



**WBU Online**  
**School of Languages and Literature**

**Wayland Baptist University Mission Statement:** Wayland Baptist University exists to educate students in an academically challenging, learning-focused, and distinctively Christian environment for professional success and service to God and humankind.

**Course Name:**

ENGL 5304.VC01 — Studies in British Literature: Victorian Family Mystery

**Term and Year:**

Spring 2 2024 (8-week term), Monday, March 25 – Saturday, May 18, 2024

**Instructor:**

Dr. Karen Beth Strovas

**Phone Number and Email**

Office (806) 291-1114, cell (806) 292-3543, 8 am–8 pm only for texts, please. Otherwise, use email. StrovasK@wbu.edu (Email is the best way to reach me!)

**Office hours, Building, and Location**

By appointment or M-F 9-11 a.m. & 1-5 p.m. except during university holidays. Office located at Gates Hall 202A on the WBU Plainview campus.

**Class Meeting Time and Location**

Fully-online asynchronous course located on Blackboard.

**Catalog Description:** Topics of special interest to graduate students and not covered elsewhere in the curriculum. May be repeated one time when topic varies. **Prerequisite:** graduate standing.

**Required Textbook and Resources:**

- Hewitt, M. *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford UP. Online ISBN: 9780191800474; Print ISBN: 9780198736813. [Available through inclusive access in Blackboard.]
- [Wuthering Heights. FREE PUBLIC DOMAIN ETEXT](#) or Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Penguin Classics. 978-0-14-143955-6
- [Bleak House. FREE PUBLIC DOMAIN ETEXT](#) or Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House*. Penguin Classics. 978-0-14-143972-3. OPTIONAL, Films on Demand BBC *Bleak House* miniseries.
- [The Moonstone. FREE PUBLIC DOMAIN ETEXT](#) or Collins, Wilkie. *The Moonstone*. Penguin Classics. 978-0-14-043408-8
- [Lady Audley's Secret. FREE PUBLIC DOMAIN ETEXT](#) or Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. *Lady Audley's Secret*. Penguin Classics. 978-0-14-043584-9

- **[Note]** The above-listed novel titles are in the public domain and available as digital reads or downloads through various e-book outlets, such as [Project Gutenberg](#) or your local library or library app. I do not mind if you use free books. Likewise, if you already own other editions of these books, use the ones you own! I will be using these Penguin Classics print texts to prepare my lectures notes, though I will likely refer to chapter numbers alongside page numbers in my lectures, so if you are completing the reading assignments in a differently-paginated book or ebook, you should be able to follow along with lecture material just fine. That being said, these are long novels and **you'll benefit from having a print copy on hand** for taking notes and prepping support for your weekly posts and end-of-term research paper.
- This course will take place entirely online. You must have a reliable and secure computer connection and internet service, as well as access to software for writing papers (such as Microsoft Word) and software capable of reading documents produced in .html and .pdf formats; also, have access to backup media such as a USB flash drive or Dropbox, etc.
- Regular access and known passwords to WBU Blackboard and WBU email account. Your WBU email is likely the only way that I will contact you.
- **Trigger Warning/Please Note:** Some of the language and subject matter of the literary pieces may be offensive to some readers, with trigger warnings of child abuse, mental illness, assault, death of a loved one, supernatural hauntings, bullying, trauma, animal abuse, drug or alcohol use, and racially-motivated slurs. I do not necessarily condone the language or content in each piece, but I have assigned each one for its creative, artistic, or discussion value.

### Course Outcome Competencies:

At the end of the course, students actively engaged in learning will be able to:

1. describe characteristics of the subject and theme of family dynamics and parent (or surrogate parents-child) relationships and themes of mystery in British literature;
2. demonstrate the ability to read critically and communicate persuasively about the works selected;
3. conduct graduate-level research on a piece of literature related to the subject or theme selected for the course;
4. use above research to complete an essay or media piece that demonstrates graduate-level skills in research, writing, argument, and analysis.

