British women writers’ representations of marital relations have long preoccupied scholars of nineteenth-century literature and culture. Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* has proved a crucial text for this line of scholarship not least because of its seemingly irreconcilable positions concerning marriage. On the one hand, it offers a heroine bold enough to define and demand the increasingly popular ideal of companionate or romantic marriage—a complementary if not also symmetrical relationship structure (S. Gilbert and S. Gubar, W. Jones, T. Schaffer). On the other hand, it reveals a heroine lonely enough to capitulate to institutionalized marriage—a decidedly asymmetrical relationship structure in both its religious and legal doctrines (M. Poovey, M. Shanley, K. Kalsem).

Friday, February 19
Noon
339 O’Shaughnessy

Presenter:

**Meagan Simpson**

Meagan K. Simpson is a PhD candidate in English and Gender Studies Minor. She specializes in nineteenth-century British literature and culture with interests in narrative, epistemology, and gender. Her dissertation, "Adam and Eve in the Victorian Imagination," argues Adam and Eve served as low-stakes and thus anxiety-free tools with which nineteenth-century Britons could develop a theory of minor character. She is currently serving as President of the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Study Graduate Student Caucus.