**Preparation for sessions on Mary Elizabeth Braddon *Lady Audley’s Secret:***

*I am giving you guidelines below for focusing your reading and note-taking, but anything not mentioned below that you think is pertinent, is welcome for discussion in the seminar.*

*If you do this prep early in Summer, do ensure to go back to the document before class.*

***Download this document to your computer****, and it is a good idea to have this printed with notes or up on your laptop during class.*

Feel free to watch the lectures ([part 1](https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/9c041c38-c919-4a1a-b6e5-0fe0b06856b5) and [part 2](https://web.microsoftstream.com/video/f824dd4b-cb69-491c-bb2a-199a84fa4374)) but please note that they are from 2020-21 and may reference other readings we do not discuss this year.

**Ensure to find examples** (and note the volume, page/chapter number) for the questions/points below to help with class discussion.

**NOTE:** Discussion of the text will be split into two parts (volume 1 in first session, volume 2-3 in second), so try and keep a summary of plot so as not to spoil it for those who haven’t had a chance to read ahead.

1. Piece together Robert’s characterization as **some pseudo-form of detective officer**; and his relationship with “the Law”; his processes for hunting clues (what does he do “right” or “wrong”) and determining evidence; and how all this might be linked to his class status and personal character.
2. Keep or make a list of the **various fragments, documents, clues etc** you come across and whether they are used or red herrings, circumstantial, inferred etc.
3. **Servitude and economy**

* What is the narrative and/or individual characters’ positions on social mobility?
* How are ideas of masculinity related to ideas of economy?
* Choosing one or two examples, consider the role the “lower orders” play in the novel.

The novel, in sum, stages the ideological conflict between the domestic angel in the house and her other (the worker or servant), exposing through the female characters the mechanisms of middle-class control, including those mechanisms that were themselves fictions, stratagems of desire.

(Elizabeth Langland, *Nobody’s Angels*, 1995)

1. **Domesticity and Womanhood**

* What does the narrator/do characters have to say about women and femininity? Find quotes to support your ideas. Think about the domestic ideal, about physical appearances and behaviour, and about class.
* Does the novel – its characters, narrator etc – concur that Lady Audley is an unequivocal “villain”?

1. **Disease, Madness and Detection**

* Find examples that suggest how is madness, in its different forms, is gendered in the novel.
* Using examples, consider what the physical characteristics of madness, according to the narrative or the perspectives of other characters, are.
* What do you make of the characterization of Dr Mosgrave and the Belgian doctor and his asylum?

1. **Topographies**

* Find examples in this novel of the **spaces and places of crime** and the use to which they are put.
* Using examples, what **constitutes public/private spheres and spaces** and how are **they transgressed?**
* **What is the role of travel in the novel?** What does it tell us about the context of the novel, the characters, and its relationship with crime?

1. Colonialism and Empire**:** There are subtle references to **objects, off-hand references, metaphors, characterization, and spaces that link the nation to the Empire – find a few and consider their significance.**