

Victoria University of Wellington
School of English, Film, Theatre, and Media Studies – 2008 (2/3)

ENGL 311 – ROMANTIC LITERATURE

Teaching Staff

Assoc. Prof. Heidi Thomson (Course coordinator)

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Office Hours: Monday 2:10-2:50 pm, Friday 2:10-2:50 pm , or by appointment. Ring me or send me an email to set up a time. I am *not* available for appointments on Wednesdays. Please note: I reply to email queries once a day (but not during weekends). You can reasonably expect to receive a reply within 36 hours.

Assoc. Prof. Harry Ricketts

Phone 463 6814
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Class Times and Places

Lectures are on Monday and Friday, 1:10 – 2:00, in Hugh McKenzie, LT105. Tutorials begin in the second week. Tutorial times will be available towards the end of the first week and will be posted on the English noticeboard in the foyer outside HM LT206, and on the course Blackboard site. You will need to bring the course textbook to every lecture and every tutorial.

Further Information

Any additional information will be provided in lectures and made available on the course Blackboard site.

Aims and Objectives

This course is primarily an introduction to the great poetry of the Romantic period in Britain (1789-1832). Main themes include the poets' interest in the Self, the human mind, and the transformative power of the imagination. In addition we will also consider literary texts about prominent social and political issues (e.g. slavery, the wars with America and France). We will primarily focus on poetry by Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats.

Course objectives include, but are not restricted to the following. Students passing the course should have:

- A basic understanding of how Romanticism in English literature is defined. [Assignment 2 and the Exam]
- The ability to read and articulate an interpretation of a Romantic text. [Assignment 1 and the Exam]
- An increased understanding of Romanticism in the context of English literary history. [Exam]
- An increased knowledge and understanding of Romantic texts, in particular Romantic poetry, and its authors. [Assignment 1, 2, and the Exam]
- An increased appreciation and knowledge of English Romantic literature, and its cultural and historical context.
- Increased reading, analytical and critical skills.

Set Text

We will use the following text for every lecture and every tutorial: *The Longman Anthology of British Literature. Volume 2A. The Romantics and their Contemporaries*. Eds. Susan Wolfson and Peter Manning (Third Edition, Longman, RRP\$79.95).

Workload

You should expect to devote 18 hours per week to this course, i.e. 3 class contact hours plus 15 hours for reading, preparation, and writing. You will find that repeated, thoughtful reading of the assigned texts is a good idea. You are encouraged to read as widely as possible in the anthology. On the course Blackboard site you will find a bibliography of recommended reading should you want to find out more about the period and its authors.

Mandatory Course Requirements and Tutorial Attendance

You are required to attend lectures and tutorials regularly, to submit all written work by the deadlines specified below, and to sit a final 3-hour exam:

- At least seven tutorials should be attended.
- All written work (two essays, a total of 4,000 words) must be satisfactorily completed and handed in. Word limits must be observed.
- A three-hour final exam (closed book) must be completed at the end of the course. The examination period for 2008 is 17 October – 8 November.

Written Work

Two pieces of written work are required (a total of 4,000 words). The first is a 2,000 word essay based on a close reading of passages by Wordsworth (see below). It is due on **Friday**

8 August 2008 and it should be delivered to the English Programme 300-level assignments mailbox on the eighth floor of von Zedlitz by 5 p.m. at the latest. The second piece of writing is a 2,000 word essay (see below). It is due on **Friday 3 October 2008** and it should be delivered to the English Programme 300-level assignments mailbox on the eighth floor of von Zedlitz by 5 p.m. at the latest. Of course you are welcome to hand in your assignments earlier. The final deadline to hand in any written work for this course is Friday 10 October 2008.

Extensions must be arranged with your tutor in advance, and not on or after the due date. A simple request will suffice for extensions for a period of one week or less. Longer or additional extensions will require documentation (e.g. a medical certificate) that establishes the need for the extension. Late work will only ever receive minimal feedback. Late work for which no extension has been granted will be marked down by a full letter grade (e.g. A- becomes B-, C becomes D), and no feedback will be provided.

We cannot assume responsibility for lost work, and you must always make a photocopy or extra printout of your work for your own records. Never place essays under my office door; such essays may be lost or dated days after they were submitted. You must hand in a hard copy of your essay; electronic or faxed copies are not acceptable.

