

Description

This course deals with the extremely influential essayists of the nineteenth century, especially in their role as cultural critics in a period when culture, society, and identity were undergoing such profound and far-reaching change. Indeed, the very appearance of the writers we read in this course is symptomatic of the tensions, conflicts, and aspirations of the period. The most general subject that we consider is the formation of modern self-consciousness or what has been called the sources of the self. We will also be concerned with the sense of social and moral crisis that permeated the Victorian period. More particularly, the course will focus on how each of our writers developed the resources of English prose as a new form of literary power and purpose as well as how those developments constitute the essence of all modern discourse. This course will ask you to read a lot, think a lot, make connections, raise questions, and understand why--or if--the writers we'll study remain fundamentally important.

Texts**Thomas Carlyle****J. S. Mill****Matthew Arnold****John Ruskin****Walter Pater****John Updike****Sartor Resartus****Autobiography****Culture and Anarchy****Unto this Last****The Renaissance****Self-Consciousness**

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one other major work