

Undisciplining The Victorian Classroom

Peer-Reviewed Assignment

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Date: 2025

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Rhetorics of Empire: A Team-Based, Multimodal Research Presentation

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Overview

Each team will focus on a particular flashpoint in Victorian Imperialism. Your task is to collaboratively plan a 45-minute class session, using your research and communication skills to educate your peers about your event. Collectively, your presentation/lesson should include all group members and practice multiple modes of communication, including written, oral, visual, electronic, and nonverbal (WOVEN).¹ In the big picture, the goal is to learn about and teach others about a particular moment in the history of Empire, in the process demonstrating your aptitude as multimodal communicators.

You may, of course, reference and draw on materials from earlier in the semester as appropriate, but your presentation should also draw on new research. You should draw on at least one secondary, scholarly (peer-reviewed) source – such as a chapter from [*The Oxford History of the British Empire*](#) or an academic article – and at least one secondary, non-scholarly source – such as a podcast or web article (while you may want to use Wikipedia as a starting point, it doesn't count as a source). You should also draw on 2-3 primary sources from different media and genres. We'll talk more about how to do research using library and other resources, and I also encourage groups to share resources with each other. In researching your event and planning your class, consider the following questions:

1. How was your event understood and commented on in the Victorian era in art, literature, journalism, etc.? What media, genres, and communications technologies were deployed? Who was communicating, who were their audiences, and what were their purposes? How are dominant and non-dominant perspectives represented? What do those Victorian representations say about Empire?

¹ WOVEN is a model of multimodal communication developed and practiced by the faculty of the Writing and Communications Program (WCP) at Georgia Tech. It is both an acronym for Written, Oral, Visual, Electronic, Nonverbal modes of communication and a metaphor for effectively weaving together multiple modes of communication. A brief introduction to WOVEN communication is available on the [WCP's website](#), and a much more thorough explanation can be found in the electronic textbook [*WOVENText*](#), which has recently been made open access by Liz Holdsworth, Marlee Givens, Suchismita Dutta, Andy Frazee, and Melissa Ianetta through an Affordable Learning Georgia grant. While some of its content is specific to Georgia Tech, it includes a wealth of material that any instructor could use.

2. How has your event been represented, adapted, etc. in art, literature, etc. by subsequent generations (e.g., by twentieth- or twenty-first-century figures)? What do these adaptations reveal about how subsequent generations have processed the Victorian Era and Empire? How have anti- or post-colonial perspectives commented on your event?
3. Overall, what does your research about your event teach us about both the history of the British Empire and multimodal communication? How did the media, genres, and communications technologies used to communicate your event shape how we understand it? How does your research help us understand imperialism itself as a multimodal project?

How to Use Your Class

Subject to these questions/criteria, how you want to plan your class, present your research, etc. is up to each team. Each of these topics is huge, so don't feel burdened to cover everything – decide as a group what specific aspects you want to emphasize. (Just as an example: if you were assigned the Crimean War, but decided to focus on the Charge of the Light Brigade, that would be fine.) In a 45-minute lesson, you can likely plan 2-4 different activities, and it would be wise to use a variety of teaching/learning methods. Remember that all group members must participate, and all modes of WOVEN must be represented. Other than that, it's up to you to decide what your objectives are and how best to achieve them. Feel free to consider games, group activities, discussions, short reading or viewing activities, etc. At your discretion, you may assign homework in preparation for your class, provided that it doesn't take more than two hours and that it is announced and circulated to the class no later than the class period before your presentation.

Grade

This project is worth 25 points (AKA 25% of the final grade). The grade will be based on:

- Audience/class evaluation of the effectiveness of your class session (5 points, group grade)
- Instructor's evaluation of the overall effectiveness of your class session, including collaboration, use of time, learning activities, etc. (5 points, group grade)
- Instructor's evaluation of effectiveness of multimodal communication (5 points, group grade)
- Instructor's evaluation of understanding, analysis, and research of/about your event and relevant sources (5 points, group grade)
- Group member peer evaluation of individual contributions to the project (5 points, individual grade)

Deliverables/Schedule

- [Week 1, Class 1]: Introduction of the Project
- [Week 1, Class 2]: Group Formation/Topic Selection/Research Practice
- [Week 1, Class 3]: Group Constitution Due
- [Week 2, Class 1]: Annotated Bibliography Due
- [Week 2, Class 1]: Group Work Day. Instructor meets with groups 1-3 during class time.
- [Week 2, Class 2]: Group Work Day. Instructor meets with groups 4-6 during class time.

- [Week 2, Class 3]: Group Lesson Plan Due
- [Weeks 3-4]: Group Class Sessions

Topics/Events

The following historical events comprise the topics. In class, each individual will have the opportunity to sign up for an event/presentation day in a random order. It would be wise to spend some time researching some of the events and having a sense of your first, second, and third choices. Presentations will take place in approximate historical order as listed here.

