

Module Title: Cultures of Inequality: Narrating Class 1815-1914

Module Code: ESH6034

Credit Value: 15

Level: 6

Pre-requisite modules:

Content Description

This module will address nineteenth-century inequality, a topic that has returned to the mainstream of British public discourse demonstrably in recent years through the comparative analysis of socio-economic stratification between now and then offered by thinkers such as Thomas Piketty. Students will learn to reflect upon the complex web of material and cultural practices that are implicated in the construction of class identity, exploring how work, leisure, housing, fashion, taste, accent etc all interrelate to signify relative positions within shifting and overlapping fields of power. Students will learn to recognise popular fiction from this period as one of the modes through which new forms of inequality became both naturalized and challenged; as an important means by which an evolving class consciousness was disseminated and modified. Key theories and historiographies of class will be explored in conjunction with sustained readings of nineteenth-century literature.