TEACHING NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH LITERATURE
FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES:
A KAZAKH’S EXPERIENCE IN AMERICAN ACADEMIA

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By

Galina Kossareva, B.A.

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Thesis Advisor: John C. Pfordresher, Ph.D.

ABSTRACT

In this thesis, I compare how English literature of the nineteenth century is taught in undergraduate courses in Kazakhstani and American universities. The work demonstrates what goals and objectives are pursued, what methods professors use for achieving their goals and what influences their choices in teaching. The paper examines the possibility of transferring the way of teaching English literature of the nineteenth century of an American university to Kazakhstani universities.

My first chapter examines the Model Curriculum, reading materials and the approaches of teaching English literature in Kazakhstani universities, with the example of Central Kazakhstan Academy. This chapter demonstrates the need to switch from the old model of teaching English literature in Kazakhstan, which is focused on rote study, to new methods of teaching English literature. In the second chapter I explain how English literature of the nineteenth century is taught in the U.S. in comparison to Kazakhstan, illustrating the differences and the peculiarities of teaching in American universities, with the examples of Georgetown University (private) and University of Maryland (public). The third chapter centers on my proposed approaches of teaching English literature of the nineteenth century for Kazakhstani students majoring in English.
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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, government officials and academics from the Republic of Kazakhstan have discussed and debated the importance of English language education in Kazakhstani society. In his 2015 annual address, “Kazakhstan Way – 2050: Common Goal, Common Interest and Common Future,” President Nursultan Nazarbayev said,

All developed countries have a unique high-quality education system. We have a great deal of work to do to improve the quality of all parts of national education…

High school graduates should speak Kazakh, Russian and English. The result of teaching should be mastery of critical thinking skills, independent research and in-depth analysis of information. (Nazarbayev)

Essentially, Nazarbayev is proposing that education should be modernized at all levels, beginning in elementary school and continuing through university. Future generations have to know three languages after graduating from high school: Kazakh is the state language; Russian is the language of communication between different ethnic groups, and English, which serves the purpose of integrating the country globally.

In his earlier speech to the people of Kazakhstan, Nazarbayev confirmed, “We need the English language to enter the global arena. Out of 10 million books published in the world 85% are in English. The science, all the new developments and information—they are all in English nowadays” (Zhumzhumina). In short, the government of the Republic of Kazakhstan is prioritizing language education policy, especially English, and strongly believes that English will make the country more competitive among global society. Additionally, knowledge of English influences the level of national education. A state program exists for language development in
Kazakhstan whose title translates to “The State Program of Languages Functioning and Development: 2011-2020”\(^1\) that the state is implementing over a period of ten years. The idea of the program is to strengthen the social and communicative functions of the Kazakh language, to preserve the Russian language, and to develop a wider national knowledge of the English language.

Various reforms are being conducted at different levels (schools, vocational schools, and universities) where students receive instruction in three languages. Children at elementary schools study English as a compulsory subject. Before the adoption of the formal 2011-2020 road map for language instruction, schools in Kazakhstan maintained their own respective language instruction policies. The result was that language education took on a patchwork form throughout Kazakhstan. In the personal experience of the author, as recently as 2005 her own experience was such that her local elementary school only began English language instruction starting for fifth graders. The high school still only taught English lessons once per week. The new policy sets forth a plan to begin English language instruction for all elementary school students beginning in the first grade. This policy elevates the importance of English language education as a foundational skill rather than a supplemental one. It demonstrates that the government is eager to provide citizens with an education that will make Kazakhstani citizens more competitive internationally. The policy is not only rooted in economics but also in the desire to increase the prestige of the nation.

\(^1\) This title is the official translation on the website. The Russian title is Государственная Программа Развития и Функционирования языков в РК and the Kazakh title is Қазақстан Республикасындада тілдерді дамыту мен қолдануы. An English translation that more clearly captures the purpose of the program is The State Program for the Development of Language Competence in the Republic of Kazakhstan.
We take the notion as a given that high-quality education is one of the key components of a competitive country. In an Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) report, on March 1, 2006, Nazarbayev stated,

Kazakhstan should become one of the world’s 50 most competitive countries by the year 2015. This aim has important implications in the policy environment and has begun to influence policy makers and practitioners in the country.

(OECD 2007 13)

The Global Competitive Index depends on several pillars, one of which is higher education (OECD 2007). The GCI “measures national competitiveness—defined as the set of institutions, policies and factors that determine the level of productivity,” with productivity demonstrating the prosperity of the citizens (World Economic Forum ix). In other words, the quality of higher education is crucial for the economy because in today’s globalizing economy countries have to have a well-educated workforce capable of not only performing complex tasks in home countries and abroad but also communicating with citizens of other nations through a common language.

According to the same report, higher education in Kazakhstan should be modernized because “the country grows in importance in the international arena” (OECD 2007 141). That implies that Kazakhstan, as a country with great potential, has to prepare its new generation for competing in different spheres all over the world. A need exists to change the curriculum at a higher level. The OECD suggests,

At the international level, there is an increased recognition of the importance of internationalising higher education as a fundamental part of educational policy that can improve the quality and relevance of education. It is evident that if
Kazakhstan wants to become a more competitive nation, higher education should become more internationally minded. (OECD 2007 141)

Higher education in Kazakhstan should correspond with international standards in order to compete with the workforce of other countries. Reviews of National Policies for Education for 2007 and 2017 suggest how to prepare Kazakhstani students to be highly professional assets to their country, being able to compete worldwide: through student and staff academic mobility and internationalizing students at local schools.

Nowadays Kazakhstani students and professors are actively sent abroad to obtain international experience in their field. According to Reviews of National Policies for Education 2017, 48,875 students studied abroad in 2015 and “in the period between 2011 and 2015, more than 2,600 faculty travelled abroad for internships” (OECD 2017 163). In other words, academic mobility in the Republic of Kazakhstan informs the internationalization of the nation’s higher education. However, the OECD review claims that universities in Kazakhstan do not pay enough attention to an internationalized curriculum. Internationalization of the curriculum is defined by Betty Leask, Associate Professor of ALTC National Teaching Fellow University of South Australia, as “the incorporation of an international and intercultural dimension into the content of the curriculum as well as the teaching and learning arrangements and support services of a program of study” (Leask 5). This statement implies not all citizens of Kazakhstan can be granted the opportunity to obtain education abroad, but in order to become a globally competitive workforce the government has to change the national curriculum. Moreover, in order

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2 Mobility refers to “the experience of academics moving to a particular country or on the experience of academics from a particular country moving abroad” (Maadad and Tight 2).
to send students abroad for academic mobility the curriculum should help them to be prepared for the international study experience.

In further changing the educational sphere, Kazakhstan’s government is considering teaching a variety of courses in English, such as natural science, mathematics, IT, and physics, naming them all STEM courses. The government has publicly committed itself to the line that competitive education can be achieved by knowing the English language because the twenty-first century is the era of technology. Innovations in computer science are rapidly changing the ways in which economies compete, and the language of computer science is English. In other words, because of globalization, the majority of technical literature is published in English and there is no means or budget for translating all this knowledge into other languages. Kazakhstani schoolchildren, the government believes, should receive STEM instruction in English. The Minister of Education, Yerlan Sagadiyev, in a TedEx talk published on October 27, 2013, says that young people should be competitive for international universities. At the heart of this thinking is a question that is both from a policymaking standpoint and a theoretical the only technical English should be developed if people who do technical jobs should develop their critical and analytical thinking with the help of literature.

A primary concern regarding the new education policy centers on the modernization of teaching English literature in English departments at Kazakhstani universities. Future generations of English teachers will have to prepare students to reflect on different interpretations of literature and to become acquainted with the cultural and historical contexts of English literature. Since the ambition of the government is to encourage every citizen to speak English at an advanced or near-native level, future generations have to be prepared to think globally, interpreting texts differently, and not just through the national Kazakhstani lens.
other words, future school teachers of English who graduate from Kazakhstani universities have to encourage students to think critically with the help of literature, future Kazakhstani students attending Western universities have to be prepared to analyze literature as native peers do, and Kazakhstani professors of English have to be competitive among scholars outside of Kazakhstan. I would argue that not only should natural science subjects be developed but literature should be as well, and modern English literature and its approaches are worth studying for new ideas. In my thesis I will examine two ways of teaching English literature and offer my curriculum that would be internationalized, for the new generation of future English teachers in Kazakhstan.

Another reason for drawing attention to English literature in English departments in Kazakhstan is because literary education is as important as STEM. According to Gerald Graff, “corporate executives often express a preference for hiring humanities majors over MBAs because of their superior writing, critical thinking, and interpretive skills” (Graff xi). In other words, people who are able to think critically and produce arguments are in high demand. “The curriculum that focused effectively on helping students talk the talk of the intellectual world could be admirably coherent even if it included clashing texts, ideas and values” (Graff xvi). Literary study is an important component for a young, educated generation who will represent their country abroad and who has to demonstrate an ability to enter into conversation with foreigners. Moreover, I would argue that current English students and future English teachers and professors have to learn how English literature is being studied in countries where English is the native language in order to see what other ways there are for interpreting literature, what problems other nations are concerned with, and what national characteristics are hidden in those texts. In short, the new generation of Kazakhstan has to have global and multicultural competencies.
In my work I suggest building the curriculum for English literature on the model of American universities because the U.S. plays a great role in the world arena and is famous for its higher education. If one looks at the World University Rankings 2016-2017, six American universities are included in the top ten. Also, the English departments at American universities offer approaches to studying literature through different discourses that many Kazakhstani students are unfamiliar with from a cultural standpoint, such as gender, sexuality, critical race, and queer studies. Kazakhstani students face a steep learning curve mastering these discourses because much of the culturally rooted debates and discussions that have arisen over the past several decades in the American context are not readily understood for Kazakhstani students. In the proposed curriculum I will consider the current curriculum of Kazakhstani universities. The curriculum will not be reformed dramatically unless we take into account the standard list of literary works that the Ministry of Education sends to literature professors as a guide for teaching students.

A distinction should be articulated in what may perhaps be the competing aims of the government and the idealistic goals of higher education institutions. Because the government in Kazakhstan is largely seeking to shape university curricula to serve the needs of the state—that is, to increase Kazakhstani soft power through international engagement and through cultural exchange initiatives—one may assume that the idealistic goal of educating citizens to be well-rounded and culturally adept individuals is more important to the state’s goals rather than for traditionally humanistic goals. In other words, should a Kazakhstani citizen become well-versed in advanced literary theory and benefit personally from that knowledge, the interest of the state’s policy is not necessarily interested in that byproduct. Rather, in a strictly practical sense the investment of training Kazakhstani students in English literature and advanced literary theory is
to gain proficiency in navigating Western academic modes of discourse as a means of bolstering the image and cultural capital of the Kazakhstani state in global affairs. Even though most Kazakhstani English majors may remain in Kazakhstan without going to study in European or American universities, increasing the numbers of literature students, teachers, and professors capable of sending future generations of Kazakhstani students abroad is part of this process. Understanding this key difference is important in guiding the overall shape of English literature departments’ curricula in Kazakhstan.

The government and academia have undertaken many reforms aimed at implementing English in the life of Kazakhstan’s youngest generations. It is the first step in order to prepare high school graduates for studying abroad, becoming a part of the competitive workforce both domestically and internationally, and potentially initiating Kazakhstan’s students into Western, and especially American, academic discourse. For Kazakhstani students who are planning to study at American universities and for the professors who are teaching at English departments, it is necessary to learn not only English and to become familiar with the major English language authors, but also to learn the discourses and theoretical lenses that are essential to scholarship in American universities. Knowledge of canonical texts is only one part of the American English department exchange. Students must be prepared to express different opinions supporting their literary interpretations while taking into consideration the long-running cultural discourses into which they are entering and with which they are engaging.