1. [Second Opium War \(1856-1860\)](#)
2. [Morant Bay Rebellion \(1865\)](#)
3. [Second Anglo-Afghan War \(1878-1880\)](#)
4. [Anglo-Zulu War \(1879\)](#)
5. [Boxer Rebellion \(1899-1901\)](#)
6. [Second Boer War \(1899-1902\)](#)

Process Document Checklist

Each group must submit the following process documents by the appropriate deadlines. While these documents are meant to be formative and will not receive evaluative grades, failure to submit process documents will result in a 10% deduction from the overall project grade per missing document.

Group Constitution	
Annotated Bibliography	
Group Lesson Plan	
Peer Review	

Rubric

Each project will be graded according to the following rubric. The grade is divided among the instructor's evaluations, audience evaluations, and peer evaluations, as below.

Audience/Class Evaluation (5 points out of 25 total):

Class eval. of overall effectiveness (5)	
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Instructor's Evaluations (15 points out of 25 total):

Effectiveness of multimodal communication (5)	
Understanding, analysis, and research of/about your event and relevant sources (5)	

Overall effectiveness of your class session, including collaboration, use of time, learning activities, etc. (5)	
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Overall Group Grade (20 points out of 25 total)*	
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**The final 5 points is an individual grade based on peer evaluations, which will be posted to the gradebook separately.*

Process Document 1: Group Constitution

Each group should make a copy of this document and complete it collaboratively. Submit one document per group.

Group Members:

Topic:

Presentation Date:

1. What will be your group's primary communication strategy? How often will you expect each other to check and respond to communication? What will be the strategy for holding a group member accountable if they stop communicating/contributing?
2. Considering the types of conflict and strategies for effective collaboration outlined in *WOVEN* Chapter 7, what types of conflict might your group encounter? How will you navigate them?
3. What will be your schedule of group meetings? Approximately when will you meet, and what will be the topics of the meetings? In what format will you meet?
4. What strengths or skills does each of you bring to the table and how will you make the most of them?
5. Do any of you have limitations (scheduling, travel, computer access, etc.) that might impact your full participation and how will you deal with them?
6. What concerns do you have about completing the project effectively?
7. What are your preliminary thoughts about the kind of class you want to put together? What will your unique angle/spin/brand be? What issues are you most interested in addressing?
8. Over the next week or two, your group will need to find and evaluate several different kinds of sources (see assignment sheet for the breakdown of types of sources). How do you want to handle this research? Will different individuals take the lead on identifying different sources? Do you want to work as a whole group or in pairs? Etc. Basically, who will do what to contribute sources to the Annotated Bibliography?
9. During the week after spring break, except for a meeting with the instructor of approximately 15-20 minutes, two class periods are set aside for groupwork on your own. How will your group use that time?
10. Five points towards the grade for this assignment will come from groupmates' evaluations of each others' performance. What are you looking for in good groupmates? Exactly what criteria do you want to agree on that you will use to evaluate each other for the grade?

Process Document 2: Annotated Bibliography (one due per group)

For the annotated bibliography, please list the MLA citation for the sources you've found in each of these categories, along with about 3 bullet points describing each source, why it is useful and what you have learned/expect to learn from it, and what you think it might contribute to your project.

At least two secondary sources, one scholarly and one non-scholarly (feel free to add more spaces if you have extra).

Scholarly:

Non-scholarly:

Two or three primary sources from different media/modes/genres:

1.

2.

3.

Process Document 3: Lesson Plan

Group Topic:

Group Members:

Presentation Date:

What are your learning objectives or goals for your class? In other words, what do you want your audience to take away from the session? (Approx. 3 bullet points)

Will you assign homework? If so, what? How long do you expect it to take? How will you distribute it to students?

How will you divide up the class time? Who will be doing what at what times? Please provide a timeline breaking down the class, activities, who will do what, etc.

How will you demonstrate effective audience awareness, particularly with regard to demonstrating respect and sensitivity when discussing potentially difficult topics? Are there any elements of your class (such as quotations from nineteenth-century documents or visual images) that you will want to present with particular care?

Process Document 4: Lesson Plan Peer Review

Class time will be set aside for each group to meet up with another group. Talk each other through your lesson plans. Use the following questions to guide your feedback. If you finish early, any remaining time can be used for group meetings, work on the project, and/or asking questions.

How effectively do the class activities match the learning objectives?

Has the group assigned homework? If they have, is it reasonable and clearly linked to the class activities? If they haven't, should they consider assigning homework?

Look at each activity. Is the amount of time allotted realistic? How or how not?

How effectively have group roles been assigned throughout the class? If one or two members are leading a particular activity, what could the others be doing to make it run smoothly?

Is there some flexibility in the lesson plan in case activities run short or (as is more often the case) long? Is the final activity expendable just in case?

Overall, does the lesson plan meet the goals and requirements of the assignment? If not, what needs attention?

Overall, does the lesson plan look likely to produce a lively and interactive class? If not, what could be improved?