

ENG 454
Spring 2014
Prof. Pyle

Office: PLC 270
Hours: W 12-2, Th 1-2
trespyle@uoregon.edu

English Romantic Writers: What is Romanticism?

This course will be a sustained examination of that question -- "What is Romanticism? – for which there is either no "answer" or as many answers as there "askers." There is, however, a rich and complex body of literature to which we assign the adjective "Romantic." Our principal project will be the close reading and discussion of some of the most important and influential texts within that "tradition," from William Blake through John Keats. We will consider the various historical, biographical, philosophical, political, and aesthetic contexts of British Romantic literature, but our primary focus will be on the texts themselves.

Assignments Students will write two 2-page close readings of brief passages from the assigned texts (10% each), one 5-6 page critical paper (30%), and will take a comprehensive final exam during the exam period, Monday, June 9th (30%). Students will participate in **one** of the four group presentations that I have assigned on two of the texts, *Lyrical Ballads* and *Frankenstein* (20%). These **twenty-minute** presentations will take place on April 24th and May 27th. Each group (of 4-5 students) will be asked a series of questions to research and address; and each group will then distill the responses into a **twenty-minute** presentation. Each group will then submit a brief written version of the research and responsibilities that culminated in to the presentation. Half of the grade will be assigned to the individual responsibility and half to the group presentation and summary.

Attendance Mandatory. On the sixth absence (for any reason), a student will without warning lose one full letter from the final course grade. Discussion is crucial to the course: I do not assign a designated "percentage" for daily participation, but I expect students to come to class having read the assigned reading (which is not excessive) and prepared to discuss. Please refrain from using mobile devices during class.

Texts The only texts you need to purchase are the most recent edition of the Norton devoted to English Romanticism and the Norton critical edition of *Frankenstein*. As our readings and discussions unfold, I will occasionally assign brief supplementary critical essays or portions of essays that I will upload to the Blackboard site.

Schedule of Readings and Assignments

- 1 Apr: **William Blake**, "Songs of Innocence" (Norton, 118-125)
3 Apr: "Songs of Experience" (112-117, 126-135)
- 8 Apr: "The Marriage of Heaven and Hell" (148-160) (The Norton Introduction to "The Romantic Period," 3-30)
- 10 Apr: **William Wordsworth** (270), from *Lyrical Ballads*: "We Are Seven" (278), "Expostulation and Reply" & "The Tables Turned" (280), "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (288)
- 15 Apr: from Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (292-304), "Strange fits of passion have I known," "She dwelt among the untrodden ways," "Three years she grew," "A slumber did my spirit seal," "I travelled among unknown men," "Nutting" (305-309)
- 17 Apr: "Resolution and Independence," "I wandered lonely as a cloud," "My heart leaps up," "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" (330-341), "To Toussaint l'Overture," "London, 1802," "The world is too much with us," "Mutability" (345-348)
- 22 Apr: from *The Prelude*, from Book Fifth [The Boy of Winander; The Drowned Man] (381-383), from Book Sixth [Crossing Simplon Pass] (384-387), from Book Seventh [Blind Beggar; Bartholomew Pass] (388-389), from Book Eleventh [Spots of Time] (395-398), from Book Thirteenth [Vision on Mount Snowdon] (398-402)
- 24 Apr: **Coleridge**, "The Eolian Harp," "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison" (437-442), "Christabel" (462-476)
Case Study #1: On *Lyrical Ballads* (two group presentations)
- 29 Apr: "Kubla Khan" (459-461), "Frost at Midnight," "Dejection: An Ode," "The Pains of Sleep" (479-483), from *Biographia Literaria*, (488-498)
- 1 May: **Lord Byron** (612-615), "Darkness" (618-619), from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (620-637)
- 6 May: **Percy Shelley**, "Mutability," "To Wordsworth" (748-752), "Ozymandias" (776), "England in 1819" (790), "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (773-775)
- 8 May: "Mont Blanc" (770-772), "The Mask of Anarchy" (779-789), from *A Defence of Poetry* (856-868)
- 13 May: "Ode to the West Wind" (791-792), "To a Sky-Lark" (834-835), "Adonais" (839-853)
- 15 May: **Mary Shelley**, *Frankenstein*, Volume I (1-58)
- 20 May: *Frankenstein*, Volume II (59-101)
- 22 May: *Frankenstein*, Volume III (103-156)

27 May: *Frankenstein*, Contexts, Responses and Interpretations

Case Study #2: *Frankenstein* (two group presentations)

29 May: **John Keats**, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," from *Sleep and Poetry*, "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles," from *Endymion*, "On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again" (901-910), from Letters (965-980)

3 Jun: "Bright Star," "La Belle Dame sans Merci: A Ballad" (922-924), "Ode to Psyche," "Ode to a Nightingale" (925-929), "Ode on Indolence (933-934)

5 Jun: "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode on Melancholy" (930-933), "This living hand, now warm and capable" (952)

9 Jun: **1:00-3:00 pm** Final Exam

ENG 454: English Romantic Writers
Case Study 1: *Lyrical Ballads*

Wordsworth and Coleridge first published *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798; and it is often regarded as the most defining early text of English Romanticism. And while we will read and discuss many of the poems published in one of the three editions of the volume, I want the two groups who are exploring *Lyrical Ballads* to research the volume itself so that we may have a more complete understanding of the version of the text – what it looked like and how it circulated – as well as the history of its reception and evaluation.

Group 1: “The Event of *Lyrical Ballads*”

What did the first and subsequent editions of *Lyrical Ballads* look like? How was it presented? What are the differences between the editions? How are these important? How was *Lyrical Ballads* received and understood in those first five years (1798-1803)? Does this attention to the material text and its immediate reception affect your understanding or interpretation of the poems? If so, how?

[Erika Powell, Anthony Brown, Alex Greenberg, Erica Lambright, Allie Peirce]

Group 2: “The History of *Lyrical Ballads*”

When did *Lyrical Ballads* become a big deal? Explore the reception of the volume over the two centuries following its publication. Identify four important moments in the interpretation or evaluation of the volume. Can you isolate a time at which *Lyrical Ballads* becomes significant? Does the volume itself remain important for critics or do they begin to disregard the collection and focus instead on individual poems? What is the reception over time of the preface that Wordsworth writes to the 1802 edition?

[Emma Ivie, Mason Shumate, Haydn Cieri, Karl Hinson]

Divide and address these questions: there are not “right” answers to these questions. They are meant to be prompts to some research into the volume. For your research, please look further than “crowd-sourced” studies. Your groups are responsible for finding at least five reputable scholarly books or articles as evidence for your responses.

The presentations should address these questions: you can decide among yourselves how and in what order you want to present the material. You may use power-point if you’d like or other hi/lo-tech options. Be sure that you can present the material in **twenty minutes**. The presentations will take place **Thursday, April 24th**. You will turn in individual write-ups detailing your own contributions the following Tuesday April 29th.