Presentation of Written Work

Your assignments should be well written, well presented, and properly documented. A style guide is available on the course Blackboard site. You should endeavour to organize and communicate your ideas in ways appropriate to academic writing. It is assumed that you will consult the appropriate reference work (e.g. a dictionary, a grammar handbook, a dictionary of literary terms) if you are not sure, for example, about the meaning of word, the placement of a comma, or the use of literary terms.

Assessment

To gain a pass in ENGL 311, you must meet the mandatory course requirements. Your final grade will be based on a combination of course work (60%) and a three-hour final exam (40%).

1. Essay 1: 30% of final grade (2,000 words) - due on Friday 8 August 2008.
2. Essay 2: 30 % of final grade (2,000 words) – due on Friday 3 October 2008.
3. Final Exam: 40% of final grade (3 hours) – date to be announced. The 2008 exam period is from Friday 17 October until Saturday 8 November.

The final 3-hour exam will consist of two sections, A and B. Section A consists of 10 short-answer questions (out of a choice of 15) which test your knowledge of authors and texts (10 points). Section B consists of a choice of essay questions, and you will be asked to answer three of them (30 points each; 90 points). For the essay questions you will need to write on at least three different authors. The exam is closed book.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means no cheating. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. The University defines plagiarism as:

The presentation of the work of another person or other persons as if it were one's own, whether intended or not. This includes published or unpublished work, material on the Internet and the work of other students or staff.

It is still plagiarism even if you re-structure the material or present it in your own style or words.

Note: It is however, perfectly acceptable to include the work of others as long as that is acknowledged by appropriate referencing.

Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria and is not worth the risk. Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course
- suspension from the course or the University.

Find out more about plagiarism, and how to avoid it, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

Relationship between Assessment and Course Objectives

Your written work should demonstrate a satisfactory response to the topic and an understanding of the texts and issues outlined in the aims and objectives.

General University Requirements

Please consult the ENGL 311 Blackboard site for the General University Requirements.

ENGL 311 – 2008 Lecture Schedule

Please note that there may be some changes to this lecture schedule; any changes will be announced in lecture and posted on Blackboard.

You are advised to read the assigned passages ahead for each week. All references to page numbers are from the Longman Anthology, Third Edition. During the lectures I will also refer to other poems or texts by way of illustration.

You are encouraged to read as widely as possible in the Anthology. “The Romantics and Their Contemporaries” (3-29), “Political and Religious Orders” (1099-1104), “Literary and Cultural Terms” (1105-28), and headnotes to the individual authors are recommended reading as well.

Week 1: Introduction

Read: Barbauld (63, 65-79) Burke (33-9; 103-12), Gilpin (40-6), Smith (88), Wordsworth (387, 394-401, 403-4, 423-5, 432-43, 450, 536), Coleridge (576-7)

Mon 7 July Introduction to the period and the poetry

Fri 11 July Introduction to the period and the poetry

Week 2: Social Sensibility

Read: 209-66; 319-56

Mon 14 July Slavery

Fri 18 July Slavery / Women

Week 3: The Doors of Perception

Read: Blake (150-2, 156-208)

Mon 21 July *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*

Fri 25 July *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (continued) and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

Week 4: Blake (continued); Wordsworth and Coleridge

Read: William Wordsworth (385-452), Dorothy Wordsworth (538-69), Coleridge (570-97)

Mon 28 July *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*

Fri 1 August *Lyrical Ballads*

Week 5: Wordsworth and Coleridge (continued)

Read: Wordsworth (385-516), Coleridge (570-97)

Mon 4 August *Lyrical Ballads* and the Greater Romantic Lyric

Fri 8 August *The Prelude*

Please note: Assignment 1 due on Friday 8 August 2008

Week 6: Wordsworth

Read: Wordsworth (452-516)

Mon 11 August The Prelude
 Fri 15 August No lecture

Mid-Trimester Break: 18 August – 31 August

Week 7: Wordsworth and Coleridge after Lyrical Ballads

Read: Coleridge (517-20, 614-6, 619-23), Wordsworth (527-33)

Mon 1 September “To a Gentleman” and “Kubla Khan”

Fri 5 September Wordsworth’s *Intimations Ode* and Coleridge’s *Dejection. An Ode*