Sherry Lee Linkon, Associate Professor of English and American Studies at Georgetown University and an author of *Literary Learning: Teaching the English Major (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning)*, states, “The complexity and nuances of literary language, together with the narratives and perspectives offered by literature, help us understand how to ‘read’ the world
around us and help us understand our own experiences and motivations” (9). In other words, English literature serves to help non-Anglophone students understand their own “experience and motivation,” as well as to “‘read’ the world around [them]” (Linkon 9). Students studying English literature should be initiated into the English discourses and rhetoric that academics engaged with literary scholarship use in order to understand how to succeed in Western academic discourse.

A distinction must be made about the students whom these changes will affect. Primarily, the goal of reforming English literature departments in Kazakhstan’s universities is to better prepare students to handle the rigors of studying literature at the graduate level in Western universities. With respect to the state’s goals to bolster English language education in general, even though elementary through high school students begin and continue to learn English grammar and conversation skills, they are not the subject of what I intend to explore and suggest. Students before the university years do not, in general, learn any English literature beyond simple stories meant for gaining proficiency in how to communicate in the language. Some individual teachers may choose to implement English literary texts as part of their individual pedagogical choices, but the state’s policies at this stage are oriented toward general language acquisition competencies. With that said, university-level students do continue learning advanced English language grammar and communication skills. Those students at universities who do continue studying English but who major in other fields should not be required to study literary theory unless they opt to. The possibility exists, though, that they may, as part of their ongoing education in the English language, take English literature courses that one hopes should expose them to the basics of literary theory. All English department students—that is, Kazakhstani English majors—must learn theory. Beyond the goal of them personally benefiting as students of
literature from a rigorous education in literary theory, in light of the goals of the state, the assumption is that each of them, or perhaps their future students should they go on to teach in high schools and universities, will at some point leave Kazakhstan and potentially engage with Western modes of academic discourse. They must be aware of what Western professors are discussing and be able to engage with those professors and with classmates in universities outside of Kazakhstan.
CHAPTER I

COURSE STRUCTURE IN KAZAKHSTANI UNIVERSITIES

The literature as well as the foreign languages departments at universities in Kazakhstan emphasize linguistics. Taking the example of Central Kazakhstan Academy in Karaganda, the university offers three tracks for students interested in studying English: English Linguistics (for university-level instruction), Teachers of English (for K-12 instruction), and English Translation. Even though students study literature and practice literary analysis, each of these fields emphasizes grammar, structure, and linguistic theory. Some of the courses that comprise the curricula of these paths include Literature of Studied Language in English, Literature of Studied Language in Russian and Reading, a part of one major course, and Practice of English Language. The English literature course primarily serves students who are preparing to teach English in high schools or universities. The course consists of alternating lectures and seminars. In one class the lecture is delivered, while in the next class the lecture is retold by students, and some reports on different relevant points may be delivered by students.

Reading materials are the choice of the professors of the course of Practice of English Language. Texts are interpreted through narrative theory and stylistic devices. The main goals are to acquaint students with narrative and stylistic elements and encourage students to discuss the texts using them. The courses of English literature in English and Russian have similar objectives and goals, and the professors use code switching techniques. For example, what is difficult to read and discuss in English. Students analyze a difficult English literature passage in

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3 Literature of Studied Language is called so because in the Department of Foreign Languages several languages are studied; however, the main language studied is English. However, if there is a major in German Linguistics where the main language studied is German, the studied literature is German. Later in the paper, I will use English literature referring to Literature of Studied Language.
Russian. In the end this is not a good way for students to master English. They need to work out these kinds of problems not in Russian but in English. In this paper, and in the context of the Kazakhstani government’s stated desire to train the next generation of Kazakhstani students to become fluent in English, I will propose and describe a potential course of English literature instruction. Additionally, with respect to both the state’s ambition of citizens mastering Russian, Kazakh, and English, as well as Minister of Education Sagadiyev’s stated goal of Kazakh history and literature being taught in Kazakh and Russian literature and world history in Russian, it stands to reason that English literature will have to be taught only in English in English departments. Moreover, future students as a matter of default should be more prepared to study English literature in English.

The English literature course at Kazakhstan universities, particularly at the Central Kazakhstan Academy for specialty English Linguistics, is based on the Model Curriculum sent by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Based on this curriculum, the teaching staff is supposed to create their own curriculum and syllabi. English literature is not divided into themes, historical periods, and different sub-disciplines. For example, the curriculum does not contain disability, queer, critical race, and gender studies. Instead, English literature is taught according to a historical paradigm beginning with medieval literature and ending with mid-twentieth-century literature. The course curriculum contains subdivisions based on historical period, but all these subdivisions are taught in one course as a broad survey. Each class lasts ninety minutes and convenes once a week over the course of two years. An explanatory note to the model curriculum states the “educational system of the

4 Future teachers of English study in this major
5 The Model Curriculum is designed in 2007, and is still used for creating syllabus. The professors say the guide has been reissued yet.
Republic of Kazakhstan seeks to encourage the importance of cultural fluency, meaning the ability of future specialists to participate in international communications, as well as foreign literature to create the basis for intercultural communication” (Ministry of Education and Science 215). According to the web page of the Language Network for Quality Assurance, intercultural communication is defined as communication between people who are ethnically and linguistically different:

[c]ommunication is the active relationship established between people through language, and intercultural means that this communicative relationship is between people of different cultures, where culture is the structured manifestation of human behaviour in social life within specific national and local contexts, e.g. political, linguistic, economic, institutional, and professional. Intercultural communication is identified as both a concept and a competence. Intercultural competence is the active possession by individuals of qualities which contribute to effective intercultural communication and can be defined in terms of three primary attributes: knowledge, skills and attitudes. (LanQua)

In other words, students have to possess knowledge in order to be aware of the specific linguistic context in this course of English literature. The new policy assumes the efficacy of students being able to achieve intercultural fluency through the convergence of two streams of thought: 1) the necessity of emphasizing English linguistics; and 2) the building-up of cultural reference points with respect to traditional concepts of what constitutes a historical-based approach to the English canon. While some scholars may disagree with the fundamental assumptions behind this mode of thinking, Kazakhstani universities at this stage do not have the luxury that Anglophone nations and certain other Western nations have in terms of assuming English fluency and literacy
in university-age students. Therefore, the departments of Kazakhstani universities must straddle the lines of building up what may be termed mechanical knowledge of the English language while working with what may to some Western scholars be considered too-traditional modes of approaching the canon of English literature. Additionally, while the cultural theory lenses referenced previously and others like it are crucial for thriving in many Anglophone university graduate departments, Kazakhstani departments would have to first lay significant groundwork for students before confidently engaging with those ideas. I will later propose some ideas for advanced study courses for those Kazakhstani students wishing to study abroad in English graduate departments, especially those in the United States.

According to the Model Curriculum,

the goals of the course are to form the cross-cultural, linguistic, literary and translational competence by studying English literature. The objectives of the course are to learn the particulars of the development of English literature its role in world literature, to become acquainted with literary movements and the works of famous English authors, to analyze the works of some authors, to become acquainted with cultural and historical realms, and to strengthen knowledge of culture-oriented linguistics. After completing the course, students have to know: the content, problems, genre distinctions, ideological and artistic features, the works of the authors, and translational analysis of some authors. After taking the course, students should be able to analyze the translations of literary works, to compare the cultural peculiarities of the studied country, to determine national and cultural historical peculiarities of the literary pieces, and
annotate, compose notes of reference materials, academic literature and critical essays. (Ministry of Education and Science 215-216)

The current goals and objectives of the course do not contain significant room for developing students’ critical thinking by interpreting texts. The goals are designed to introduce students to English literary heritage. The objectives of the course are acquainting students with authors, literary works and movements. According to the curriculum, students’ unique interpretations are not required, unless the professors specifically create a syllabus in which they devote time for analyzing literary works closely.

Based on my own teaching experience, the most analyzed literature in the course is nineteenth-century literature. It covers Romanticism and Realism with many authors of that period; almost half of the required reading list contains the works of nineteenth-century literature and the literature of this period is easy to read for non-native speakers. Because of the preponderance of nineteenth-century readings, one whole semester of the English literature course is devoted to literature from this period. Even though the curriculum is not divided into separate courses, in this thesis I focus on teaching English literature of the nineteenth century.

According to the sections devoted to nineteenth-century literature in the Model Curriculum, undergraduate students in the fourth course should study the Romantic Period and Critical Realism. The first part of the nineteenth-century is devoted to “Romanticism in the Literature of the 19th Century” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). The objectives are to examine and reflect upon “the process of alienation from society. The role of the Lake Poets in the formation of English Romanticism. Revolutionary romantics and novel characters of their poetry” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). According to the Model Curriculum,
professors teaching the Romantic period should dedicate most time to the Lake Poets, while the only novel they should teach is Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe* (1820). Walter Scott is studied as “the father of the English historical novel” and whose *Ivanhoe* “deals with the English history of the 12th century” (Lecture 7 5). Since *Ivanhoe* is a historical novel, it serves an educational purpose to demonstrate English history, particularly the conflict between the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans and their own cultural values and codes of chivalry. *Ivanhoe* is a nineteenth-century work of nationalist fantasy in which Scott extols the virtues of a romanticized medieval past to glorify the might of the then-British present. Its place in the canon with respect to notions of nationalism and nationhood itself is worth noting with respect to the ties between literature curricula and national concepts of self.

When students begin reading the works of the Lake Poets, William Wordsworth features prominently among those whom they study. However, the most characteristic theme of Wordsworth’s poetry, besides the beauty of nature, is the defense of the common people and their feelings and beliefs. Another representative of the Romantic Period that students study is Byron. The lecture says “[he] wrote his ‘Song for the Luddites’ where he again raised his voice in defense of the oppressed workers, encouraging them to fight for freedom” (Lecture 7 3). Percy Bysshe Shelley is another representative of that period: “[l]ike Byron, he came of an aristocratic family and like Byron he broke with his class at an early age” (Lecture 7 4). Moreover, the lecture emphasizes Shelley’s poems’ revolutionary expression of and advocacy for workers’ ideas. For example, lecture 7 provides a Marxist reading of “Song to the Men of England,” stating that “Shelley calls upon the workers to take up arms in their own defense. This poem and other revolutionary poems of his became a popular song of the workers” (Lecture 7 4). The lecture concludes by stating, “Shelley’s entire life and art were devoted to the struggle against
oppression and tyranny in every form” (Lecture 7 5). In brief, all poets are described in the lecture as people who express workers’ ideas despite their poetry about nature.