*The more the student puts into the course, the higher his or her outcome competencies will be.*

### Attendance Requirements

This WBU Online course is set up on a weekly “module” basis. This means assignments, readings, discussions, papers, etc. will generally be presented and due each week (Monday-Sunday). Therefore, a *minimum* “attendance” of accessing the Blackboard (BB) class at least twice a week is required in order to complete the course successfully. Participation and attendance will be determined through discussion board posts and/or submission of assignments. With that in mind, failure to submit two or more required assignments (including Discussion Board posts) is grounds for receiving an F in the course, regardless of final grade average. Makeup work will be offered at the instructor's discretion and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any authorized makeups must be completed within the time limit set by the instructor; otherwise, the makeup grade will be zero. Finally, recall that WBU's catalog stipulates students who miss 25% or more of class time will automatically fail the course. 25% of 8 weeks is 2 weeks.

### Academic Honesty

No form of cheating will be tolerated. *Plagiarism*—copying or purchasing someone else's words or ideas

and presenting them as your own—is not only a form of cheating but also a serious academic offense. In the very least plagiarism or related forms of cheating will result in an F on the work in question, with the possibility of an F in the class. An official report will also be filed with the VP of Academics. See the catalog for further information on the penalties of plagiarism. [Link to Statement on Academic Integrity](#)

- a. No use of any generative AI tools permitted.
  1. Students are required to create and produce all work themselves or with assigned group members. Any work submitted that has used an AI generative tool like ChatGPT will be in immediate violation of the academic integrity policies for the course and WBU.
  2. All assignments must be fully created, designed, and prepared by the student(s).
  3. Any work that uses generative AI will be treated as plagiarism.

### **Disability Statement**

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), it is the policy of Wayland Baptist University that no otherwise qualified person with a disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any educational program or activity in the university. The Disability Services Coordinator and Academic Coach serves as the coordinator of students with disabilities and must be contacted concerning accommodation requests (office (806) 291-1057. Documentation of a disability must accompany any request for accommodations.

### **Technical Aspects of the course**

If you encounter technical problems, find some assistance at [WBU Online](#).

- You are encouraged to visit the [WBUonline Blackboard login page](#) as soon as possible and work through Blackboard Ultra tutorials are not familiar with how the service works.
- Make sure your browsers are up to date.

### **Class Communication, Announcements, and Updates**

Official announcements not made in class will be sent to our Blackboard class online, and Blackboard automatically forwards these announcements to your WBU email, as well. It is your responsibility to set up your Wayland email account and check it daily. If you need assistance with your **Wayland email**, call IT @ (806)291-3540, OR [access assistance online from IT regarding your email account](#).

### **Class Expectations and Respect for Others**

Students are expected to treat one another and their instructor with respect in all communication, whether that is through email or Blackboard Discussion Boards. Please choose your words well.

### **Wayland Baptist University Multidisciplinary Writing Center (FREE!! Online appointments open!)**

Make a tutorial appointment request online at the [Tutorial Services website](#). Love supporting your fellow students and want to work as a tutor? I can write a recommendation letter for you to apply for this student-worker position. :)

### **Grading Chart:**

- Active typed or video participation in any posted Discussion Board question	50%
- Essay topic proposal with a working thesis (due week 7)	5%
- Reaction Vlog or Podcast (due early week 8)	20%
- Comparative Analysis Essay (due late week 8)	25%

### Assignment Descriptions:

This class is made up of five types of assignments: 1) Scheduled Weekly Readings, 2) Discussion Board Postings, 3) Essay Topic Proposal, 4) Comparative Analysis Essay, and 5) Reaction Vlog or Podcast. More detailed assignment descriptions will be uploaded to “assignment sheets” in Blackboard within at least three weeks of the assignment’s due date. All written assignments must be submitted in electronic form through Blackboard on their due dates. **Late comparative analysis essays, vlogs, or podcasts will be penalized 5 points per 24-hour period.**

#### 1-2. Reading Homework and Discussion Boards Participation–

Students are responsible for reading, studying, and completing the assigned material by the assigned due dates. Each week, I will present at least one or two topics for discussion from the reading or a related subject on the Blackboard forum for this course. You are expected to participate helpfully, thoughtfully, and respectfully in each discussion.

**Assessment of Discussion Boards:** In general, if you follow directions, turn your DB in on time, answer my prompt fully and thoughtfully, and respond to at least two classmates, you will receive between 90-100%. I will automatically deduct 10 points at each 24-hour mark late. I will deduct 10 points for each missing response to a classmate. Each DB post will be assessed on a case-by-case basis for quality and completion.

3. **Essay Topic Proposal** with a working thesis. See essay assignment sheet for more details.

