ENG 3806-001: British Romantic Literature

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Romantic Healthcare: Going Viral

The Classical I call the healthy and the Romantic the sick. (2 April 1829)
—Goethe from Conversations with Eckermann

Could sickness not be a medium of higher synthesis—the more frightening the pain, the higher the desire hidden within. Each sickness is perhaps the necessary beginning of love.
—Novalis

Charles Bell, The Anatomy of the Brain (1812)

In this seminar, we will explore a few ways of evaluating what we consider to be Romanticism by observing and analyzing the role of healthcare and sickness during this literary period. Friedrich Schlegel coined the term “romantisch” in opposition to Classical forms of writing, drawing on an etymology connecting it to the medieval enromancier, romancar, the translation or rendering of predominantly Latin texts into the vernacular. To be “romantic”, at its root, means to be translated, to be infected through exposure to something from the outside, to be, as Goethe puts it, “sick”. Many Romantics were indeed fascinated by illness, even to the point of desiring to be mutated by some sort of “higher synthesis,” as Novalis calls such a transformation through an infusion of the Other.

This period saw significant changes in public healthcare, as widespread inoculation in the late 1700s metamorphosed into the vaccination practices with which we are now familiar. One might imagine that it was a radical transformation of sensibility to infect oneself deliberately with a disease in order to defend oneself against a worse infection—something that we consider quite customary today. By focusing on this fascination with self-othering during the period, we will find a new frame of reference for reading some writers previously sidelined in Romantic studies, and for reevaluating other canonical texts. What happens, for example, when we consider Wordsworth’s “Preface” to Lyrical Ballads within the historical context of a public sphere of readers enamored with plays and novels of foreign extraction? Was Wordsworth resistant to the strains of foreign forms, or was he susceptible to external influence/za?
"He [Schiller] proved to me that I myself, against my will, am romantic, and my Iphigenie is, through the prominence of sentience, in no way so classical and in antic style as one might like to believe. The Schlegels seized onto the ideas, and incited them onward such that they have now extended themselves over the entire world, and everyone now speaks of Classicism and Romanticism, of which no one thought fifty years ago." (21 March 1830)

—Goethe from Conversations with Eckermann

The Romantic period witnessed some remarkable transformations in not only the medical, but also the political, social, and literary fields. This course will offer an introduction to a few of the canonical and lesser-known writers of the age in the hopes of prompting more detailed studies at a later date. Fair warning, though. Romanticism can be quite contagious: you may find yourself infected with these texts for years to come!

Texts
Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. The Sorrows of Young Werther.
Novalis, Philosophical Writings.
Radcliffe, Ann. The Italian.
Walpole, Horace. The Castle of Otranto.

Requirements
Participation 10%
Tests 25% (5% each for 5 Tests)
Midterm Exam 30%
Final Writing Project and Exam 35%

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS MUST BE COMPLETED TO PASS THE COURSE**

Midterm Exam, October 23 (30%)
The midterm exam will consist of two parts: an in-class section, which must be written on October 8 during our class period (no exceptions) and a take-home section, which must be handed in during our first class thereafter (October 12). The take-home section will require you to analyze passages from our early-semester readings.

Final Writing Project and Final Exam (35%)
In the first half of the semester, I would like you to select one Romantic text from The Longman Anthology not on our reading list for this semester—preferably a poetic work, but this is negotiable—on which you would consider writing a detailed close reading. You will thoughtfully select a brief section of the larger work—perhaps 10-15 lines of a poem, one or two paragraphs of prose—in order to analyze closely the significance of your chosen passage as it aids in understanding the larger text from which it is taken. You are not required, although I would encourage you, to use secondary research for this project. You will, however, need to do some reading about the writer of the text you choose, and the work from which it is drawn.

Presentation of Final Project (0%)
I will ask you to present in the final weeks of the course a brief (five-minute), formal presentation of the work you have done in preparing your final project. The presentation is required, but ungraded.
Tests (25%, 5% each for five tests)
The tests will verify your engagement with the class material through identification and short-answer questions.