The second step is to analyze “Realism in English Literature and its national-historical particulars [and the] problem of a positive character in the works of Realists” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). The objectives are to read the works of Charles Dickens and examine “his role in the development of a social realistic novel [and the] critic of the bourgeois relations in the novel Oliver Twist [and]... Dombey and Son” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). In addition, students must study the peculiarities of William Thackeray’s satiric talent and Vanity Fair as the peak of his realistic work. The next step is Neo-Romanticism. Students have to examine “[the] changes in the literature at the turn of the century and [the] initiation and progression of the decadent movement in English literature” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). Thomas Hardy, as the author of novels about folk life, is selected by the Ministry of Education in order “to demonstrate the tragic issues of that period” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). Another representative of English realism is Herbert Wells who wrote in the genre of fantasy. Next, students have to become acquainted with Oscar Wilde, “the representative of aestheticism in English literature” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). According to the curriculum, the main idea that students must learn from his works is to understand “the priority of Art over life” (Ministry of Education and Science 219). Students will have to pay close attention to The Picture of Dorian Gray. Students majoring in translation also have to examine the problems of the translation of nineteenth-century English literature. The Model Curriculum is designed for the professors as the course guide for creating the course syllabus. The curriculum has strategies for what literary challenges students must contend with and master. However, the course lacks room for students’ ideas and original input.
The present Model Curriculum, the list of texts to be studied, and the present lectures of English literature used by Central Kazakhstan Academy raise many questions. First, emphasizing intercultural communication in the Model Curriculum, it is not clear for the professors if students have to analyze English culture and to either take the principles of English studies and turn them to the world or to analyze our Kazakhstani culture through the English other. The answer to this question can clarify the selection of the literature for the course. Second, the Model Curriculum emphasizes folk life as the main topic of Hardy’s work and others in order to illustrate the tragic period of that time. A question is why the primary emphasis should remain on folk life and workers’ struggles for modern Kazakhstani students, and to what degree they may be changed or include other interpretive lenses. How will knowledge of the difficulties of the people of that time influence students’ critical thinking or prepare them for modern life? To what extent are those lenses helpful and still-relevant and in what respects are they antiquated? Should students be informed that they are actually being taught to assume by default a Marxist theoretical lens in this approach? Third, according to the Model Curriculum, the instruction for the students’ interpretation is clear (for example, the main idea of the work is the importance of art over life). However, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* has much significance to the field of queer and gender studies. The issue is whether question is if the Ministry of Education and Science is concerned about pushback from more conservative elements within society. Instruction in non-heteronormative interpretations of texts within Kazakhstani society is not clear-cut, and encouraging students to discuss, for example, homoeroticism and other culturally sensitive or taboo topics is not readily achievable. In this case, the government may be inclined to adhere to the Soviet system of education in which sexual topics were prohibited from discussion.
This situation presents a challenging conundrum. In order to be a competitive Kazakhstani scholar in English studies and in order to participate in international conferences, students have to master not just the mechanics of the language and traditional concepts of the canon. They must also become well-versed in what may be considered forbidden discourses. While Western scholars may chafe at this recommendation, “baby steps” are required. Whole courses cannot at this stage be devoted to, for example, queer studies discourse because the society at large, and in particular older generations, may assume that such themes corrupt the youth. Students at least have to know what Western students and professors write in their papers and what issues they discuss at conferences about, say, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. That also means students need to know the works of major scholars who have written on queer theory, such as Michel Foucault, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, and Judith Butler, because many professors and students build their works on their publications. Carefully constructed approaches to introducing the discourses of culturally sensitive ideas may help resolve some academic issues. Such approaches would help attract students’ attention to the literature and encourage stimulating engagement with the texts since new topics can be discussed. Also, new students can be inspired to write about something that interests them. It would be a step in the direction of understanding a particular culture, and why this topic is so important to study for them.

The lecture⁶ content of English literature used by Central Kazakhstan Academy is full of biographical information that forces students to interpret texts through authors’ backgrounds. For example, the information on Dickens, whose father was sent to debtors’ prison, suggests that he wrote from his own experience. Moreover, the lecture used by the professors of Central Kazakhstan Academy confirms autobiographical connection by stating,

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⁶ The author of the series of lectures is unknown but the professors have been using them for a while, because they seize all periods and works that are talked over during the course.
David Copperfield is, to a great extent, an autobiographical novel. In the character of David Copperfield, Dickens shows many features of his own life. The hero of the novel is a young man who lives through hardships and injustice but in the end achieves well-being. (Lecture 5 3)

The curriculum designs students’ interpretations to assume the author’s biography as the chief reason for a text's being. Interpreting texts through the author’s biography can provide rich analytical modes of study and insight, but the lecture should be designed to leave room for students to realize that this mode of interpretation is just one tool available at their disposal and not the only one. Curricula can still guide and train students well without presenting knowledge as static and fixed, as if there is little flexibility in interpretation. One of the primary goals of reforming the curricula of English departments is to embrace the inherent multiplicity of literary approaches. The Model Curriculum seems to suggest and even encourage fixity of thought. One of the simplest but challenging aspects of reform is to guide future curricula into allowing for the possibility of many interpretations. Another means of imagining this discussion is to say that the present Model Curriculum suggests that the presented interpretation is fact, rather than that there are facts that scholars need to interpret and continue interpreting. Encouraging students to break away from the former and to hew to the latter is key.

Also, the suggested literature for professors mentioned in the Model Curriculum is out of date. For example, the textbook used is History of English Literature (in three volumes) published by the Academy of Science of USSR, 1943-48. The textbook emphasizes that Dickens criticized the bourgeoisie in his works. Such an interpretive lens makes abundant sense within the context of the USSR, when literature resembled proletarian realism. The basic postulate of proletarian realism in literature during the Depression Era in the U.S., according to Deborah
Rosenfelt, is “that fiction should show the sufferings and struggles and essential dignity of working-class people under capitalism and allow readers to see the details of [writers’] lives and work” (Rosenfelt 70). Dickens’s literature indeed corresponds with proletarian literature because it demonstrates hard labor, the sufferings of the main characters, and Dickens’s own experience. In addition, the lectures about Critical Realism that are used by professors state that the main theme of the main representatives of that time was “[to criticize] the capitalist society, exposing social contradiction… The merit of English realism lies in its profound humanism—its sympathy for the working people” (Lecture 5 1). In other words, lecture 5, which is devoted to Critical Realism, is concerned with imparting proletarian values over capitalist values, and corresponds to Soviet values. Even though Marxist theory is not studied precisely in Kazakhstani universities, it seems Marxist thought has undergirded much of Kazakhstan’s approaches to teaching literature and the quasi-neoliberal, globalist, capitalist tendencies of the new approach of trying to use the teaching of literature as a means of connecting Kazakhstani society and its economy with the rest of the world as a means of tapping into global capital streams that it has hitherto been disconnected from. Dickens’ works can be divided into periods. In his early works Dickens believes in the inevitable triumph of good over evil, when his main characters overcome all difficulties. The novels of early periods end happily which has become a characteristic feature of the greater part of Dickens’s works, which make him very different from the working classes which remain around him – not a Marxist “happy end” at all. However, his later works are not so optimistic.

The representatives of Critical Realism for students are Charles Dickens, William Thackeray and the Brontë Sisters. After each writer’s brief biographies, the textbook provides what amounts to a fixed literary interpretation of the writer’s works through the lens of that
biography. Because of its fixity, the particular (and perhaps questionable) literary interpretation of the anonymous curriculum author is presented as unmovable fact rather than malleable interpretation. For example, Thackeray “gives a vivid description of the upper classes of society, their mode of life, manners and tastes” (Lecture 5 4) and Charlotte Brontë “attacks the greed and lack of culture of the bourgeoisie and sympathizes with the workers and peasants” (Lecture 5 5). The lecture does not specify the novels; however this must be a reference to her novel *Shirley* because it’s not valid for *Jane Eyre*. In other words, students are already told what to look at while interpreting the works of the critical realists, and their interpretation expects to be focused on criticizing the bourgeoisie. However, in the third chapter, I will argue that Brontë does not “sympathize with the workers and peasants” as the lecture suggests.

English literature of the second half of the nineteenth century is represented by Thomas Hardy, H. G. Wells, and Oscar Wilde. However, the lecture argues that “[t]his period was characterized by a crisis in bourgeois culture, too. Artists, poets, novelists, musicians and all the intellectuals hated this heartless world, which disturbed the development of the human personality” (Lecture 6 1). In other words, from the beginning of the lecture, students are informed through which lens the period should be viewed; and again the lecture suggests that the writers of this period illustrate a realistic picture of society. According to the lecture, Hardy “portrays all the evils of his contemporary society—poverty, exploitation, injustice and misery” (Lecture 6 2). Again, all readers’ attention is driven toward social issues of that period. “[Wells’] social experience and his interest in technology also drew him to writing fictional-sociological studies in which he surveyed and analyzed, often with the same Dickensian humour the society of his time” (Lecture 6 3). That again proves the fact that the lecture suggestion for the interpretation of Wells’s texts is to analyze the society of that time. Even Oscar Wilde is
described as a supporter of “aesthetic movement,” which came into being as a protest against bourgeois hypocrisy, but later turned reactionary” (Lecture 6). In brief, the lecture does not mention that, for example, in the American academic context that Wilde’s works are often explored through the lens of queer theory. One possible explanation is because the lecture is based on books that are dated from the years 1949, 1976, 1979, and 2002 by Soviet and Russian publishers, not Anglophone ones. However, queer studies started to be taught in the 1970s in the U.S. and the lecture was designed in the 2000s, and it should be mentioned from which lenses the U.S. undergraduate and graduate students view Oscar Wilde’s works. This notion may encourage students to do close reading and find evidence of queerness through the text and master their English skills because international students reading some of Wilde’s texts cannot catch the peculiarities. For example, after reading *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Kazakhstani students may not catch the suggestive ways in which the two men speak; students may assume that is how people at that time spoke without any hint of subtext. And probably they will be right; however, that is yet another motivation to work with the text closely.

The curriculum presents the notion that the Romantic era shared the same anxieties that the writers of the Critical Realist era were concerned with, which is the working class’s struggles against the bourgeoisie. At the end of the course, students have oral exams where they have to answer several questions: to talk about the particular literary period and to talk about an author’s work, and its themes and main idea. And they may be expected to repeat the quasi-Marxist analysis of the formal lectures. The plus of an oral exam is to develop English speaking skills; however, students lack the ability to think critically, since they only retell facts during exams. If the government has begun the program of teaching English from the first grade, the new generation is coming to the English departments of Kazakhstani universities more prepared
than the previous generations who had English class once a week in high school. Since the students are supposed to be more prepared, the professors should set the bar higher and switch oral exams into, say, writing papers. Writing papers will encourage students to read more secondary reading materials than just assigned lectures and literature. The papers should strengthen students’ writing and analytical skills that are essential for writing academic articles and theses in future. Also, it helps to fulfill one of the objectives mentioned in the Model Curriculum—to be able to annotate literature.\textsuperscript{7}

In short, teaching English literature in the course of Literature of Studied Language raises many issues: being behind the times, not encouraging critical thinking, and not advancing the ability of students to develop original arguments. However, the main concern of this thesis is that students and future leaders of the country will not be able to compete with the workforce not only abroad but will also be behind foreign professionals who may come to work in Kazakhstan. Also, since the government hopes to implement a trilingual education policy, there is and will be a great need for professionals specializing in English language instruction. However, these future teachers and professors’ approaches should teach students at all levels to think analytically and critically. In other words, English literature teaching approaches should be changed in order to prepare students and later, future professors, for potential mobility to study and to work abroad, for international conferences, and for a deeper knowledge in the vocabulary of English literature and especially the vocabulary of contemporary English studies. Moreover, by studying how literature is taught in Anglophone countries, students will learn cultural differences, what appeals to native English speakers in the particular pieces of literature, and why. Looking at interpretive

\textsuperscript{7}Annotating means writing notes which explain historical context, writer biographies, and supplying with critical or explanatory notes. Annotating is an ability to outline the main points of a book, an article, a report, a presentation and etc.
approaches, students not only will be able to keep up fruitful conversation with other students and professors in this field from Anglophone countries, but they will also be able to learn the cultural characteristics of the country and help advance the important discourses.
American universities, both public and private, as a general rule require writing and literature courses for all majors. For those who choose to major in English in the U.S., the academic program offers a wide selection of classes featuring an array not just core but also elective courses. English Literature programs for undergraduate and graduate students include British and American literature, along with, for example, creative writing, rhetoric and composition, and foreign literature in translation courses. Students are free to choose electives based on personal interests. Georgetown University’s Department of English website states, “Studying English offers magnificent and powerful insights into how we imagine our best and worst selves. Majoring in English means intensive study of what really matters” (AAUP). In other words, Georgetown proposes that literature should cover contemporary topics of significance. For example, the program includes gender, disability, and critical race studies that address contemporary matters. University departments have significant autonomy over their curricula. Academics, even in public institutions, can explore and apply their ideas usually without any government mandate.

