

Academic year 2022-23 (תשפ"ג)

**Course title (English):** The Decadent 1890s: The Fin de Siècle in British Literature and Culture

**Course title (Hebrew):** הדקדנטיות של שלהי המאה ה-19

**Course number:** 132-2-0133

**Course slot (semester/s, weekday/s, hours):** Semesters A+B, Mondays 14-16

**Lecturer:** Prof. Eitan Bar-Yosef

**Lecturer's conference hour and contact details:** Mondays 11-12 or by appointment: [eby@bgu.ac.il](mailto:eby@bgu.ac.il)

**Course description & objectives:**

Exploring the range of fantasies, desires, fears, and obsessions that preoccupied Britain in the 1890s, this course will approach the *fin de siècle* as a crucial turning point in British culture. Reading novels, short stories, plays, poems and journalistic work by various authors, the course will examine how the literature of the period reflected shifts in Britain's political, social, urban, and cultural landscape. Themes will include the rise of the "New Woman"; the emergence of new literary movements, such as Aestheticism, Decadence and Symbolism; new sciences - criminology, psychology, and sexology; new visual technologies of communication and entertainment; anxieties concerning degeneration and the fate of Empire; and the interest in the occult.

**Course requirements:**

*Attendance is required*

In-class presentations & short Moodle responses	10%
Mid-year paper (1,500-2,000 words, due first class, semester B)	40%
Final paper (2,000-2,500 words) or Seminar paper (4,000), due 30 Sep	50%

**Themes & bibliography:**

<i>Degeneration</i>	Robert Louis Stevenson, <i>Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> (1886) H.G. Wells, <i>The Time Machine</i> (1895)
<i>The New Woman</i>	Grant Allen, <i>The Woman Who Did</i> (1895) George Egerton, "A Cross Line" (1893) Ella D'Arcy, "The Pleasure-Pilgrim" (1895)
Aestheticism	Oscar Wilde, <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> (1891)
Detective & reason	Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" (1892)
Empire/ the occult	Henry Rider Haggard, <i>She</i> (1887)

The city/ realism     Arthur Morrison, *A Child of the Jago* (1896)  
Socialism & utopia     William Morris, *News from Nowhere* (1890)