4. **Comparative Analysis** – This is a 1200- to 1500-word argument with a thesis which should be developed by reading two novels closely (or novel + film series). Your analysis should examine a particular character, scene, theme, or significant idea that appears in both novels. Hone in on a single controlling idea or even one specific related moment in the text so that you can successfully argue a convincing thesis in a short space. Use short quoted excerpts and description from the novels to focus and substantiate your argument. **Outside sources are not required—only your primary sources.** I want to see how well you understand what's going on in the primary works themselves. See the assignment sheet for more details.

Use current MLA documentation style (9th edition). Helpful MLA citation documents can be found online but may also be posted to our Blackboard page.

**How I will grade:** These analyses will be evaluated on a rubric according to the following criteria: (1) control and responsible development of discussion; (2) presentation of novels’ language as evidence; (3) analysis of, and ability to draw conclusions from, this evidence; (4) clarity and polish of writing; (5) proper use of MLA documentation style; (6) following directions.

**\*Comparative Analysis Essay is due uploaded to Blackboard by midnight on May 18 midnight central.**

#### 5. Reaction Vlog or Podcast

5a. The **Reaction Vlog option** takes its inspiration from the reaction video and reading vlogs trends of YouTube’s “BookTube” community, in which readers vlog (video-blog) their reading experience and capture their candid reactions during the reading process. Your vlog would need to consist of multiple clips and include preconceptions (such as before-reading hypotheses) or first impressions, regular updates during the reading (at least once every fifty-to-one hundred pages), final thoughts, and analysis of primary themes and characters at the end or along the way. The edited-down final version of connected footage should not exceed 40 minutes. Add personality, flair, snippets of your daily life, etc.,

to fit into the vlog genre. Submit your final project as a YouTube link or VidGrid link or VidGrid embed. **DO NOT EMBED A VIDEO FILE.** Please note that you can record individual clips on VidGrid and then combine them into one video so that you can record a little at a time. (Go to Blackboard Tools menu, Vidgrid Embed, and then Record!)

5b. The **Podcast option** requires you to prepare a 15- to 20-minute audio podcast in which you deliver your thoughts about any one of the assigned texts, with special emphasis on the family dynamics or relationships in the novel. Mandatory elements of the podcast include the following:

- Intro and context – circa 500-800 words of scripted narration that introduces the issue and concept(s) you are addressing. (2-3 min)
- Edited unscripted or loosely scripted discussion of specific textual issues and examples, which can include sound bites from external sources (10-15 minutes after editing)
- Analysis and synthesis (3-5 minutes)
- Additional requirements submitted in .docx or .pdf include
  - full reference list, including all the sources used regardless of medium (books, articles, video documentary, archive sound bites and so on - should be referenced and linked if possible);
  - your personal reflections (200-400 words) on creating the podcast.

**The Final Vlog or Podcast project is due by May 15 midnight central. See assignment sheet for more details.**

**Letter Grade Scale:** My grading scale for this course is as follows: 89.45–100 is an A; 79.45–89.44 is a B; and so forth. Anything below 59.45 is an F. Weighted grades are averaged according to a 100-point scale and are totaled at the end of the semester. Please talk with me if you are having concerns (or happiness!) about your grades.

### **Grade Appeals**

Students shall have protection through orderly procedures against prejudices or capricious academic evaluation. A student who believes that he or she has not been held to realistic academic standards, just evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course by using the student grade appeal process described in the Academic Catalog. Appeals may not be made for advanced placement examinations or course bypass examinations. Appeals are limited to the final course grade, which may be upheld, raised, or lowered at any stage of the appeal process. Any recommendation to lower a course grade must be submitted through the vice president of academic affairs to the Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee for review and approval. The Faculty Assembly Grade Appeals Committee may instruct that the course grade be upheld, raised, or lowered to a more proper evaluation.

## Special Topics in English: Victorian Family Mystery

### Course Schedule/Outline

This schedule is subject to revision, although due dates for graded assignments *will never be earlier* than currently listed. Students will be notified of any changes.