Tenure also protects professors’ rights. According to the American Association of University Professors, “the purpose of tenure is to safeguard academic freedom, which is necessary for all who teach and conduct research in higher education” (AAUP). This means that professors can organize their curriculum freely without sticking to any national standards. However, professors frequently change their curricula by taking into account social demands and interests, as well as personal assessments of the quality of their respective curricula. In the
curricula, the canon is malleable rather than fixed. For instance, Joan Lipman Brown, who wrote *Confronting Our Canons: Spanish and Latin American Studies in the 21st Century*, discusses American undergraduate literary courses whose purpose is to study texts that fall outside of the traditional canon. She states that the courses can be shaped according to professors’ preferences and pedagogical goals. However, problems can arise from this freedom. One example, Brown cites, is Emily Eaki’s *New York Times* “Education Life” essay, in which she writes about how she graduated from a respected university without ever having read anything by William Shakespeare, John Milton, and other similar writers whose works are known to fall within the traditional English literature canon. Even though it was her choice of which courses to take, her point was that that was wrong with higher education. In the end she could see that in passing over these writers she had missed something crucial in her course of English studies. A tension exists between the sometimes nebulous aims of English department curricula and the societal impression, and perhaps demands, that an English department still has a duty to maintain imparting knowledge of the traditional canon, especially before students become subject to too much curricular experimentation.

For checking what the undergraduate courses look like at English Departments, the curricular of two universities were examined a public state-run institution University of Maryland and a private Georgetown University. According to the official web page of University of Maryland, the institution offers various undergraduate canon-based courses such as British Literature from 1600 to 1800, Medieval and Renaissance British Literature, Shakespeare and other courses that teach canonical texts. However, the University also offers undergraduate students courses that are not based on literary canons; for example, Film Form and Culture, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Literatures, Reading and Writing Disability and so on.
To take Georgetown University’s (which is a private institution) English Department as an example, freshman- and sophomore-level courses such as Literary History I and II do teach what are considered broad surveys of the canon divided by historical time periods. In addition to these canon-based courses, though, freshmen and sophomores may take courses such as The Other Victorians and Disability Studies Seminar. Advanced courses for seniors exist, though, such as Senior Seminar: Approaching the Anthropocene and Senior Seminar: Reading the Indian Ocean, where reading materials of contemporary authors, or authors who were not studied previously in the U.S. and abroad, can be explored with relative freedom. In short, English departments of public or private universities have wide latitude while also still attempting to pay homage to “the canon.”

Two leading English literature anthologies, the *Heath Anthology of American Literature* and the *Norton Anthology of English Literature* (henceforth the *Heath* and the *Norton*), provide baseline examples of what constitutes the English literature canon and its many changes over the decades. *Heath* and *Norton* are surveys that provide literary texts often in chronological order, along with historical, biographical, national, and cultural summaries to frame what students read. Paul Lauter in his article “Transforming a Literary Canon” describes with perhaps too much candor how the *Heath* has been changing for 25 years. He states, “What is taught today in literary and cultural classrooms would have been unrecognizable to the gentlemen with whom I studied sixty years ago” (Lauter 31). Lauter emphasizes that what we consider literature and literature worth studying shifts over time in the U.S. In the article, he says that the *Heath Anthology of American Literature* helped to change the process of selecting literatures that address contemporary issues. In response to these scholarly debates, the *Heath* now makes a stronger point of including the works of women writers and African-American writers, which in
turn shapes the ways in which professors teach not only the canon but also elective courses. The preface of the ninth edition of the *Norton* states that since readers’ interests continuously change the history of literary study, the literary anthology should undergo a concomitant process of revision, guided by critical views from teachers and students.

According to Laura Aull, “[The anthologies] are written by established members of the field and are original compositions, making the editors’ anthology work as much that of author as that of compiler/historiographer” (499). Aull refers to Joseph Csicsila’s *Canons by Consensus* (1998), saying that “anthology inclusions and exclusions essentially dictate which authors are taught in college classrooms across the country and how” (501). That is, typically anthologies are used in undergraduate courses and professors’ curricula are based on the authors’ chronologies. The editors’ choices affect how the professors structure their syllabi. Anthologies, such as the *Norton*, are a guide that “reinf[orces] a model in which faculty consider how to introduce students to an existing body of work in the anthology (from which the faculty have chosen texts and authors from a larger, rather established classroom canon)” (Aull 505). In other words, anthologies play the role of model curricula for universities that include the canon literature for creating their syllabi rather than a state-mandated guide. In this chapter, I discuss the differences in comparison with the U.S. model to how literature of the nineteenth century is taught in Kazakhstan, and examine how the issues of nineteenth-century English literature are described in the *Norton Anthology of English Literature*.

First, the ninth edition of the *Norton* has two volumes with nineteenth-century readings: *D* includes the Romantic Period and *E* contains the Victorian Age. The Romantic period covers the last decade of the eighteenth century and continues up to the 1830s. The Victorian period includes literature from 1830 to 1900. In short, even though nineteenth-century
literature contains the Romantic and the Victorian periods, the U.S. curricula have a sharp
division of these two periods. Meanwhile, a Kazakhstani curriculum of nineteenth-century
English literature is divided into two periods: Romanticism and Critical Realism. The Norton
states,

By convention, the boundaries delimiting those other epochs are either set by the
reigns of monarchs (so that we have the “Elizabethan” and “Victorian” ages
named for two long-reigning queens) or conceptualized as conceding with the
openings and closing of centuries. (Greenblatt and Abrams 3)

In American universities, a strict division between the Romantic and Victorian periods is taught
as part of most canon-based curricula that use the Norton as their guide. The Romantic period
runs from approximately the late eighteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century,
which comprises part of the Victorian era. The Victorian period is classified as literature
composed during the reign of Queen Victoria, 1837 to 1901. But in Kazakhstan, the two primary
divisions are Romanticism and Critical Realism. The difference with respect to the two is that the
Kazakhstani curriculum uses the nineteenth century as a broad category to emphasize the themes
for both kinds of literature, whereas the American curricula emphasize the theme in the first
(even though it overlaps with the Victorian period) and the time period in the second over any
particular theme. In Kazakhstan, the Critical Realism emphasizes literature that would fall under
the Victorian time period as well as texts composed after it, perhaps up to the mid-twentieth
century rather than just those texts that were written during her reign. The Norton explains that
the Romantic era is “as complex and diverse as any other period in British literary history” and
should be separated from other literary periods (Greenblatt and Abrams 3). Victoria’s reign
“marks a different historical consciousness among Britain’s writers” (Greenblatt and Abrams
The writers of the Victorian period shared modern views. Norton quotes Carlyle, who declared, “Close thy Byron; open thy Goethe” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1020). That implies that during Victoria’s reign contemporary society should turn to higher values that could be found in the works of Victorian writers.

However, the Norton Anthology states that Romanticism could be divided into two parts,

About a hundred years ago, the Cambridge History of English Literature segmented the era that this volume of the Norton Anthology covers into two parts, tidily divvying of the “Period of French Revolution” (1789-1815) from a subsequent period of “Romance Revival” that filled in the years between the defeat of Napoleonic France and the ascent of Queen Victoria. (Greenblatt and Abrams 4)

This quote shows how the anthology could organize this complex history into two parts. The Norton Anthology treats Romanticism as “a single entity” because it “equips [editors] better to do justice to its complex multiplicity” (Greenblatt and Abrams 4). It emphasizes that there is a possibility to look at this era as one unified period of Romanticism, and as a period divided into two sub-periods. In classrooms this division can influence the course structure, where the Romantic period can be studied in the course of eighteenth-century and nineteenth-century literature. In brief, such period divisions are the first difference between U.S. and Kazakhstani curricula; in Kazakhstan only Romanticism of the nineteenth century is included in the curricula of English literature, and in the U.S. the whole course is devoted to the Romantic period.
Another difference between Kazakhstani and U.S. curricula is the selection of literary canon. As was written above, in Kazakhstani universities, according to the national Model Curriculum, students analyze the works of the late Romanticists, such as the poets of the Lake School, William Wordsworth, George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Walter Scott. The curriculum is full of writers who dedicated much of what they wrote to nature. The Norton states,

[the] earlier criticism, especially during the third quarter of the twentieth century, developed accounts of a unified Romanticism extrapolating from the writings of the six male poets that it had singled out for attention (Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge in the first generation, and Byron, Shelley, and Keats in the second.

(Greenblatt and Abrams 5)

This implies that Kazakhstani curricula seem to adhere to the old canon that concentrates on writers who call attention to nature and the simple problems of life. Norton admits further that recent scholars enlarged the canon of the Romantic period that previously centered on poems created by poets who were inspired by nature. Though one must stress the great importance Wordsworth’s early poetry gives to working class people’s lives.

Recent scholarship has expanded, or re-expanded, a canon formally centered on introspective lyric poems inspired by poets’ encounters with objects in or features of the natural world. (Greenblatt and Abrams 5)

In other words, Romantic literature in the Norton includes more forms, not only poetry about nature but also other literary form prose, novels, and drama. That means that students in American universities study the work of the Romantic era more widely; they are able to study
works that are not explored by Kazkahstani students. Moreover, different issues of the Romantic period can be viewed in class, not only the theme of nature in the poems.

According to the *Norton*, there were several innovations in novel-writing in the Romantic period. First, Walter Scott’s *Waverley* and his reviews of Jane Austen’s *Emma* proclaimed “a new style of novel” (Greenblatt and Abrams 25). There was a rise in novel-writing and it became a more respectable genre among other literary forms. “[T]he novel began to endanger poetry’s long-held monopoly on literary prestige” (Greenblatt and Abrams 25). In other words, the Romantic period is famous for its novels as well as the poetry which distinguished this era. There were also early experiments with this genre in the last decade of the eighteenth century, such as “new ways of linking fiction with philosophy and history” (Greenblatt and Abrams 25). That means that writers demonstrated that epoch issues along with the individual psychologies of their protagonists. Another change in novel-writing was the genre of the Gothic novel, which became “a recovery of what was old” (Greenblatt and Abrams 26). In other words, the Gothic novel is rooted in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century conceptions of medieval Europe, in large part inspired by old architecture evoking gloomy castles and the ghosts that presumably haunted them.

Gothic gave Romantic period writers and readers a way to describe accounts of terrifying experiences in ancient castles and ruined abbeys—experience connected with subterranean dungeons, secret passageways, flickering lamps, screams, moans, ghosts, and graveyards. (Greenblatt and Abrams 26)

After reading Gothic novels, readers are encouraged to evoke mental imagery that draws on imaginings of eras before the sixteenth century while living centuries beyond those eras.
However, the novels engage readers to think of the problems of modern society. For example, according to Jeffrey Cohen, “[t]he monster's body quite literally incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy (ataractic or incendiary), giving them life and an uncanny independence” (Cohen 4). Gothic English novels employ monstrosity in order to represent social issues such as threats and problems. Fred Botting states, “Morality and monstrosity were two of the hallmarks of eighteenth-century aesthetic judgment” (20). Gothic novels demonstrate what does not meet norms. According to Botting, the monster in the Gothic novels is just a reflection upon the “monstrosity of social and familial institutions that constructed them” (172). That suggests that one of the ideas behind the composition of Gothic novels is to show deviations in society, that there are some others different from the norms that society determines. In doing so, the reader is invited to question the validity of those norms and their widespread acceptance. Professors can be divided into those who think gothic novels are second rate as fiction and others who think differently. Even though, some American professors regard gothic novels as badly written popular literature and never teach them in their courses, students are at least introduced to gothic traditions; for example while analyzing *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë.

