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ENG 3806-001: English romantic literature

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ENG 3806.001: English Romantic Literature

Description: The course will focus principally on the major poets of the Romantic Movement in England: Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats and Byron. Although our attention will be on close readings of selected poems, we will also read selected theoretical prose pieces by not only these poets, but also other essayists. Our preoccupation will be with the themes and characteristics of High Romanticism as a literary movement: the spontaneous, experiential, interior sense of art; the freedom of the self from the constraints of decorum; the isolation (sometimes alienation) of self-consciousness; the values of desire and the joys of sensuality; and, the distrust of logical inquiry in the development of subjective knowledge. We will also seek to place these themes in the context of the Romantics' prophetic faith in the imagination to unify the cultural changes and violence of political revolution, the rise of industrialism and the staid institutionalism of the Church with the exuberant idealism of the individual. Along the way, if we have time, we may also question the impact and influence of Romantic ideology on modern literature and culture.

Prerequisite and Electronic Writing Portfolio Submissions: Students must have completed English 1002G or its equivalent before enrolling in ENG 3806, a "writing intensive" course. Sophomores, juniors and seniors may elect to submit an essay from ENG 3806 to their portfolios.

Format and requirements: I shall use lectures to sketch the historical, social and cultural backgrounds of the poets' texts, but, when we are considering specific poems, I shall expect students to keep up with the readings and to participate in the discussions. Reading quizzes will be given as necessary. Students will write two 6-7 page critical essays (25% each); a take-home midterm essay examination (15%); and a final essay examination (25%); participation, including quizzes and brief assignments, will count 10%.

Course Texts:
William Blake, Songs of Innocence and Experience (SIE)
Blake, The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (MHH)
The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman (CPPWB)
S. Foster Damon, A Blake Dictionary: The Ideas and Symbols of William Blake (BD)
Coleridge and Wordsworth, Lyrical Ballads (LB)
Anne Mellor and Richard Matlak, British Literature: 1780-1830 (BL)
Recommended Library Readings:
Harold Bloom, Romanticism and Consciousness
Aidan Day, Romanticism
Lilian Furst, Romanticism
Marilyn Gaul, English Romanticism: The Human Context
E. Hobsbawn, The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848
J. R. Watson, English Poetry of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830
Duncan Wu, Romanticism: A Critical Reader

The recommended texts are optional readings which may be helpful in developing your critical essays and broadening your background for assigned readings. I encourage you to peruse them: Wu's Reader, Bloom's collection of essays and Watson's overview of the period may offer specific material on poets or poems that you choose to write on. Furst offers a solid discussion, akin to Day's, on the development and evolution of the Romantic ideology throughout Europe; Hobsbawn discusses the political history out of which Romanticism emerges; and, Gaul covers topics briefly that sketch the cultural climate of the period.

General Policies:
Grading Standards: I shall follow the EIU English Department Guidelines, distributed in class. In all cases, I shall use a plus and minus system to distinguish, say, a high B from a low one.

Attendance: I do take roll, and I evaluate attendance directly in the context of your participation in the course.

Conferences: These are at your request unless I ask to see you. Please ask for help as soon as you feel you need it; please don't wait until the last couple of weeks of class.

Submission of work: Essays should be typed, double-spaced, on one side of the paper only, titled and indicate the following: name, date, course and section number. Exercises and quizzes must be legible.

Late Essays: For each day that the essay is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade: an A essay due on Friday will be an F by the next Thursday. If there are particular difficulties, please see me.

Plagiarism: The English Department Policy

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and the representation of them as one's own original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office. If I discover an act of plagiarism, I shall exercise the right to the fullest extent possible.

Please note: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.