

# ENG 461 The Senior Seminar: "Love and Sex in the Victorian Age"

Spring 2019 W 4-6:45

Professor Kenneth McNeil

A Senior Seminar version of a class in Victorian Literature.

The course will examine the often complex attitudes about love and sex in Victorian Britain and seek to test the assumption that the Victorian age was a repressed one, in which all matters concerning sexuality were regarded as taboo. After all, the Victorian age also saw an explosion of scientific and psychological thinking on the very nature of love and sexuality. We will therefore take an interdisciplinary look at Victorian ideas about sex and love as reflected in literature and other cultural works, such as art works, travel narratives, pamphlets, essays, and trial proceedings.

## Course Goals

Since this course is not simply an upper-division literary course but a seminar course, the "capstone" of your English career at Eastern, I will be asking you to develop your ideas about the literature we read through informed and thoughtful discussions during class, and in formal written papers,

presentations, and proposals. The final goal of this semester's study is to allow you to begin thinking about the final product of next semester—an extensively thought out, researched, and reworked big project—what I hope you will consider your best work, the culmination of your work as an English major at Eastern.



Figure 4. "Albert will you marry me?" Lithograph, 1839.



D. G. Rossetti, "Goblin Market," 1859.