Other literary forms of the Romantic period were drama and prose, and they reflect the social issues of the period. According to the Norton, for Englishmen the theater was “a mirror to political order” and “the link between drama and disorder was one reason that new dramas had to meet the approval of a censure before they could perform” (Greenblatt and Abrams 24). Because of the imposed restrictions on drama, the writers found it unpleasant. Moreover, even though the plays did not contain political criticism, they could be unstageable because they touched upon unspeakable topics, such as the appearance of incest in *The Cenci* (1820) by Percy Shelley (Greenblatt and Abrams 25). Such texts – *The Cenci* is a an example – are called “closet
dramas” because they were intended to be read in one’s study and were never intended to be staged. Prose took the form of essays, reviews, and pamphlets. The prose of that time “had been valued as the medium of social exchange” (Greenblatt and Abrams 23). However, the Norton writes that during the Romantic period a number of voices debated the merits of prose and whether or not one could deem it literature. Although, according to the Norton, by the end of the Romantic period, the essays and critical responses to writers’ works brought prose to “the literary” by separating it from “public life” (Greenblatt and Abrams 24). Of course, logistically one possible explanation for why a number of works of prose and drama are not studied by Kazakhstani universities is because the sheer length and volume of the texts is too formidable for most Kazakhstani students. However, if many prose and drama works are perceived to contain topics that are forbidden to openly discuss more than poetry is (no matter how inaccurate that may be), especially if the Kazakhstani curriculum still relies on Soviet guides for creating syllabi, then it may be too easy to rely on surface reasons such as length or pointing to the convenience of saying these works did not constitute “the literary” (and therefore one need not waste time studying them). Gothic novels, though, are valuable for students to read and interpret for other classes that deal with close reading, such as the Home Reading courses that many Kazakhstani students must take, and which are devoted to honing close interpretation skills. Gothic novels and stories contain many topics that students have to decode, but again these stories would likely be forbidden according to the old Soviet mandate prohibiting the discussion or suggestion of topics of a sexual nature. Also, from personal communication with American professors at Georgetown University, they said that would not use them because they are awkwardly made and written.
The Victorian issues studied by students in the U.S., according to the *Norton Anthology*, are evolution, industrialism, the Victorian debate about gender, empire, and national identity. In other words, students become acquainted with these Victorian issues and analyze pieces of literature of the nineteenth century, looking at these issues which were urgent at that period of time. According to Joseph Carroll, Darwinian literary scholars created the possibility of using the theme of evolution for interpreting literary works.

[Darwinian literary theorists] have offered cogent alternatives to historicist accounts of cultural identity and Freudian accounts of psychosexual development. They have integrated personality psychology with the analysis of individual characters, incorporated the idea that reading fiction is a form of simulated social activity, used evolutionary concepts to analyze tone and authorial persona, and developed specifically concepts of particular genres such as horror and dystopian fiction. (Carroll 208)

The critic uses both thinkers to some end but that would be the critic’s decision and have nothing to do with Darwin and Freud. However, the influence of Freud in psychoanalysis is one particularly fruitful avenue of exploration for students. In other words, Freud’s works allow students to interpret the characters of literary works by examining them through psychological analysis. Carroll admits that he conducted different courses for undergraduates and graduate students. In his courses for undergraduates he included literature of different periods as well as the Victorian period. For example, Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is appropriate for discussing psychosexual themes. However, Carroll admits that courses on Darwinism and evolution can be problematic for undergraduate students because it is challenging to make connections between cultural theory, biological sciences, and psychoanalytical levels through
literary interpretation. Expecting professors, let alone students, to have significant enough expertise in such diverse fields of knowledge and then to apply the theories of those fields to the process of literary interpretation with the expectation that meaningful, rigorous interpretations will appear is dubious.

Industrialism is another issue of the Victorian period. According to the *Norton Anthology*, the Industrial Revolution “created profound economic and social changes” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1581). Many people migrated to industrial centers where they lived in awful conditions, and worked long shifts for miserable wages. Moreover, in order to pay less, employers hired women and children. “Moved by terrible suffering of the workers, which was intensified by a severe depression in the early 1840s, writers and legislators drew increasingly urgent attention to the condition of the working class” (1581). In other words, the historical fact that faced British people in the nineteenth century was described in the works of Victorian writers. The works of writers on industrialism help students to learn English history deeply and analyze the literary works of that period that illustrate the painful consequences of the Industrial Revolution.

The terrible living and working conditions of industrial laborers led a number of writers to see the Industrial Revolution as an appalling retrogression…They criticized industrial manufacture not only for the misery the conditions it created but also for its regimentation of minds and hearts as well as bodies and resources. (Greenblatt and Abrams 1581)

In other words, the writers of this period, through their works, criticized the government and sympathized with the working class. Through their works we can trace historical moments of this
period and examine how industrialism changed nineteenth-century English society. For example, Charles Dickens’s works can illustrate the atmosphere on the streets of English cities, the major problems of the Victorian period, and ordinary people.

The “Woman Question” is another issue of the Victorian period. “The ‘Woman Question,’ as it was called, engaged many Victorians, both male and female” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1607). The relationship between men and women was widely discussed: the role of women as daughters, mothers, and wives. This question, while not unique to the Victorian period, became far more pertinent as society, traditional roles of women, and the perceptions of women changed. Queen Victoria believed “in education for her sex, she gave support and encouragement to the founding of a college for women in 1847” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1607-1608). Queen Victoria began instituting changes from the level of the state to begin the process of including women more widely into the modern nation. However, the queen was against granting rights to women to vote and believed that women should sacrifice themselves in marriage. All knowledge on the “Woman Question” helps to learn the historical figure of Queen Victoria and analyze the society of this period, since the “Woman Question” engaged both genders. Even though the queen had relatively little power, her views were voiced to the British public. Power continued to reside in the system of capitalism and imperialism which had made Britain wealthy and powerful.

The main problem for Victorian women, at least according to the Norton, was boredom: “To be bored was the privilege of wives and daughters in upper and middle class homes, establishments in which feminine idleness was treasured as a status symbol” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1609). In other words, women of means were free from domestic work, raising children, and studying. However, if the economical situation in the family worsened, the women were not able to do any work but be governesses. Charlotte Brontë in Jane Eyre expresses criticism of
“her own impoverished plight” in which she argues that women, just as much as men, want to learn and to do something meaningful with their lives (Greenblatt and Abrams 1609). Her work expresses the anxiety that many women felt during the Victorian period, which was the inherent meaninglessness of life that the structures of their society and culture seemed to imply and encourage.

In the late Victorian period another term appeared, the “New Woman.” The *Norton Anthology* says that the “New Woman” was “frequently satirized as simply a bicycle-riding, cigarette-smoking, mannish creature…in articles, stories, and plays (the character Vivie in Bernard Shaw’s *Mrs. Warren’s Profession* [1898] is a good example of the type)” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1609). The “New Woman” is a topic that many students explore widely in the U.S. and serves the process of unpacking Victorian literary works. Moreover, the concept of the “New Woman” helps trace how women were changing in the literature of the Victorian period. For example, in the early Victorian period, William Thackeray portrayed “women [who] were insipid” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1634). However, even texts that perform their authority, such as the *Norton*, can easily be rebutted. William Thackeray in *Vanity Fair* created a rich depiction of a wide range of women who could not be seen as insipid. In short, literary works can help explore how the status of women had been changing during Queen Victoria’s reign. In addition, the part of my pedagogical approach is the possibility of arguing with the so-called authority of a textbook. Students in Kazakhstan should be trained to be view all texts as inherently capable of being interpreted in different ways and even countered.

Empire and national identity is another issue of the Victorian period.
Great Britain during Victoria’s reign was not just a powerful island nation. It was the center of a global empire that brought the British into contact with a wide variety of other cultures, though the exchange was usually an unequal one. By the end of the nineteenth century, nearly one-quarter of the earth’s land surface was part of the British Empire, and the more than four hundred people were governed (however nominally) from Great Britain. (Greenblatt and Abrams 1636)

In other words, during the Victorian period Great Britain was an empire that had colonies and protectorates with indigenous people. However, the American Revolution of 1776 was marked as “the end of the first British Empire,” but “the second empire had continued to grow; Britain acquired a number of new territories, greatly expanded its colonies in Australia and Canada” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1636). In short, the historical events of the Victorian period influenced many countries and its consequences are illustrated in the literary works of that time. “As we try to understand, if not redeem, the British Empire, we must investigate some of the principal ideas that collected around huge and diverse phenomenon” (Greenblatt and Abrams 1637). I would say that literary works are aimed to help readers understand the relationship of Great Britain with the other countries and British identity. Gayatri Spivak, cited in the Norton Anthology, states,

It should not be possible to read nineteenth-century British literature, without remembering that imperialism, understood as England’s social mission, was a crucial part of the cultural representation of England to English. (Greenblatt and Abrams 1639)
In other words, the reflection of imperialism can be found in the majority of Victorian texts. This means that political issues of the period could be traced in the literature of that time. There is an inherent Marxist and post colonialist reading that can be made about the entire process of non-Western countries assuming they need to adapt Western customs and cultural predilections in approaching things such as education reform, classroom pedagogy, and literature curricula. The idea that Kazakhstan can, or wants, to tap into the system of global capital by mimicking aspects of Western academia is a form of cultural and imperial hegemony in the twenty-first century. This is not to say that making the process of reforming Kazakhstani university literature and language departments is bad, but it’s perhaps important to acknowledge and then articulate the assumptions that are at play in the entire process of changing Kazakhstani curricula to incorporate elements of American academic tendencies/culture in the process of “catching up.”

Even though the government of Kazakhstan is still ostensibly a socialist republic, it is allowing a certain neoliberalism to enter into its national agenda.

Looking back at the Kazakhstani curriculum, as mentioned previously, one of the divisions is Critical Realism. According to the Norton Anthology,

Realism of another brand is evident in the tightly crafted dramas of the playwright Bernard Shaw. Works such as Mrs Warren’ Profession (1898) reveal that some late-century artists wanted to engage with the pressing social, moral, and political issues of the day, and strove to challenge their audiences with thorny problems. (Greenblatt and Abrams 1669)

This play can be an excellent example of the kinds of complex social problems which would be very usefully taught in Kazakhstani universities. In other words, the Norton confirms that the
writers of the Victorian period demonstrated a realistic picture of contemporary England. That implies that to call the Victorian period Critical Realism can be justified because the writers created their works on the contemporary themes of that time. However, the Victorian period is full of many other topics that are worth studying separately.

*Heath* and the *Norton* are perfect examples of capitalism at work. They exist because they make money for their publishers and they are revised regularly in part because college teachers and students seem to demand new writers and ideas and in order to make money *Norton* and *Heath* respond to their customers. In the end they become a kind of “mandated curriculum” in that teachers order them, use them, and require students to read them. The mandate comes from the “market” not from the government.

The *Heath* and the *Norton* perform a non-government mandated curriculum model similar to the way the Kazakhstani Model Curriculum operates. For example, by stating that the “main problem for Victorian women was boredom,” the *Norton* tends to present boredom as the everyday reality that pervaded the lives of Victorian women. That informs students how to look at Victorian women without giving them the opportunity to make their own analysis. The anthology also presents the forces of industrialism as salient influences on the literature of the Victorian period. Although that is what the anthology says, students should be able to not just agree or disagree with it but to also provide unique interpretations of the material. Moreover, Paul Lauter, who is a major figure in the revision of the American literary canon, can be critiqued for his revision of the canon just for his one statement: “What is taught today in literary and cultural classrooms would have been unrecognizable to the gentlemen with whom I studied sixty years ago.” The very fact that he says “the gentlemen with whom I studied sixty years ago” precludes the idea of women. That implies that the interpretation of the works about the Woman
Question can differ if Lauter’s worldview has not been shaped and influenced by feminist perspectives that the canon has significantly changed through the inclusion of women’s points of view. For example, the anthology could present the issues of nineteenth-century literature differently if the canon did not state boredom as the main problem of the Victorian period. The anthology would rather make the emphasis on Victorian men who caused the problems experienced by Victorian women; since they did not think women should read and possess knowledge or be fully integrated into society and the economy. The anthology seems to suggest to students that they should view the Victorian period in an overly simplified manner that emphasizes misogynistic tendencies without giving credit to complex realities. In other words, one may counter the anthology by demonstrating that, actually, whatever the opinions of certain men, those opinions were not valid owing to the reality that women read all the time. There was clearly a market demand for women readership, which could be shown to students as a way to rebut the anthology by adopting a Marxist approach. Moreover, the canon is not only divided into time periods, but it is also divided politically according to the revision of anthologies. For example, the theme of the New Woman seems to be the tribute to feminism that is a main topic in the U.S.