Week 8: Wordsworth and Coleridge after Lyrical Ballads

Read: Coleridge (619-23), Wordsworth (527-33), Byron (656-8, 711-78, 809-14), “Sir Patrick Spence” (368-71)

Monday 8 September Wordsworth’s *Intimations Ode* and Coleridge’s *Dejection. An Ode*

Fri 12 September Byron: A Portrait (lecture by Assoc. Prof. Harry Ricketts)

Week 9: Byron and Shelley

Read: Byron (711-78, 809-14), Shelley (814-24)

Mon 15 September Childe Harold and Don Juan

Fri 19 September Shelley’s lyrics, *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty* and *Mont Blanc*

Week 10: Shelley continued and Keats

Read: Shelley (814-24, 827-9), Keats (920-4, 929-61, 991-1007)

Mon 22 September Hymn to Intellectual Beauty and Mont Blanc

Fri 26 September Keats

Week 11: Keats continued

Read: Keats (920-4, 929-61, 991-1007)

Mon 29 September Keats

Fri 3 October Keats

Please note: Assignment 2 due on Friday 3 October 2008

Week 12: John Clare + Conclusion

Read: John Clare (908-20)

Mon 6 October Clare’s context and poems

Fri 10 October Conclusion

Some Notes for Reading Poetry

- Look up any words which you don't understand. Keep in mind that the meaning of a word may change over time ("enthusiastic" is a good example of this). A desk dictionary will do, but keep in mind that the Oxford English Dictionary (O.E.D.) is available online on the library page. It is a good dictionary for this course because you can trace the historical changes in the language.
- Consider the "argument" or the "plot" of the poem:
 - > what is the initial situation of the speaker like? (good, bad, ominous, disturbing, reassuring, descriptive etc.?)
 - > what does the speaker want, desire, strive for?
 - > what are the obstacles which prevent the speaker from achieving this?
 - > what is the resolution? does the speaker get what he or she wants?
- How is the speaker characterized? Does the speaker work through some mental or emotional process? How is this process evoked?
- How is the poem organized? Which patterns can you find throughout the poem? Are there shifts or changes in the subject matter? If so, what do these signify? Are there accompanying changes in tone? What is the relation of those, if present, to the formal divisions in the poems?
- What about line divisions? Stanza divisions? Rhyme schemes? Imagery? Contrasts? Repetition?

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 ENGL 311 – 2008
 Romantic Literature

First Assignment: Essay based on close reading of passages by Wordsworth (30%)

The first assignment is a 2,000 word essay based on your close reading of three passages from Wordsworth's *Prelude*.

The passages are:

1. From *The Prelude, Book First*, ll. 287-333 (*Longman Anthology*, pp. 459-60)
2. From *The Prelude, Book First*, ll. 373-428 (*Longman Anthology*, pp. 461-62)
3. From *The Prelude, Book Eleventh*, ll. 252-343 (*Longman Anthology*, pp. 507-8)

For your convenience, a copy of the passages is attached to this handout. You are strongly advised, however, to read the passages within their contexts in the Anthology.

Your essay may consist of three independent sections of c.600-700 words each (totalling 2,000 words). You do not have to relate the passages to one another. Your close readings should incorporate a detailed answer to the following questions:

- First passage: How does the passage convey that the speaker was “foster'd alike by beauty and by fear” (l. 307)?
- Second passage: How do the speaker's *thoughts* about the experience (ll. 415-28) relate to the *description* of the experience itself?
- Third passage: How does the speaker express the relevance of his frightening childhood experience?

You do not need to consult or refer to secondary critical sources for this assignment. You are expected to deliver a thoughtful, considered, detailed response to the questions above. Read the passages several times and pay attention to the formal characteristics of the poem to evoke your understanding of this poem: how does the poem make its points? Look up any words which you do not understand in a dictionary (the *Oxford English Dictionary* is available on-line on the library page).

It is due on Friday 8 August 2008 and it should be handed in at the lecture or delivered to the English department administrative assistant on the eighth floor of von Zedlitz by 5 p.m. at the latest.

Extensions must be arranged with your tutor in advance, and not on or after the due date. A simple request will suffice for extensions for a period of one week or less. Longer or additional extensions will require documentation (e.g. a medical certificate) that establishes the need for the extension. Late work will only receive minimal feedback. Late work for which no extension has been granted will be marked down by a full letter grade (e.g. A- becomes B-, C becomes D), and no feedback will be provided.