#### **Week 1: Monday, March 25–Thursday, March 28:**

1. Read “Introduction to ENGL 5304” on Blackboard (BB) and complete FIRST REQUIRED ASSIGNMENT on BB (short academic integrity survey) for census attendance count.
2. Read Week 1 Announcement on BB
3. Read full syllabus.
4. Read through the Vlog/Podcast and Comparative Analysis Essay assignment sheets from start to finish. Email any questions you have.
5. Read [Wuthering Heights](#), full novel.
6. Skim Ch. 1 *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction* ebook by Hewitt for added context.
7. View Video Lectures 1a and 1b
8. Complete Week 1 Discussion Board posts—can be delayed until Tuesday after Easter if desired.
9. Make sure to record your reaction vlog AS YOU READ the novel if you have chosen that option. Come see me for help with VigGrid if you need assistance recording.

---Mar. 29-Apr. 1: WBUonline Holidays for Good Friday/Easter Monday break.---

#### **Week 2: Tuesday, April 2–Sunday, April 7:**

1. Read Week 2 Announcement
2. Read and complete first half of [Bleak House](#) or watch first half of BBC series as posted in content folder. See content folder for instructions for BBC series location or click embedded video. (You may need to complete your Microsoft dual authentication log-in before clicking the embed.)
3. Skim Chs. 3-4 *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction* ebook by Hewitt for added context.
4. View Video Lectures 2a and 2b
5. Complete Week 2 Discussion Board post
6. Brainstorm themes for potential *Wuthering Heights* or *Bleak House* essay topics. Make sure to record your vlog AS YOU READ the novel or watch the series if you have chosen that option.

#### **Week 3: Monday, April 8–Sunday, April 14:**

1. Read Week 3 Announcement
2. Read and complete second half of [Bleak House](#) or watch second half of BBC series as posted in content folder. See content folder for instructions for BBC series location or click embedded video. (You may need to complete your Microsoft dual authentication log-in before clicking the embed.)
3. Skim Ch. 5 *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction* ebook by Hewitt for added context.
4. View Video Lectures 3a and 3b
5. Complete Week 3 Discussion Board post
6. Brainstorm themes for potential *Wuthering Heights* or *Bleak House* essay topics.

**Week 4: Monday, April 15–Sunday, April 21:**

1. Read Week 4 Announcement
2. Read and complete [The Moonstone](#), Prologue + “First Period,” and through the First Narrative (Miss Clack’s Narrative) of the “Second Period.”
3. Skim Ch. 6 *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction* ebook by Hewitt for added context.
4. View Video Lectures 4a and 4b
5. Complete Week 4 Discussion Board post
6. Brainstorm themes for potential essays or projects. Make sure to record your vlog AS YOU READ the novel if you have chosen that option.

**Week 5: Monday, April 22–Sunday, April 28:**

1. Read Week 5 Announcement
2. Read and complete [The Moonstone](#), “Second Period,” second through eighth narratives + Epilogue, reading to the end.
3. Skim Ch. 7 *The Victorians: A Very Short Introduction* ebook by Hewitt for added context.
4. View Video Lectures 5a and 5b
5. Complete Week 5 Discussion Board post
6. Pat yourself on the back—what a week! You’re past the halfway point. 😊

**Week 6: Monday, April 29–Sunday, May 5:**

1. Read Week 6 Announcement
2. Read and complete [Lady Audley’s Secret](#), Vols. 1-2
3. View Video Lectures 6a and 6b
4. Complete Week 6 Discussion Board post
5. Don’t forget to record your reaction vlog AS YOU READ the novel if you have chosen that option.
6. Prepare your essay topic. Begin choosing your key passages for analysis, secondary sources (see assignment sheet for research suggestions), and try to devote at least .5-1 hour per day this week to pre-writing such as outlining, taking notes on sources, etc.

**Week 7: Monday, May 6–Sunday, May 12:**

1. Read Week 7 Announcement
2. Read and complete [Lady Audley’s Secret](#), Vol. 3 to the end.
3. Email me 1) a short 3-6 sentence topic synopsis of your upcoming comparative analysis essay, 2) a clear, arguable thesis for your essay, and 3) a consideration of what kind of research you’re doing and what you’ve found thus far. Do this as soon as you solidify your topic and focus—due no later than Wednesday of Week 7.

**Week 8: Monday, May 13–Saturday, May 18:**

1. Read Week 8 Announcement
2. **Vlog or Podcast project due to Blackboard by midnight Central on Wednesday, May 15 (12 a.m. CST, May 16)** —Please see assignment sheet for full details.
3. **Comparative Analysis Final Essay due to Blackboard by midnight Central on Saturday, May 18 (12 a.m. CST, May 19)** —Please see assignment sheet for full details.