In chapter one, I mentioned that Kazakhstani professors of English literature give examinations at the end of the semester to evaluate students’ knowledge. In brief, the purpose of an exam assumes a fixity of thought regarding literary interpretation. Meanwhile, American professors of English literature, particularly at Georgetown University, prefer papers instead of exams for evaluating students. Dale J. Menkhaus, a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics at the University of Wyoming, published findings of research he conducted in an article entitled “Reaction Papers as an Alternative To Tests: Some Observations” (1998), in
which he concludes that students find tests more stressful than reaction papers. Moreover, students appreciated writing papers and felt that they learned more rather than if they were preparing for tests. Also, writing papers improved students’ writing skills and critical thinking. In short, writing essays and papers is not only essential for English literature students, but also for students in all departments. Students should not only memorize facts and data, but also be able to think critically and organize their thoughts logically in the paper.

John C. Bean in his book *Engaging Ideas* (1996) pays close attention to both writing and critical thinking, stating that in order to become critical thinkers students have to understand “what makes the problem problematic” (3). In short, what he means is that each academic discipline has its own problems and the task of students is to make an argument. However, there is no common definition for critical thinking. Bean lists how different scholars define it. He quotes Brookfield (1987), saying that critical thinking involves “identifying and challenging assumptions and exploring alternative ways of thinning and acting” (3). Bean continues to quote what critical thinking is for Richard Paul (1987): “dialogic exchange” between our points of views and other peoples’, whose points of view differ from ours (3). However, Bean finds Kurfiss’s definition of critical thinking helpful. Critical thinking for Kurfiss “is both a tentative solution to the problem and a justifying argument” (3). In short, critical thinking is an important component for doing academic research. However, according to Bean, “writing is both a process of doing critical thinking and a product communicating the results of critical thinking” (3). Bean suggests that writing should encourage students to be engaged with a problem and a main “step in teaching critical thinking is to develop good problems for students to think about” (5). However, another question rises here about how problems should be created by professors, because papers can operate in the same way that exams do if professors merely want students to
repeat regulate facts in a different genre than the exam. In short, professors, mentoring students on writing papers, should leave the space for students’ ideas. Although, the key difference between papers versus exams is that papers should, by definition, attempt original thought that pushes against the current thinking. Every paper is theoretically an original argument that encourages students to read, investigate and enter the academic conversation.
CHAPTER III

CREATING A SYLLABUS FOR KAZAKHSTANI UNIVERSITIES

In creating the syllabus for an undergraduate course on nineteenth-century literature for the Kazakhstani university, I will take into account several issues: time, the standards set by the Ministry of Education and Science, and students’ lack of preparation to analyze texts through literary theory.

Time is the first constraint that should be considered while constructing the course syllabus, which technically must teach an exhaustive list of texts to students upon completion of the course. One must acknowledge that hours of the course will not be extended and the administration has a limited number of spaces to which they can allocate class sections. The hours of the course cannot be extended for several reasons. The first reason is that State Educational Standard exists, which is consistent across all Kazakhstani universities. That is why students will have the same amount of hours as set forth in the Curriculum Model. The second reason is owing to budgetary restrictions. Even though Central Kazakhstan Academy is a private university and theoretically has some discretion in adding extra hours that a public institution may not have, private universities in Kazakhstan depend on self-financing. In other words, private universities use only the money that students pay for tuition without having any donation or sponsors’ funding as American universities may have. For example, Georgetown University could boast $50 million in donations received in fall 2015. Kazakhstani universities could potentially receive donations from alumni, but these donations are usually limited to modest demonstrations of appreciation, such as by gifting specific items like computers or printers to a department. The third reason for not extending hours of the course is the load of the courses.
There are many classes and internships during the academic year that make it impossible to squeeze in more hours of literature. However, in the future, since the education is undergoing changes, there can be ways to add more hours of English literature by replacing English literature taught in Russian and reorganizing the whole structure of the academic year.

The list of literature that is sent by the Ministry of Education and Science is the second issue that should be taken into account. The course must be constructed around the texts listed in the Curriculum Model, but with only minor alterations allowed. The first reason for maintaining the standard reading materials is because students have to master a set of metrics (of which specific texts are a part) for the purpose of passing standardized state tests that they may eventually take for accreditation by the Ministry of Education and Science. For example, during the university accreditation process, the government testers will check students’ knowledge on an assortment of subjects in an impromptu manner. Students have to be ready to know the major works of English literature. The second reason that is similar to the first one is that students have to become acquainted with classic literature from around the world as well. In *Thinking Literature Across Continents*, J. Hillis Miller shares his experience of teaching literature through the Department of English at Johns Hopkins University, posing the question of whether or not literature should be taught or read. He questions whether reading *Beowulf*, Shakespeare, Dickens, Woolf, Stevens, and Conrad embodies the ethos of the U.S. citizen. He adds that because of the rise of new forms of mass media,

young people want to teach and write about things that interest them — for example, film, popular culture, women’s studies, African American studies, and so on…Less and less literature is taught these days in American departments of English. Soon, Chinese or Indian students of English literature, American
literature, and worldwide literature in English will know more about these than American students do. (Ghosh and Miller 194)

In other words, Miller considers that some courses at English departments have nothing to do with literary studies and literature. He gives many examples that confirms his point of view; for instance, he says that one of the university professors of literature does “cultural studies with a feminist slant, but not literary studies” (Ghosh and Miller 195).

The third reason for sticking to the reading list sent by the Ministry of Education and Science is if students learn how to analyze the given literary works with the help of literary theory, they will easily work on other reading materials. Clare Connors, the author of *Literary Theory*, states,

there is no such thing as “literary theory” in a general sense. The term “theory” is a shorthand way of describing a series of stabs, speculations, hypotheses and intellectual forays, which seek to provide the best account they can of different aspects of the thing we call “literature.” (8)

Literary theory is a major field whose definition may at times be nebulous or different according to whom one asks. Seeking precise explanations for theory requires significant time, training, and hours of class time to establish firmly in the minds of students. The field of literary studies, especially as it is practiced in the United States, often requires and takes it as a given that the active application of critical theoretical lenses is necessary. Theory involves complex relations of speculations, hypotheses and intellectual forays. Theory can help students to think about readings with new possibilities.
Theory makes you desire mastery: you hope that theoretical reading will give you the concepts to organize and understand the phenomena that concern you. But theory makes mastery impossible, not only because there is always more to know, but, more specifically and more painfully, because theory is itself the questioning of presumed results and the assumptions on which they are based. The nature of theory is to undo, though a contesting of premisses and postulates, what you thought you knew, so the effects of theory are not predictable. You have not become master, but neither are you where you were before. You reflect on your reading in new ways. You have different questions to ask and a better sense of the implications of the questions you put to works you read. (Culler 16)

In other words, the theory knowledge functions as a start-up for students’ process of interpretation. Based on theory, students can build their arguments and think critically. Theory also encourages students to look closely at texts either finding the support for the theory in the construction of the text or making a contrary point about a different perspective. Moreover, theory is always developing and there are, according to many scholars and theorists, endless possibilities to create other ideas out of the amalgamation of literary works and theory. Theory allows students to interpret the literary works in various ways and that makes students read more precisely and closely for proving their points of view.

Students’ lack of preparation for analyzing literature using theory is another issue that professors must be aware of while working on the syllabus for a particular group of students. Even though Kazakhstani universities teach a course called Introduction to Linguistics in which students learn Russian Formalism and Ferdinand de Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics*, two problems exist: 1) new theories that have arisen after 1960 are not viewed, and 2) the
teachers expect the students to understand these theories without the expectation that the students should actually apply them practically or critically in any way other than memorizing what Saussure states. In my syllabus, I propose to introduce the major literary theories as well as to ensure that students practice them out by reading the standard texts assigned by the government through those interpretive lenses.

The course on nineteenth-century literature I am building is based on the application of literary theories. As a guide, I am relying on *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* that briefly provides an introduction to literary movements and their representatives. The book states,

This *Very Short Introduction* will not make you a master of theory and not just because it is very short but, it outlines significant lines of thought and areas of debate, especially those pertaining to literature. It presents examples of theoretical investigation in the hope that readers will find theory valuable and engaging and take occasions to sample the pleasure of thought. (Culler 18)

First, this *Very Short Introduction* is a practical and straightforward base for creating lectures per class that will be organized in the form of workshops with the text sample at the beginning of the course. And the theories will be mastered within the whole course. The first class will demonstrate the various possible ways of interpretation. The information that students receive will be enough to investigate in the direction they see the following pieces of literature. For example, the first lecture will provide the list of theorists in a particular field whose works students will use in their oral and written interpretations as a support. On the first day of our class after the workshop on the literary theories, we will interpret a short text of the nineteenth-century literature not listed in the catalog sent by the Ministry of Education and Science.
The genre of “theory” includes the work of anthropology, art history, film studies, gender studies, linguistics, philosophy, political theory, psychoanalysis, science studies, social and intellectual history, and sociology… Works that become “theory” offer accounts other can use about meaning, nature, and culture, the functioning of the psyche, the relations of public to private experience and of larger historical forces to individual experience. (Culler 4)

In other words, students can use theory for developing their critical thinking and making arguments by analyzing texts. Some students can take something out of texts without any theory; however, the majority of undergraduate students need to be encouraged to to reflect on texts but without the teacher telling exactly how the texts can be interpreted, as we could see in the lectures. In other words, to alter the ancient maxim, give students prepared ideas on a text and you feed them for a day; teach students to build ideas and you feed them for a lifetime. Even though they may think that there is nothing in the texts, the studied theories may force students to develop their analysis in ways they never thought possible.

Applying literary theory to the course will not contradict with Model Curriculum sent by the Ministry of Education and Science. To remind one of the goals and objectives of the course according to the state standard, they are to form cross-cultural, linguistic, literary and translational competence by studying English literature. The objectives of the course are to learn the particulars of the development of English literature and its role in world literature, to become acquainted with literary movements and the works of famous English authors, to analyze the works of some authors, to become
First, the objectives of the course will be completed by the end of the semester accordingly. Students will still learn the literary periods, their movements and the works of famous English writers of the nineteenth century since we would proceed according to the list sent by the Ministry of Education. Moreover, *A Very Short Introduction* allows students to immerse themselves in the cultural experience of Anglophone culture. As Culler notes, “Some literary professors may have turned away from Milton to Madonna, from Shakespeare to soap operas, abandoning the study of literature together” (43). Later Culler explains what happens is cultural studies, “a major activity in the humanities since the 1990s,” that is believed to go together: “‘theory’ is the theory and cultural studies the practice” (43). In other words, students will learn and analyze the culture and what is important for the lives of Anglophone people. Culler confirms that “the project of cultural studies is to understand the functioning of culture, particularly in the modern world” (44). Herein is located a possible answer as to why Kazakhstani departments should “catch up” with Western/Anglophone universities. Kazakhstani universities can develop their own cultural theoretical lenses within the specific Kazakhstani context; however, the idea of the curriculum is “to become acquainted with cultural and historical realms, and to strengthen knowledge of culture-oriented linguistics” (Ministry of Education and Science 215-216). Western/Anglophone cultural approaches will help to analyze cultural objects and be aware of cultural issues of Anglophone countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom. In addition, the knowledge of theory will demonstrate “the particulars of the development of English literature and its role in world literature” (Ministry of Education and Science 215-216). In other words, the course will introduce students to theory and
Theorists and how literary studies have been developed recently in Anglophone countries. Theory still allows for the goals of the course to meet the requirements. Students will have “cross-cultural, linguistic, literary competence” since students will read and analyze canon-based works. In addition, there will be a room for developing students’ critical, argumentative and analytical thinking while interpreting texts. While the primary goal, under the auspices of the new state initiative, of learning these theoretical approaches is to equip Kazakhstani students to be ready to engage with Western academic discourse, these students will also gain the ability to read their own cultural present through these lenses. They will therefore also be equipped to give sophisticated verbal shape to the Kazakhstani experience when they engage with non-Kazakhstani academics.

