### Module Title

**Dickens and the Condition of England**

### Module Code

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module Code</th>
<th>EAS3165</th>
<th>Module Title</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Lecturer(s)

John Plunkett

### Credit Value

- **Credit Value**: 30
- **ECTS Value**: 15

### Pre-Requisites

None

### Co-Requisites

None

### Duration of Module

11 weeks

### Total Student Study Time

300 hours (including 1 x 2-hr and 1 x 1-hr seminar per week)

### Aims

The module aims to provide an examination of the career of probably the most successful and influential of all Victorian novelists, Charles Dickens. It will particularly focus on the way his novels portrayed the dramatic changes in the social structure of industrial Britain from the 1840s-1870s. Seminars will focus on a number of Dickens's major novels, including *Bleak House*, *Great Expectations*, *Tale of Two Cities* and *Dombey and Son*, exploring social and literary issues such as comedy, class relations, sentimentality and melodrama, gender relations, modes of narration, his relationship to the realist novel, and cityscapes. In addition to Dickens's major works, the seminar will focus on the evolution of Dickens's career as an exemplar of the changing role of the Victorian novelist and the growth of the literary marketplace. Seminars will draw on material from the University of Exeter Special Collections in order to explore Dickens's role as editor of *Household Words* and *All the Year Round*. Other topics to be discussed include Dickens's public readings and his literary celebrity, modes of publication, and his extensive journalistic output.

### Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

**On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:**

1. **Module Specific Skills:**
   
   a. demonstrate a thorough understanding of the major novels and Charles Dickens and the evolution of his career as a novelist.
   
   b. demonstrate an informed appreciation of the social, cultural and political changes of the Victorian period, particularly the Condition-of-England question.
   
   c. demonstrate an awareness of many of the key aesthetic, commercial, and political influences on the work of Charles Dickens.
2. **Discipline Specific Skills:**
   
a. demonstrate an advanced ability to analyse the novels of Charles Dickens and to relate its concerns and its modes of expression to its historical context.

b. demonstrate an advanced ability to interrelate texts and discourses specific to their own discipline with issues in the wider context of cultural and intellectual history.

c. demonstrate an advanced ability to understand and analyse relevant theoretical ideas, and to apply these ideas to literary texts.

3. **Personal and Key Skills:**
   
a. through seminar work and presentations, demonstrate advanced communication skills, and an ability to work both individually and in groups.

b. through essay-writing, demonstrate appropriate research and bibliographic skills, an advanced capacity to construct a coherent, substantiated argument, and a capacity to write clear and correct prose.

c. through research for seminars, essays, and presentations demonstrate advanced proficiency in information retrieval and analysis.

d. through research and writing, demonstrate an advanced capacity to make critical use of secondary material, to question assumptions, and to reflect on their own learning process.

**LEARNING/TEACHING METHODS**

**Details of Learning and Teaching Methods:**

Teaching is by one two-hour and one one-hour seminar a week. Students will be expected to participate in class discussion, and will be encouraged to hold independent small group meetings in preparation for the seminars. Seminar attendance is compulsory, and students are expected to participate in seminar discussions.

**ASSIGNMENTS & ASSESSMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative or % Contribution:</th>
<th>Form of Assessment:</th>
<th>Size of the assessment e.g. duration/length</th>
<th>ILO's assessed by this assessment:</th>
<th>Feedback method:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15%</td>
<td>Critical Commentary</td>
<td>1000 words</td>
<td>1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c.</td>
<td>Feedback sheet with opportunity for tutorial follow-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
<td>1a,1b, 1c2a, 2b, 2c, 3b3c3d</td>
<td>Feedback sheet with opportunity for tutorial follow-up.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50%</td>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>3000 words</td>
<td>1a.1b,1c, 3a, 2a, 2b, 2c, 3b, 3c.</td>
<td>Feedback sheet with opportunity for tutorial follow-up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SYLLABUS PLAN

1. Beginnings: Sketching London
2. Christmas Books
3. Making Tracks
4. The Machine Age
5. Editor, Journalist, Celebrity (I)
6. The Condition of England Question (I)
7. The Condition of England Question (II)
8. Great Expectations
9. Revolutionary Cityscapes: London to Paris
10. Editor, Journalist, Celebrity (II)
11. Riches and Dust-Heaps

INDICATIVE LEARNING RESOURCES

Indicative basic reading list:

Primary texts

Please purchase the novels listed below.


Charles Dickens, *Dombey and Son* (Penguin Classics, 2006)


A selection from Dickens's journalism and *Sketches by Boz*, together with related contextual readings will be made available in a course reading pack.

Selected secondary texts


Sally Ledger, *Dickens and the Popular Radical Imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)

Rosemary Bodenheimer, *Knowing Dickens* (Cornell UP, 2007)


Juliet John, *Dickens's villains: melodrama, character, popular culture* (Oxford University Press, 2001)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Efraim Sicherm, <em>Rereading the city, rereading Dickens: representation, the novel, and urban realism</em> (AMS Press, 2003)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicative web based resources:** Exeter Learning Environment.

**Reading for week 1**

[Selected short pieces from Charles Dickens, *Sketches By Boz*]

**DATE OF LAST REVISION**