

ROMANTIC CONNECTIONS BRITISH POETRY AND PROSE 1789-1830

Course Description

In 1815 an empire is defeated. In 1793 a country executes its leader. In 1821 a young man dies in a Roman apartment. In 1800 a city's people number over a million. In 1819 an army fires upon a peaceful crowd. And in 1798 two men publish a collection of poetry.

What is it that connects all these events? For some students of English literature, the answer may seem obvious. In literary terms, these moments have become landmarks in the historical definition of British 'Romantic' culture. As concrete events, they provide a backdrop to the enormously rich seam of writing that runs through the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. William Wordsworth learned of Napoleon's demise in the same newspapers that Jane Austen might have read. William Blake walked in the same vast city as Byron. And yet, when we look at a poem by Coleridge or a novel by Austen, the connections between two texts may not seem so easy to fathom. How do they relate to one another or to the age that gave them life? Does it change our reading of the literature, one critic has asked, if we find its connections 'frankly puzzling'?

This course has two primary objectives. The first of these is to introduce you, as English majors, to a selection of the most powerful literary texts of the Romantic era. Through a combination of short introductions, seminars and close readings, we will consider a wide selection of writers and their works. Our program will include the work of Blake, Godwin, Wordsworth, Austen, Wollstonecraft, Charlotte Smith, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley and Keats.

The second objective of this course is to allow you to examine possible connections in and between Romantic-era texts. We will look at the kinds of connections that can be made between two texts (i.e. writing that shares ideas or focus, responds to other specific texts, or is associated with the same people); we will test and trace connections between texts and the social and political events that form their 'context' (asking, is context always vital to our understanding of a Romantic text? Which texts seem to disguise or efface their connections with a particular time or space?). Finally, we will also consider a number of key aesthetic concepts – notably, the sublime and the imagination – and their connections to particular texts and to the pervasive critical ideology of 'Romanticism'.

Required Texts

Romanticism: An Anthology W/CD Rom ed. Duncan Wu (Oxford; Blackwell, 2000) 2nd edition

Aidan Day, Romanticism (New York; Routledge, 1996)

William Godwin, Caleb Williams, or Things As They Are, ed. Maurice Hindle (London; Penguin, 1988)

Jane Austen, Mansfield Park ed. Claudia L. Johnson (W. W. Norton 1998)

Assessments and Grading:

The grade you receive at the end of the semester will reflect your work over the whole course; the percentage breakdown of that grade into its constituent elements can be found below. It is important to bear in mind that a substantial portion of your final grade will assess elements such as participation and intellectual engagement in class, alongside formal written assignments. You should therefore regard your contributions and performance in class as of equal importance to the written work you are required to produce. Your discussions and contributions to a positive learning environment are valued as highly on this course as any other element.

In order to obtain a passing grade in the course, however, you must attend to some additional stipulations. Your written work must reach standards that can reasonably be expected of English majors: that is, it must show evidence of critical reading and response, must be sound in argumentation and should express ideas clearly and succinctly. In addition, your work should be accurate. By that I mean it should be carefully proofread for spelling and grammatical errors. If you need any explicit help on writing, please make use of the resources in the Writing Center or see me. (Barret 212).

You should also be cognisant of the fact that this is a 'period paper'. By virtue of its historical definition, the Romantic age necessarily requires an engagement with the extra-literary context of the writings we will be studying. It is therefore essential to spend some time assimilating information about the social, political and cultural contexts of Romantic literature. All historical and contextual information received in class or contained within the readings may become the subject of in-class impromptu quizzes, the results of which will contribute to your final grade in participation.

As with all grading, it is worth remembering the following: 'C' is not a failing grade but rather an indication of satisfactory work. B indicates an effort and achievement that is well above average and an A indicates consistently excellent work, though this latter grade is not often given.

	(words)	
• Assessment 1: Literature and Revolution	(20 Sept) 1500	15%
• Presentation: Research Project Proposal & Bibliography	(13 Oct)	15%
• Assessment 2: Romantic Poetry	(4 Nov) 1500	15%
• Research Essay (developed from Proposal)	(21 Nov) 3000	20%
• Final Exam (pre-released questions)	(12 Dec)	15%
• Participation in class activity and discussion		20%

Please note: failure to submit any of the required assessments will result in failure of the course.