Theory will be introduced on the first session in the form of workshops with handouts with information from *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* by Culler. The workshops and handouts will serve as visual materials. During the presentation in the class I will explain to the students the theoretical schools and movements. After, I will show students an example by analyzing the given literary piece with the help of one possible theory; for example with feminist theory. In this case I am using the scaffolding approach described by Sherry Lee Linkon. She suggests that the literary course should not rely on lectures only but should be organized around discussions. However, she admits that “not all discussion develops students’ strategic knowledge” and she suggests scaffolding as a good approach for practicing theories through class discussions (Linkon 41). According to Linkon, in her teaching experience “[t]he scaffold did exactly what the bricklayers’ scaffold does: it provided a simple utilitarian frame that allowed students to slowly build more complex and sturdy structures” (43). In short, the idea of scaffolding is, first,
to provide students with clear instructions and examples of the process, and then to begin with analyzing a short text, and then bring all practices to other texts.

Scaffolding can also guide students through the process of exploring an issue or text, suggesting not just an initial question but also strategies for considering multiple angles, testing hypotheses, and developing ideas. Repetition and variation help students develop their literary thinking skills. Each time students work on contextualizing a text or applying a particular theory, they become more adept. (41-42)

In my course, I will introduce literary theory and the variety of movements that comprise the field, briefly surveying theories such as Russian Formalism, New Criticism, Phenomenology, Structuralism, Poststructuralism, Deconstruction, Feminist Theory, Psychoanalysis, Marxism, New Historicism, Postcolonial Theory, Minority Discourse, Queer Theory and Ecocriticism. Of course, covering all of these approaches in-depth would not be possible with such a limited amount of time. Emphasizing the multiplicity of forms and the infinite possibilities open to students would be part of the goal, but more practically I would determine on a semester-by-semester basis a few specific choices to emphasize. As part of this process, I would demonstrate how we can analyze the text applying various theories and then suggest that students continue analyzing a small text by Charles Dickens with possible theories. For example, we will discuss “Nurse’s Stories” by Charles Dickens for our first class session.

At first, students will be asked to tell what they think the author wanted to tell through these short stories. Every student will have 30 seconds to share their ideas. Then I will demonstrate how these stories can be analyzed with the help of the academic article “Charles
Dickens’ “Nurse’s Stories” by Gordon D. Hirsch. The article demonstrates psychoanalytical literary criticism. The article also discusses a horror story about Captain Murderer that is included in “Nurse’s Stores” and its similarity to a vampire story. All this information will illustrate for students how to look at gothic novels and stories. Moreover, Hirsch states that these neglected stories “shed a little more light on some of the earliest influences on and operations of a great novelist’s mind” (178). In other words, viewing Dickens’s early work will help not only scaffold but will be useful for analyzing Dickens’s novels later on the course, since this article refers to *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield* and *Great Expectations*.

The list of reading material remains the same with small corrections. First, the course of nineteenth-century literature will be divided into the Romanticism and the Victorian periods. During the Romanticism portion, we will become acquainted with the historical issues of the particular era, with the representatives of the Lake School. In particular, we will examine William Wordsworth and several of his poems, with George Gordon Byron and his works *Don Juan*, and Walter Scott’s *Ivanhoe*. During the Victorian section, students will become acquainted with the period issues and read the following works: Charles Dickens’s *Oliver Twist*, *Great Expectations*, and *David Copperfield*, William Thackeray’s *Vanity Fair*, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*, Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, and Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Students will be assigned to read during the summer break before the academic year starts. However, several logistical problems may arise from relying on this. Some students do not read during the summer and students may not remember the texts well enough for in-depth analysis months after the fact. To better control for this, I would prepare lists of questions and prompts that students would have to answer. These responses would not need to be perfect, being more like notes. The students may feel free to answer in Russian, Kazakh, or English. The purpose is
to emphasize their diligence in reading and responding to the texts. Upon the start of the academic term, I would ask students to reread some assigned pages of the books before each class and to organize their responses that they prepared in advance over the summer.

The literary works can be divided into three blocks: 1) Romantic poetry, 2) The Rise of the Novel, and 3) The Victorian Novels. The whole academic year students will spend on analyzing the literature shown in the chart (See appendix A). Since the load of the work is too intense, the professor can choose to avoid few pieces of literature for analyzing in the class; for example can choose only one work of Charles Dickens. Students will read the works during the summer, however if professors would like to check their preparation for the course they can always have a five-minute test that reveals if students read the list of literature for summer or not. The choice of literature for analyzing in the class can depend on the professors’ preferences. The Model Curriculum states that one of the objectives of the course is “to analyze the works of certain authors” (Ministry of Education and Science 215). That implies that professors do not necessarily to analyze all books that are assigned for the course.

Deciding which form the final assignment should take in the course, the same issues have been considered: time as well as students’ unpreparedness to analyze texts with literary theory. One of the challenges students will face is what theory is for and how it can be linked to texts. Professors should employ cultural studies in approaching texts to demonstrate how the theory works for textual interpretation. One of the ways to prepare both professors and students for the challenge of taking on the application of theory could be the creation of a so-called “cheat sheet.” This cheat sheet could provide a basic summary of all of the theoretical lenses we covered in class, both those covered in-depth and those covered only cursorily. Examples given in English and their Russian translations would be provided side-by-side. The use of such a document could
provide a steadying guide that standardizes for both professors and students alike a convenient baseline. For students, the baseline would help them exercise creative, intellectual freedom in attempting original interpretations. For professors, the baseline would help them determine the bounds of students’ interpretive possibility and provide something of a rubric for evaluation of student work. While the ultimate goal would be to move beyond the necessity of what is ostensibly something of a training document, it would be a tool that helps reassure both those expected to teach theory and those beginning to learn theory.

First, time is the main issue while designing not only the syllabus for the whole course but for deciding in which form the final assignment should be organized. According to the State Standards usually three hours are devoted to the final exam. However, if we decide to adopt the papers instead of exams at the end of the semester then either professors should be paid extra hours for checking those papers or the professor should work on their enthusiasm only. Since we are aware that because of state standards and the university budget is tight then additional hours cannot be added either for additional classes or final papers. Moreover, at the end of the semester professors have much paper work: such as grading papers before the end of the semester. For example, if an exam took place on the twentieth of January, by the end of the day the exam sheet should be submitted at the dean’s office. In short, all grades should be submitted by every professor by the end of the semester. Also, professors are responsible for students’ academic life; they participate in organizing concerts and conferences, they go to the scheduled events with students and they ensure students do not forget about their academic work. In other words, there is an extra element of emotional labor expected of professors at Kazakhstani universities that have them performing multiple functions that make it difficult to find extra time for grading students’ final papers that may be fifteen to twenty pages long. Moreover, because of such strict
time frames for submitting grades, the quality of comments dramatically drops since professors should spend much more than just three hours checking the papers of ten to twenty students.

Second, since for students this semester is the first time when they learned literary theory and tried analyzing texts with it, we have to be sure that the end of the semester will not add any unusual, extra stresses for students. In other words, some of the students are not able to express their ideas in written form even in one paragraph. Also, the significant problem of libraries with scant materials and access to academic works is an urgent problem. While perhaps beyond the scope of this paper, one must acknowledge that in order for literary theory to flourish in an academic context, funding for libraries must also increase. Library holdings should be updated and their online resources and access to scholarly databases expanded. Students and professors alike must be able to access such services as ProQuest, JSTOR and MLA. Since the university does not have these resources yet, the information will be limited for students; they will use the articles professors suggest or they can use some other articles that can be viewed online freely, for example through Project Muse.

Due to all the issues mentioned above, and in addition to the materials cited by Sherry Lee Linkon, I propose the best way to design a final assignment is to follow in the footsteps of John Pfordscher, a professor at the Department of English of Georgetown University. His syllabi encourage students to read, write and speak during the whole semester. The main feature of his syllabi is the absence of just one culminating term paper. Instead, he employs a variety of shorter writing assignments over the course of the semester capping specific sections. For every class, students have to submit a paragraph response detailing what interests them in a particular
text on Blackboard.\textsuperscript{8} Then after the competition of each book students have to submit five-page exit essay, as Pfordresher called them. Moreover, during the semester students present on the article and after submit several-pages of their reflection how the particular article helped them in reading a particular literary piece. Pfordresher’s approach in creating syllabi for literary courses develops all essential elements for non-native English speakers: reading, writing, speaking and listening.

First, the idea of writing small paragraphs on what interests students for each class will master students ability to write a well-organized paragraph and prepare them for writing the bigger assignment as a five-page essay. Also, writing a paragraph will encourage students to be prepared for classes since they will need to reflect on the particular literary piece. In addition, collecting the paragraphs will help professors to structure their class backing on students’ interests. The number of final essays can be reduced, with no need to write on each book since there is no much time. The syllabus will be divided into blocks that include some literary pieces for each. Students will be given an option after each block to write an essay from three up to five pages on a book they found more appealing. Writing several essays will help them master their ability to write well-constructed and argumentative essays and, in the future, if they enroll in Anglophone universities or other internationalized or non-internationalized universities they will be prepared for writing academic articles according to what would be expected of them. The last exit essay can be called a final one since the student will have learned all essential skills on how to organize an academic literary analysis and can work on a final block of literature independently.

\textsuperscript{8} Blackboard is a course management system designed for learning outside the classroom. Blackboard helps professors and students to add academic information online.
Second, Pfordscher encourages every student to speak in his class with the help of students’ posted paragraphs in order to clarify what their points are and continue to develop the argument with other students. Making references and notes in response to student writing would be expected as part of this process. Moreover, every student is supposed to present several times during the course. The presentation and the blog posts will help students to develop their speaking skills since they have to present in the class that is also an essential activity in Anglophone universities. Such activities correspond with the objectives listed in the Model Curriculum: “annotate, compose notes of reference materials, academic literature and critical essays” (Ministry of Education and Science 215-216). Moreover, while listening to the presentations of other students, all would be expected to listen attentively, take notes, and imagine ways of responding in such a manner that advances the academic discussion. Central Kazakhstan Academy does not as of yet have Blackboard access or a similar application allowing professors to post their syllabi, assignments and handouts, or an integrated means by which students in their turn could post their blogs and online responses. However, at the beginning, professors at Central Kazakhstan Academy could use, for example, Google Docs for working with the whole class. In other words, substitutes to Blackboard could be found until the university creates something similar to Blackboard or manages to strike a partnership with Blackboard implementing the software.

In brief, the newly created syllabus (See Appendix B) does not contradict the standards sent by the Ministry of Education and Science. The goals and objectives correspond with the Model Curriculum and the list of mandatory literature is not in any significant way altered. Students will still read canonical texts of nineteenth-century English literature. Only the structure of the course has changed. It has various activities during the course that allow students not only
to become acquainted with the canonical British books and poems of the nineteenth century but also allow to develop reading, speaking and writing skills as well. Such an approach develops students’ critical thinking because they not only memorize but also create their own arguments based on scholars’ works. Moreover, students are taught to express their ideas and make their arguments in English. Various work on different skills conducted during the course leads to fluency in English. Moreover, such a structure of the course is a step toward internationalized education, because English department students in Kazakhstan will have the literary vocabulary, will be taught to present in the class, and express their ideas in oral and written forms in English. All these components are essential for studying on exchange programs abroad, bolstering student mobility.

Finally, the newly designed structure offers more opportunity for students to exercise greater creative and intellectual freedom. Instead of being expected to obtain through rote memorization names, dates, and summaries of literature, the course would encourage students to actively participate by developing their own hypotheses and ideas. Of course, the new expectations will place greater demands on students and teachers in terms of reading, writing, speaking, and moving beyond the assumption of fixed knowledge. Students should be inspired to share their points of view, not just to repeat memorized ideas. This emphasis will require teachers to be more flexible in their own approach to understanding authority within the classroom. Moreover, even though students will be lost in some classes, they should be interested in how the texts can be analyzed in that, theoretically, the majority of undergraduates are eager to obtain more advanced knowledge in their field. In addition, students who are interested in foreign cultures and ways of living, especially the modes of discourse that mark the cultures of the United States and Western European nations, may find the ability to engage in
these conversations through literature more stimulating than previous approaches employed by the English department. As stated earlier, the primary goal of reforming the country’s education policy emphasizes the desire to increase Kazakhstan’s global stature over individual enjoyment and humanistic betterment. But finding moments within the classroom that do emphasize the role of both literature and theory to improve individual lives and to give enjoyment to those engaged with these texts—whether the students are American or British or Kazakhstani—is something for which every teacher should personally strive and about which they should care. By embracing the many possibilities for enlivening literary discourse, future Kazakhstani literature students will, I hope, be able to take their experience and knowledge of literature to the international stage.
CONCLUSION

Nowadays the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan devotes significant resources to English language education for Kazakhstani citizens. The government places special emphasis on the importance of STEM courses for preparing students to be competitive both while working abroad and to bring up Kazakhstan’s standards to a global level. However, English literature remains neglected even within English Departments in Kazakhstani universities because it is not a priority. Additionally, the future generation of professors and teachers of English can raise the overall level of the average Kazakhstani’s English language capabilities. They can teach students to think and write critically by analyzing texts. They can prepare students to be competitive for studying abroad. Moreover, they can prepare a competitive workforce within Kazakhstan itself and internationally among English-speaking institutions.

