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ENG 3806-002: English Romantic Literature "Traveling Romantics"

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Course Overview and Objectives: Though the title of this class (“Traveling Romantics”) may suggest planning for one’s honeymoon, in fact we will be traveling back in time (figuratively speaking) and into the minds of that solitary walker Rousseau and that Scandinavian sojourner, Mary Wollstonecraft. This course also features the poetic transports (both imaginative and geographical) of Coleridge, Wordsworth, the Shelleys, Byron, and Keats, their visionary journeys to heaven and hell and around the world, as well as their more prosaic ventures closer to home. Together, we will investigate the significance of travel to the variously manifested romanticisms and in a variety of genres: long “epic” poems, short ballads and lyrics, essays, and fiction.

In this course we will examine a representative sampling of Romantic writers and literary genres, as well as several late-twentieth century cinematic visions and revisions of romantic texts, using the lens of travel. Classroom time will be divided between lecture/discussions, student-led discussions, focused readings, small group activities and in-class writing. Our goal: to gain some sense of the dominating concerns and modes of expression associated with literary romanticism. A second objective is to develop further a critical appreciation of and a confidence in reading and discussing poetry and other writerly expressions. Finally, this course aims to provide opportunities for extending and enhancing one’s skills in reading, writing, and speaking in general, and more specifically about this tumultuous period of English literary history spanning between the American and French Revolutions and the Napoleonic Wars that produced a group of writers who later became identified as “Romantics.”

Course Requirements: To fulfill the above goals requires effort. Your part is to keep up with the class reading and to carefully prepare to join in class discussions.

- This class requires active and informed participation in class discussion and small groups. Furthermore, at least once during the quarter you and a fellow student will serve as discussion partners. This means that you and your discussion partner introduce a text with some historical or literary context (accompanied by a handout)
and then pose a question or questions that will productively initiate class discussion. You will be responsible to engage the class in a discussion of a given text for approximately 15-20 minutes. This task can be fulfilled in a number of ways such as focusing our attention on a literary problem the text poses, tracing a theme or idea that illuminates the reading or providing an historical context for the material to be discussed. (10%).

- **Key passages:** These assignments are intended to encourage thoughtful reading of the texts and to help stimulate class discussion. As you read the assigned texts, note passages that seem especially revealing, interesting, perplexing, or controversial. When you finish reading. Choose one passage (no more than 4 lines of poetry or 3 prose sentences) and jot it down on a 4X6 index card along with your name, the date the reading is due, and the author, genre, and title of the work in which the passage appears. On the back of the card, write several sentences explaining what you think the passage means and why it is significant. For instance, does it contribute to the work’s theme or message, convey a particular mood, or reveal something important about the character? Is it typical of its writer’s style, or does it express one of its writer’s or the period’s major ideas or concerns? Starting September 4th, one key passage card will be due at the beginning of each class for which readings are assigned for a total of twelve (no cards due on ). These passages may be handed in late only in cases of excused absence (i.e. absence due to sickness for which a doctor’s note is provided, or to participate in an approved University activity). (10%)

- You will write **two essays**, the topics to be announced (30%).

- There will be a mid-term (15%) and a final exam (20%).

- Miscellaneous in-class assignments (10%).

- You will also be expected to memorize and recite a poem (or excerpt) of 14 lines or more (5%).

**Required Texts:**
- Course Packet(s) available in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Union Copy Center.
- Duncan Wu’s *Romanticism: an Anthology* (available at through the EIU’s Textbook Rental System).
- Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* (Broadview 2nd Edition, TRS)
- Jane Austen’s *Persuasion* (Norton, TRS).

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**Romanticism on the Net**

The following websites provide a wealth of information on Romantic-era literature and culture:

**Voice of the Shuttle** An excellent website for research in the humanities. Click on Romantic Literature in index. [http://vos.ucsb.edu/](http://vos.ucsb.edu/)

**Romantic Circles** A fascinating, general resource for Romantic-era texts, contexts, scholarship, and links to other sites. [http://www.rc.umd.edu/](http://www.rc.umd.edu/)
**Romanticism on the Net**  An online Romanticism journal—includes articles and reviews.  
http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/

**British Women Romantic Poets Project**  Includes searchable, annotated e-texts of hard-to-locate works by women Romantic poets, as well as links to other sites.  
http://www.lib.ucdavis.edu/English/BWRP/index.html

**Class Reading Schedule:**

**Week One 8/28**
Introduction to Course

**Week Two 9/4**
Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (packet)

**Week Three 9/11**
Edmund Burke’s essay on the Sublime and the Beautiful (packet 2)  
Supplementary essay by Professor Nicola Trott (optional reading, in packet 2). Mary Wollstonecraft’s *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway, and Denmark* (packet 2)

**Week Four 9/18**
Single Page Essay due: Description in course packet  
Introduction to Coleridge and Wordsworth. Read biographical information on Wordsworth and Coleridge (189-190) plus Advertisement for *Lyrical Ballads*, “The Nightingale” (212)  
“The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (528ff) and “Kubla Khan” (523-4)

**Week Five 9/25**
Coleridge “Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement” (453-5)  
“This Lime-Tree Bower, My Prison”(551-553); “Frost at Midnight.” (553-5)

**Week Six 10/2**
Guest Lecturer: Dr. Dana Ringuette, English  
Wordsworth: Advertisement (191) Preface to (357-366) and selections from *Lyrical Ballads* including “The Thorn,”(234-239) also, “Note to the Thorn” (344); “We are Seven” (234-239); “The Discharged Soldier” (273-277); “The Ruined Cottage,”(277-289); “The Pedlar” (289ff).

**Week Seven 10/9**
“Tintern Abbey,” (265-269); “Daffodils,” (383); “Intimations of Immortality” (375-380); “The World is Too Much With Us” (372); “There is an Active Principle” (298); Dorothy Wordsworth: journal (434) and “Thoughts on my sickbed” (439-40).  
P.B. Shelley’s “Defense of Poetry” (944-956); “To Wordsworth” (823).

**Week Eight 10/16**
Midterm (1 hour); Introduction to Second Wave Romantics  
Lady Caroline Lamb’s bio (648-9), from Glenarvon (650), and “I would I had seen thee dead and cold” (658);  
Byron: “She Walks in Beauty,” (668)

**Week Nine 10/23**
“Don Juan” Cantos One and Two and film.

**Week Ten 10/30**
Byron’s “Manfred,”(718-751); “Prometheus” (708); Coleridge’s “The Satanic Hero,” (handout); P.B. Shelley “Ozymandius,”(849); “Alastor” (824-841); excerpts from Shelley’s “Prometheus Unbound” (TBA)
Week Eleven 11/6  Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* Walton’s Letters, Volume I

Week Twelve 11/13  *Frankenstein* Volumes II and III, P.B. Shelley’s “Mont Blanc” (Wu 845-849). film: “A Postmodern Prometheus”

Week Thirteen 11/20  Jane Austen’s *Persuasion*

Week Fourteen: THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week Fifteen 12/4  *Persuasion* continued

*Second Paper Due if you would like the opportunity to revise*

Week Sixteen 12/11  Keats: “Ode to a Grecian Urn” (1060); “Ode to the Nightingale”(1058); “La Belle Dame Sans Merci”(1054); “Lamia” (1064-1080); “To Autumn” (1080)

Class Wrap-Up at Dr. Bredesen’s

Final Exam: Monday, December 16th 12.30-2.30 pm