Papers that are late will be deducted a full letter grade. Rewrites are acceptable in this class provided they have been subject to a full and thorough revision. In this sense 'revision' is not simply a paraphrase for better proofreading. Rewrites must demonstrate a fundamental reconsideration of the subject and your line of approach to it. They will be accepted for up to a fortnight after the return of the original paper. The grade you receive will be an average of your original and rewritten papers.

All papers will be submitted in MLA format. If you are in any doubt over those conventions, please consult the MLA Handbook (sixth edition) available at the reference desk in the Barret library or the Writing Center. Papers must be typed, double-spaced and written in 12pt Times New Roman. Margins should be one inch wide. Each paper you submit to me must **have your name, my name, a word count and a title.**

Attendance:

Please make sure you are present in class everyday. Present means that you will be fully awake, prepared and ready to contribute to class activities. Failure to meet the terms of that definition may result in a student being marked absent. Equally, make sure cell phones are turned off and that bathroom breaks have been taken before class begins. You are also responsible for signing in each class. The attendance policy is firm in 350 because the success of the course depends on the feedback, involvement and participation of all its members. You may miss two classes in the term without penalty (for illness, sickness, religious holidays or other absences). Three, four or five absences will result in your final grade for the entire course being lowered a third of a point (i.e. From B+ to B, from B- to C+). More than six absences will result in failure of the course. Please make sure you see me in advance if there are truly extenuating circumstances.

Honor Code:

Please make sure you are absolutely clear about the terms of the honor code. All written work must be your own. If you are ever unsure whether you might be violating the code, please contact me, the writing fellow, or another professor to find out.

Disabilities

If you have a disability, please contact me in advance of the class to discuss any additional requirements you may have, such as large print handouts or extra time in assessments.

Email and WebCT

If you wish to contact the class about anything, please email 10275@rhodes.edu. If materials are to be available to you on WebCT, I will send an email advising you of that fact.

SCHEDULE

(SUBJECT TO CHANGE)

Week 1	Th 25 Aug	Course Introductions Locating 'Romanticism': Keywords Romantic Assumptions
Week 2:	T 30 Aug	Reading the Romantic Text 1 Reading due: ♦ Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (1798) (<u>Wu</u> 265-69) ♦ William Hazlitt, "On Gusto" (1817) (<u>Wu</u> 597-99)
	Th 1 Sep	The French Revolution 1; William Blake Reading due: ♦ William Blake, <u>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</u> (1789-93) (<u>Wu</u> 60-84)
Week 3:	T 6 Sep	'Visionary Imagination': Reading the Romantic Text 2 Student Presentations Reading due: ♦ William Blake, <u>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</u> ♦ "Art for the People in the Revolutionary Decade" (Photocopy)
	Th 8 Sep	The French Revolution 2: Burke, Paine, Godwin Reading due: ♦ Burke, <u>Reflections on the Revolution</u> (<u>Wu</u> 5-8) ♦ Paine, <u>Rights of Man</u> (<u>Wu</u> 14-16) ♦ Godwin, <u>Political Justice</u> (<u>Wu</u> 47-50)
Week 4	T 13 Sep	Ideology and Treason in the 1790s Introduction To <u>Caleb Williams</u> Reading Due: ♦ William Godwin, <u>Caleb Williams</u> (1794) ♦ Marilyn Butler, 'Godwin, Burke, and Caleb Williams' in <u>Romanticism: A Critical Reader</u> (On Hold in Library)
	Th 15 Sep	<u>Things as They Are; or The Adventures of Caleb Williams</u> Reading Due: ♦ William Godwin, <u>Caleb Williams</u> (1794)
Week 5	T 20 Sep	In-class Presentations: What kind of a novel is <u>Caleb Williams</u>? Reading Due: ♦ William Godwin, <u>Caleb Williams</u> (1794) Seminar Discussion on 'Revolutionary Texts' Due: Assignment 1
	Th 22 Sep	'Unsex'd Females': Women Writers and the Public Voice: Reading Due: ♦ Mary Wollstonecraft, <u>A Vindication of the Rights of Woman</u> (1792) (<u>Wu</u> 142-44) ♦ Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "Epistle to William Wilberforce" (1792) (<u>Wu</u> 142-44)
Week 6	T 27 Sep	Reading the Romantic Text 3 Reading Due: ♦ Anna Laetitia Barbauld "Washing-Day" (photocopy)

- ◆ Charlotte Smith, Sonnet 59 (Elegiac Sonnets)
(photocopy)
- ◆ Mary Robinson, "January 1795" (photocopy)

