works that take up this growing cultural anxiety in both exploitative and critical ways. By focusing on works that address and represent behavior that radically transgressed the social, legal, and moral ideology of the day, we will seek to uncover the social conditions and cultural understandings that led to the public’s preoccupation with tales of bigamy, fraud, arson, blackmail, and murder.

Course Requirements:

Two exams, an annotated critical bibliography, class presentation, and a long research paper.