Class Participation (10%)
There will be a number of required, yet ungraded assignments throughout the quarter, constituting a substantial portion your class-participation grade. I will expect you to come to class having read the material, and with questions or comments on the readings. While reading the course material, you should pinpoint specific moments of difficulty, and come to class with questions about them. If you attend class without reading the texts carefully and completely, you will almost certainly fail the two exams, and your class-participation grade will suffer immensely.

TESTS AND EXAMS: You cannot make up a test or exam after the class period in which it is administered.

Academic honesty: Students are responsible for knowing Eastern Illinois University regulations and policies regarding academic honesty. Plagiarism will likely result in your failing the course and in further action by the university. Here is the English Department's statement on plagiarism:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism — “The appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author, and 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 assignments, of a grade of F for the assigned essay and a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Paper Policies

Papers—and all other assignments—are due at the beginning of class. Late papers will not be commented upon, and be marked a half grade lower for every class period late. Essays turned in a week past the deadline will be given a “zero,” but must nevertheless be submitted in order to pass the course. Your paper should be stapled and include page numbers. Format: 12-point Times New Roman font, double-spaced, with one-inch margins.

Absence Policy

When you are absent—especially when you are frequently absent—two things happen. First, your participation grade drops substantially. Second, you naturally fall behind in understanding course material and neither the class nor the Professor can catch you up on everything missed in a day's class. YOU need to decide when it is absolutely necessary to miss class. Be wise. It bears repeating: you cannot make up missed work and late assignments will be penalized. Whether these are excused or unexcused absences does not matter for this course. Being late for class will be counted as an absence.

If you are late for or miss six (6) class meetings, constituting 20% of the course class time, you cannot pass this course. If you think you will be late for or miss six classes, you should strongly reconsider registering for this class. Once you have missed six classes, you are welcome to continue visiting the class, but you will receive a failure on your transcript.

Emailing Policy

I want to get to know you and your work this semester. Thus I ask that you call me or stop by my office during office hours (or scheduled times) so that we can talk. DO NOT EMAIL ME TO ASK FOR AN "UPDATE" ON MISSED ASSIGNMENTS, OR TO EXPLAIN AN ABSENCE. Working groups will be assigned so that you can contact group members for notes and missed work.
Wharram / English 3806-001: Schedule of Classes—subject to revision

L = Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 2A: The Romantics and Their Contemporaries

For each class period, you need to have carefully read and be prepared to discuss the assigned selections in their entirety in the Longman text, starting on the page number given.

Although we will not be discussing William Wordsworth's "Preface to Lyrical Ballads" (L 408) on any particular day, I highly recommend that you read it, and will refer to it on numerous occasions throughout the course.

WEEK ONE
T 8/25  INTRODUCTION
William Wordsworth, The Ruined Cottage (handout)

Th 8/27  ENLIGHTENMENT vs. ROMANTICISM
Alexander Pope, from Essay on Man (handout)
William Wordsworth, from The Prelude (handout)

WEEK TWO
T 9/1  CONTAGION
William Wordsworth, "Sonnet on seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress" (handout)
Charlotte Smith, "The Dead Beggar" (L 88)
Joanna Baillie, "Introductory Discourse" from Plays on the Passions (L 357)

Th 9/3  (Test #1)
THE SLAVE TRADE
Olaudah Equiano, from The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano (L 211)
William Cowper, "Sweet Meat Has Sour Sauce," "The Negro's Complaint" (L 237, 238)
Ann Cromartie Yearsley, from A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave-Trade (L 232)
John Newton, "Amazing Grace" (L 231)
William Wordsworth, "To Toussaint L'Ouverture" (L 259)

WEEK THREE
MONDAY 9/8—Deadline to drop course without a grade

T 9/8  SENTIMENT
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Werther

Th 9/10  Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Werther
Charlotte Smith, selections from Elegiac Sonnets (handout)

WEEK FOUR
T 9/15  AESTHETICS
Edmund Burke, from A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (L 33)
Mary Robinson, "Ode to Beauty" (L 267)
Immanuel Kant, from The Critique of Judgement (L 56)