- Th 29 Sep **Romantic Imagination 1: Wordsworth, Coleridge**
◆ 'Preface' to the Lyrical Ballads (1800, rev.1802) (Wu 357-63)

- Week 7 T 4 Oct **1798: 'Annus Mirabilis'**
Reading due: ◆ Selections from The Lyrical Ballads (1798)
(Wu 189- 269) **Consult Assignment Sheet**

- Th 6 Oct **Poetic Imagination in Practice**
Reading Due: ◆ Wordsworth, 'Resolution and Independence' (1802)
(Wu 368-72)
◆ Coleridge, 'Dejection: An Ode' (pub.1802)
(Wu 507-11)

- Week 8 T 11 Oct **The Sublime**
Reading due: ◆ Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (1798)
◆ Shelley, "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (Wu 841-843)
◆ Edmund Burke, from A Philosophical Enquiry into the
Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful
(1757) (Wu 5)

- Th 13 Oct **Research Project: Presentations and Bibliography due**
Sign up for conferences

- Week 9 Th 20 Oct **Nationhood & The Nineteenth Century**
An Introduction
Reading due: ◆ Byron, Don Juan Dedication & Canto 1 (1818)
(Wu 752-85)

- Week 10 T 25 Oct **The Romantic Imagination 2**
Reading Due: ◆ "Letter from JK to Benjamin Bailey 22 Nov 1817"
(Wu 1018-19)
◆ "Letter from JK to Tom & George Keats 21 Dec 1817"
(Wu 1019)
◆ Shelley, "To A Sky-lark" (1820) (Wu 941-943)
◆ Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry" (1821) (Wu 944-956)

- Th 27 Oct **Reading Keats:** ◆ "On First Looking at Chapman's Homer" (1816)
(Wu 1012)
◆ "To Autumn" (1819) (Wu 1080)

- Week 11 T 1 Nov **Presentations and Close Reading:**
◆ "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819) (Wu 1058-1060)

- Th 3 Nov **The Cockney School of Poetry**
Reading due: ◆ John Lockhart, "On the Cockney School of Poetry
No.4"(1818) (Wu 1006-9)

◆ Leigh Hunt/ John Keats “Two Sonnets on the Cricket and the Grasshopper” (photocopy)

F 4 Nov **DUE Assignment 2: Reading Romantic Poetry**

Week 12 T 8 Nov **Nationalism and Empire:**
Reading due: ◆ Jane Austen, Mansfield Park

Th 10 Nov **Reading due:** ◆ Jane Austen, Mansfield Park

Week 13 T 15 Nov **Reading due:** ◆ Jane Austen, Mansfield Park

Th 17 Nov **The Magazine Essay: Personality and ‘authorship’**
Reading Due: ◆ Lamb (Elia), “Witches, and Other Night-Fears”
(Wu 585-89)
◆ Hazlitt, “Mr. Coleridge” (Wu 611-617)

M 21 Nov **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

Week 14 T 22 Nov **Authorship and Transgression**
Reading due: ◆ Thomas De Quincey, “On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth” (Wu 638-640)
◆ De Quincey, “On Murder Considered As One of the Fine Arts” (photocopy)

Week 15 T 29 Nov Shelley in 1819: The Peterloo Massacre
Reading due: ◆ Shelley, “England in 1819” (1819) (Wu 940)
◆ Shelley, “The Mask of Anarchy” (Wu 930-940)

Th 1 Dec **Reading the Romantic Text 4: “Ode to the West Wind” (1819)**
(Wu 859-861)

Week 16 T 6 Dec **Course overview: Pre-Release Final Exam Questions**

Monday 12 December FINAL EXAM

Department of English Expectations and Policies

A college course is more than simply a set of assignments; it is an intellectual process, one which requires active engagement from beginning to end in order to achieve its intended results. With this in mind, the Department of English has formulated a number of expectations and the policies that support them. If you have questions about how these policies relate to the syllabus for a particular course, you should address them to the instructor.

Attendance: The success of a course depends to a significant extent upon the presence of students alert and prepared to address the subject under discussion. Unavoidable absences should be discussed with the instructor, ideally before they occur. Excessive absences will result in a lowering of grade, in some cases to an F.

Deadlines: Writing assignments, tests, etc., are carefully scheduled as stages toward the fulfilment of the course's goals and cannot be indefinitely deferred without frustrating those goals. Brief extensions for good reasons may be permissible with the instructor's prior approval; otherwise, late assignments will be penalized and may result in their not being accepted for credit.

Submission of all work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

Intellectual honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult your teacher.