

ENG 4880/81 Literature of the Victorian Period: The 1860s and the Victorian “World”

Dr Jill Ehnenn ❖ 100% online via Zoom ❖ MW 3:30-4:45



This seminar will explore British literature and culture of the 1860s. This is the decade *Great Expectations*, *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland*, and the rise of sensation fiction and melodrama; it is the era of Darwin, the first transatlantic cable, and a growing awareness that Britain's interdependence on a global network of trade in raw materials—like coal—would someday become unsustainable. The 1860s saw many English poets at the height of their powers, the popularization of photography, and the apex of Victorian realism; the British literary imagination was inspired by myth, Italian unification, and the abolition of slavery in the U.S.; and it was also a decade of fierce debates about nature, capitalism, marriage, voting, and race.

Against this backdrop, this seminar will consider how British literature (including literature from India, Australia, and other colonial spaces) reflects and affects global networks of power, knowledge, resources, and culture-making. Our study will include novels, poetry, plays, prose and the visual arts, and attend to questions of race and empire, class, gender and sexuality, and environmentalism.