Th 9/16  William Gilpin, selections from Observations on the picturesque (handout)
William Wordsworth, "Lines Left upon a Seat in a Yew Tree" (handout)
WEEK FIVE
T 9/22
ROMANTIC FRAGMENTS
John Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (L 955) and "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles" (L 934)
Benjamin Haydon, Study After the Elgin Marbles (L 34)

Th 9/24
RUINS
William Gilpin, from Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty, on Picturesque Travel, and on Sketching Landscape (L 41)
Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Ozymandias" (L 823)
John Ruskin, from Modern Painters (L 59)
Charlotte Smith, "Sonnet 67" from Elegiac Sonnets (handout)

WEEK SIX
T 9/29
GOTHIC RUINS & THE PICTURESQUE
Matthew "Monk" Lewis, "Osric the Lion, A Romance" (handout)
Thomas De Quincey, selection from Confessions of an English Opium Eater (Wu 816)
William Wordsworth, "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (L 404)

Th 10/1
continue "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (L 404)

WEEK SEVEN
T 10/6
PLOTS OF GOTHIC POETRY
Thomas Gray, "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (handout)
Wordsworth, "We Are Seven" (L 391), "Song" (L 422), and "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" (L 423)
Charlotte Smith, "Written in the church-yard at Middleton in Sussex" (L 86)
Felicia Hemans, "The Graves of a Household" (L 901)

Th 10/8
THE PICTURESQUE EYE!"I"
William Wordsworth, The Prelude, Book First (L 452-467)
Percy Bysshe Shelley, Alastor (handout)
------(extent of material for the midterm exam)-----

WEEK EIGHT
Tu 10/13
(review and catch-up day)

Th 10/15
MID-TERM EXAM (take-homes distributed)

WEEK NINE
T 10/20
Wordsworth, "Nutting" (L 425)

Th 10/22
MID-TERM EXAM (take-homes due, and in-class exams)

WEEK TEN
T 10/27
Individual conferences, 3010 Coleman

T 10/29
Individual conferences
Tentative Schedule for Final Weeks (subject to revision)

WEEK ELEVEN

T 11/3  REVOLUTION
Wordsworth, Book 6: Cambridge and the Alps, from *The Prelude* of 1805

Th 11/5  Mary Shelley, “The Swiss Peasant” (L 1086) (subject to time constraints)

Friday 11/7—Deadline to withdraw with a “W”

WEEK TWELVE

T 11/10  NATURE INTERPRETED / TRANSLATED
John Keats, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (L 924)
Selections of Aeolian poems (handout)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “The Eolian Harp” (L 572)
Percy Bysshe Shelley, from “A Defense of Poetry” (L 867)
Germaine de Stael, “On the Spirit of Translations” (selection, handout)
Felicia Hemans, “Corinne at the Capitol” (L 902)
John Keats, selection from *Endymion* (“The Pleasure Thermometer”) (handout)

Th 11/12  William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* VI. 488ff. (L 482)
William Wordsworth, “Resolution and Independence” (L 521)
Mary Shelley, from *Frankenstein* (L 704)
John Keats, “This living hand, now warm and capable” (L 991)

WEEK THIRTEEN

T 11/17  Individual conferences

Th 11/18  Individual conferences

WEEK FOURTEEN  M 11/23 – F 11/27  Thanksgiving Recess—NO CLASS

WEEK FIFTEEN

T 12/1  RHETORIC OF IMPROVEMENT
John Clare, “The Mores” (L 918) and “I am” (L 917)
William Cobbett, from *Rural Rides* (L 1083)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “THIS LIME-TREE BOWER MY PRISON” (L 574)

Th 12/3  Lord Byron, Canto I, stanzas 86-94, from *Don Juan* (L 750-52)

WEEK SIXTEEN

T 12/9  Presentations

Th 12/11  Presentations

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14th—12:30 – 14:30  FINAL EXAM, Final Projects Due