We cannot assume responsibility for lost work, and you are responsible for making a photocopy of your work for your own records. Never place essays under my office door; such essays may be lost or dated days after they were submitted.

Presentation of Written Work:

Your assignments should be well written, well presented, and properly documented. You should endeavour to organize and communicate your ideas in ways appropriate to academic writing. It is assumed that you will consult the appropriate reference work (e.g. *A Handbook for Students of English Literature*, a dictionary, a grammar handbook, a dictionary of literary terms) if you are not sure, for example, about the meaning of word, the placement of a comma, or the use of literary terms.

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Romantic Literature
Second Assignment: Essay Topics

Note: Keep in mind the mandatory course requirements which stipulate that all written work (two essays) must be satisfactorily completed and handed in.

This second piece of writing is a 2,000 word essay. It is due on **Friday 3 October 2008**, and it should be delivered to the English Programme Essay boxes (von Zedlitz 809) by 5 p.m. at the latest. Of course you are welcome to hand in your assignments earlier. You must hand in a hard copy of your essay; electronic copies will not be accepted. Extensions will not be granted beyond the end of the final week of lectures, Friday 10 October 2008, without the permission of the Head of School, Assoc. Professor Peter Whiteford.

Extensions must be arranged with your tutor in advance, and not on or after the due date. A simple request will suffice for extensions for a period of one week or less. Longer or additional extensions will require documentation (e.g. a medical certificate) that establishes the need for the extension. All late work will receive minimal feedback. In addition, late work for which no extension was requested will be marked down by a full letter grade (e.g. A- becomes B-, C becomes D), and no feedback will be provided.

We cannot assume responsibility for lost work, and you are responsible for making a photocopy of your work for your own records. Never place essays under my office door; such essays may be lost or dated days after they were submitted.

Your essay should be well written, well presented, and properly documented. You should endeavour to organize and communicate your ideas in ways appropriate to academic writing. It is assumed that you will consult the appropriate reference work (e.g. a dictionary, a grammar handbook, a dictionary of literary terms) if you are not sure, for example, about the meaning of word, the placement of a comma, or the use of literary terms.

Please do come and see me during office hours, or make an appointment if you want to discuss your work in progress

Choose one topic:

1. Wordsworth writes in *The Excursion*:

Not Chaos, not
 The darkest pit of lowest Erebus,
 Nor aught of blinder vacancy – scooped out
 By help of dreams, can breed such fear and awe
 As fall upon us often when we look
 Into our Minds, into the Mind of man,

My haunt, and the main region of my Song.

Write an essay on how English Romantic poets turn the Mind into the “main region” of their song. You do not necessarily have to focus on Wordsworth.

2. Blake’s poetry offers a “trenchant argument for imaginative freedom over psychological inhibition, conventional morality, and institutionalized authority” (Wolfson and Manning). Write an essay on how Blake addresses “psychological inhibition, conventional morality, and institutionalized authority” in his work.

3. The *Oxford English Dictionary Online* offers a range of definitions for “slave”, including:

- One who is the property of, and entirely subject to, another person, whether by capture, purchase, or birth; a servant completely divested of freedom and personal rights.
- One who submits in a servile manner to the authority or dictation of another or others; a submissive or devoted servant.
- One who is completely under the domination of, or subject to, a specified influence.

Write an essay on slavery and/or enslavement, bearing in mind the above definitions, as you found it portrayed by Romantic poets.

4. “Poetry sometimes crowns the search for happiness. It is itself a search for happiness” (Wallace Stevens). Write an essay on how this statement applies to the poetry of Coleridge.

5. Write an essay on how Byron satirizes what many people would consider matters of high importance (war and marriage for instance) in his verse.

6. Write an essay on the part which nature plays in Shelley’s poetry. Refer to a range of poems which you have read in the course.

7. Keats writes in “Ode on Melancholy”: “Ay, in the very temple of Delight / Veil’d Melancholy has her sovran shrine.” Write an essay on the combination of pleasure and pain in Keats’s verse.

8. Wolfson and Manning write in their headnote to *The Prelude*: “[*The Prelude*] emerges as a great, self-conscious testimony to the construction of the past out of the urgent needs of the present.” Write an essay on how Wordsworth affirms a connection between the past and the present in his poetry.