As an example, I adopted an American way of teaching literature in my syllabus, although some Kazakhstani academics may not agree with American approaches and may argue that even some American professors are not satisfied with the current approach. In *Thinking Literature Across Continents*, Miller describes the present situation in the field of Humanities and how it has been neglected.

The humanities especially suffered because so many people believed they were less important than STEM courses and research. That was what said in 2010, slightly revised now in 2016. What can I say about the “now” of April 2016, as a context within which literature must today be read and taught? The situation has changed quite a bit in the intervening four years, and by no means always for the better. The United States is still hell-bent on autoimmune self destruction. *Autoimmunity*
is Jacques Derrida’s term for the way a community or a nation destroys itself through its own self-protection mechanism. … I put the self-destructive autoimmune forces at work in the United States today under six interrelated rubrics. They constitute the context now for reading or teaching literature in my country: (1) education; (2) the media; (3) economics; (4) politics; (5) foreign wars; and (6) climate change.” (184-185)

In other words, Miller demonstrates that the U.S. education system does not always run so smoothly and that American universities occasionally suffer from a lack of funding. In his first point on education, Miller mentions that by 2016 the funding has improved, but nowadays American colleges and universities are becoming trade schools and preparing students for technical jobs. He also devotes some time to describing the controversial Common Core curriculum that American public schools have been trying to implement. According to Miller, Common Core has some benefits, but he is sure that the independent classroom is a conducive place to teach student to think by and for themselves, and it is good for teachers to decide what readings are good for a particular group of students. When one examines American education policy at the K-12 level, such as Common Core, it seems the U.S. system is tending toward a mode of thinking reminiscent of the current Kazakhstani one, in that the underlying assumption that all education can be gauged through metrics is lending itself to the creation of standardized lists of literature. Likewise, when states cut funding to humanities programs in order to show preference to more readily and quantifiably measurable fields, such as in the sciences and in business, the same concern about fixating on metrics and simple categorical thinking rather than the complexity that the humanities do encourage is at play. In short, one may argue why we should adopt the American approaches if the Americans themselves are not sure if they do it
correctly, or even if American crafters of education policy are incapable of articulating the worth and necessity of critical literary study whose outcomes do not conveniently fit within defined categories. There are many arguments among literary critics whether and how literature should be taught and read. I have surveyed some past and present approaches, while also proposing a new approach for the Kazakhstani system — to teach literature with the help of literary theory. Even though professors of English literature may be against such an approach, they can easily argue with Anglophone professors through academic articles. However, first, they have to study theories and be able to apply them.

Logistically, Kazakhstani universities should add more hours of English literature to the curriculum. During this extra time, resources should be devoted to working on literature closely, to read and to analyze new works of Anglophone authors. This process should include engagement with secondary sources as well. However, this institutional change is not the task of just one or even five years. The change should be completed step by step. In addition, the professional staff would have to undergo special preparation, which in and of itself would require additional investment of time and resources. However, it is worth the results. While engagement with critical theories would not be necessary for linguistic fluency, if Kazakhstan wants future students to be competitive in especially the field of American literary and cultural academics, a solid foundation in core theoretical approaches is integral to their education before sending them overseas.

This work is just one small step that serves to attract the attention of Kazakhstani professors toward the importance of rethinking the way they teach English literature. In Kazakhstani universities, not many hours of literature are devoted to studying English literature. The literature that is studied is only canonized. The students are not offered new English and
American authors’ works to analyze. They are also not exposed to new secondary sources, such as academic articles, in which leading and emerging scholars’ ideas advance the field of study. While students memorize information about literature, they do not analyze it, nor are they equipped with sophisticated ways of doing so, which can sometimes lead to misinterpreting texts. In American universities, a constantly shifting variety of different courses engage students and teachers alike with intellectual exploration and possibility, such as courses about the consequences of colonization; or the literature and culture of America during particular eras that encourage students to interpret what the author may have wanted to tell the readers at that time and how the consequences of the era influenced the characters; or cutting edge theories of ecocriticism that do not shy away from combining scientific knowledge with literary analysis. These are just some examples out of what amounts to limitless possibilities. Kazakhstani universities, too, can and should adopt a dynamic, rather than a static, approach to literary studies.
APPENDIX A

REQUIED READING FOR STUDENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. The Rise of the Novel</td>
<td>George Gordon Byron</td>
<td>Don Juan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Walter Scott</td>
<td>Ivanhoe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Victorian Novels</td>
<td>William Thackeray</td>
<td>Vanity Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thomas Hardy</td>
<td>Tess of the D’Urbervilles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B. Shaw</td>
<td>Mrs Warren’s Profession</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oscar Wilde</td>
<td>The Picture of Dorian Gray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Charles Dickens</td>
<td>Oliver Twist, Great Expectations, David Copperfield</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

POTENTIAL CLASSROOM SYLLABUS

The syllabus for the course English Literature of the 19th Century is aimed at working on literary theories. Educational goals are to learn the introduction to the literary theory, to be able to interpret the works of the 19th century using various literary theories. Theory has many options to choose from, so everyone should find something interesting for themselves during the semester. From a pedagogical perspective the theory introduces into cultural studies and teaches critical thinking. Also, the combination of the theory and literary works of the 19th century is good for writing assignments, especially essays. Prompts for writing tasks based on our reading materials will be included in the syllabus later. I believe the theory is helpful in advancing pedagogical and educational goals.

General Course Description

Welcome to English Literature of the 19th Century! This course is designed for third-year undergraduate students. In this course, we will explore the works of English writers of the 19th century through literary theories. First, we’ll study the elements of literary theory practicing them on literary works of the 19th century, and how we can find areas for interpretation. Second, we will develop speaking skills interpreting texts in the class. During the semester each student has to make a presentation on the topic they will choose from my list (either on author’s biography, or article, or literary theory). A ten to fifteen minute in-class presentation will allow you to develop your pedagogical skills, so I require everyone to submit the plan of the presentation two days before your presentation. There will be several writing assignments during the semester. This course will also include opportunities for local engagement outside of the
class. The class materials are designed for a class that runs for 1 hour and 20 minutes once a week.

**Course Objectives**

1. Improving reading and speaking skills
2. Taking notes from texts
3. Learning approaches of literary theory
4. Analyzing short stories analytically and argumentatively
5. Writing essays

**Course Activities**

1. Reading authentic texts: novels, theories, and articles
2. Presentations on different elements of literary theory, writers’ biography, and/or articles
3. Work in a group on the class assignments
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>In-class Assignment</th>
<th>Home Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>“Charles Dickens’ ‘Nurse’s Stories’” by Gordon D. Hirsch. -I will give presentation gothic novels</td>
<td>- to revise Lake School. William Wordsworth - prepare a short information on Russian Formalism (2 students) blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>- presentation on Russian Formalism - discuss Lyrical Ballads.</td>
<td>- to revise Don Juan - prepare the presentation on New Criticism (1-2 students) - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>- to present the assigned presentation on New Criticism - discuss Don Juan by Byron</td>
<td>- Don Juan by Byron - prepare the presentation on Structuralism (2 students) - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>- work on Don Juan by Byron - presentation on Structuralism</td>
<td>- to revise Ivanhoe by Walter Scott - presentation on Poststructuralism - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>- presentation on Poststructuralism - work on Ivanhoe by Walter Scott</td>
<td>- to revise Ivanhoe by Walter Scott - prepare on Deconstruction (2 students) - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>- presentation on Deconstruction - work on Ivanhoe by Walter Scott</td>
<td>- to revise Ivanhoe by Walter Scott - prepare the presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>- Review</td>
<td>- revise Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen - Presentation on Feminist Theory - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>- Presentation on Feminist Theory - Work on Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen</td>
<td>- Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen - Presentation on some articles - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>- Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen - Presentation</td>
<td>Exit paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>- revise Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë - presentation on Ch. Brontë’s biography - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>- presentation on Ch. Brontë’s biography - work on Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë</td>
<td>Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë - presentation on Postcolonial Theory - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>- Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë - presentation on Postcolonial Theory</td>
<td>Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë - blog post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë</td>
<td>Exit paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>one class just in case of weather circumstances</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Second Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Weeks</th>
<th>In-class Assignment</th>
<th>Home Assignment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1     | -Presentation on Learned Theories (mine)  
- Vanity Fair by Thackeray | -Vanity Fair by Thackeray  
- blog post  
- presentation on article A (1-2 students) |
| 2     | -presentation on article A (1-2 students)  
- work on Vanity Fair by Thackeray | Vanity Fair by Thackeray  
- blog post  
- presentation on article B (1-2 students) |
| 3     | *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray  
- blog post  
- presentation on article B (1-2 students) | *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray  
- blog post  
- presentation on article C (1-2 students) |
| 4     | *Vanity Fair* by Thackeray  
- blog post  
- presentation on article C (1-2 students) | Exit paper |
| 5     | -Tess of the D’Urbervilles Hardy  
- blog post  
- presentation on Queer Theory (1-2 students) | -Tess of the D’Urbervilles by Th. Hardy  
- blog post  
- presentation on article D (1-2 students) |
| 6     | -Tess of the D’Urbervilles Hardy  
- presentation on article D (1-2 students) | -Mrs Warren’s Profession by B. Shaw  
- blog post  
- presentation on article E (1-2 students) |
| 7     | -Mrs Warren’s Profession by B. Shaw  
- presentation on article E (1-2 students) | -Mrs Warren’s Profession by B. Shaw  
- blog post  
- presentation on article F (1-2 students) |
| 8     | -Mrs Warren’s Profession by B. Shaw  
- presentation on article F (1-2 students) | David Copperfield by Ch. Dickens  
- blog post  
- presentation on Dickens’s biography (1-2 students) |
| 9     | David Copperfield by Ch. Dickens  
- presentation on Dickens’s biography (1-2 students) | David Copperfield by Ch. Dickens & Oliver Twist  
- blog post  
- presentation on article G (1-2 students) |
| 10    | David Copperfield and Oliver Twist by Ch. Dickens  
- blog post  
- presentation on article G (1-2 students) | Oliver Twist by Ch. Dickens  
- blog post  
- presentation on article H |
| 11    | Oliver Twist by Ch. Dickens  
- presentation on article H | The Picture of Dorian Gray  
- blog post  
- presentation on article I |
| 12    | The Picture of Dorian Gray  
- presentation on article I | The Picture of Dorian Gray  
- blog post |
| 13    | The Picture of Dorian Gray and Review | Exit paper on any literary piece of this semester |
| 14    | one class just in case of weather circumstances |   |


*LanQua*. “Intercultural communication”, 2017, lanqua.eu/themes/intercultural-communication/.


“Lecture 5: Realism in English Literature.” Literature of Studied Language, Central Kazakhstan Academy, Received 2017. Course Lecture.


“Lecture 7: English Literature in the 19th century.” Literature of Studied Language, Central Kazakhstan Academy, Received 2017. Course Lecture.


Sagadiyev, Yerlan. YouTube, uploaded by TEDx Talks, 27 October 2013, youtube.com/watch?v=egi3bPp3CCM&t=20s.


