You Say You Want a Revolution? British Romanticism

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Course Description: The "revolutionary" spirit of Romanticism is defined by the political/cultural revolutions of the time and the self-conscious break with inherited literary tradition. Yet these assumptions are countered by notions of what has been called the "autonomous imagination" celebrated by Romantics, a desire to escape into what Shelley called the "still cave of the witch Poesy." Using a contemporary revisionist anthology of British Romanticism, we will read a diverse selection of Romantic texts and explore the movement of Romantic vision from flights of imaginative reverie to graphic renditions/distortions of history, including Wollstonecraft's cultural "vision," Blake's critiques of sexual, political, and aesthetic oppression, Wordsworth's revolutionary ballads, and Coleridge's and Keats' sites of imaginative retreats (the urn, a magical snake, a
pleasure dome and opium). We will also explore the gothic in Shelley and the performance of gender/empire in Austen. In all, we will explore Romantic contexts with regard to political, cultural, sexual, and spiritual liberation and the equally subversive Romantic imagination.

**Required Texts:** *Broadview Anthology of Romanticism Vol. 4*
- Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*
- Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
- Selected online texts as assigned

**English 4002 Department Course Objectives:** Students will be able to
1. Understand and assess the traditions, conventions, and contexts associated with the study of the English language and its literatures in a particular literary period ranging from the nineteenth century through to the contemporary in Britain and the former British Empire, depending upon the specific course topic.
2. Apply critical thinking skills to the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information and ideas from diverse oral, written, and/or visual sources.
3. Conduct research, develop organizational strategies, and compose professional documents using the academic conventions of English Studies as a discipline.

**English 4002 British Romanticism Specific Course Objectives:** Students will be able to
1. Read critically and analytically selections from British Romantic writers in diverse genres and to read representative scholarship so as to consider these texts from a variety of critical perspectives.
2. To consider the challenges of the definition of Romanticism, apparent in recent critical re-readings of the period, especially the "conflict" between a transcendental, visionary Romanticism and Romanticism as a socially-engaged cultural critique, and then to move beyond such arbitrary binary distinctions and re-define, for ourselves, what we mean by the term.
3. To consider current notions of "periodization" in general, especially with regard to Romanticism and gender.
4. To use a variety of written assignments (in-class writing exercises, analytical papers, researched papers) in the fulfillment of a Writing Across the Curriculum course.

**Course Requirements and Class Policies:**

1. Students are expected to have read all assigned texts before each class meeting and be prepared to discuss; students should bring specific questions to class each meeting. We will have focused free writing exercises (quizzes) on the readings at the beginning of each class to enhance our discussions. Being prepared to discuss at each class meeting
will shape the participation grade; thus absences in excess of 3 will lower the participation grade substantially.

2. Students will complete 2 brief (3 pages each) out of class response essays which will demonstrate the ability to synthesize material and discuss specific passages in a concise, report form. The 2nd essay may lead into the research paper.

3. Students will write a research paper (8-10 pp) using correct and current MLA style on a topic chosen in consultation with the professor. Papers should go through a cycle of drafting/revision before final submission at the end of the quarter.

4. Students will complete a midterm and a final to demonstrate broad knowledge of specific texts, ideas, from the course.

Plagiarism Policy: The Department of English and Philosophy defines plagiarism as taking personal credit for the words and ideas of others as they are presented in electronic, print, and verbal sources. The Department expects that students will accurately credit sources in all assignments. An equally dishonest practice is fabricating sources or facts; it is another form of misrepresenting the truth. Plagiarism is grounds for failing the course. Any assignment plagiarized will receive a ZERO. Students will be reported to the appropriate university officials.

Evaluation Procedures
Evaluation of assignments is based on the unique expectations of each kind of assignment. Grades are evaluated in terms of the following:

- Response essays 30%
- Research paper 20%
- Participation (quizzes, free writings, group work, writing workshops) 10%
- Mid-term 20%
- Final 20%

Th 10 Introduction to course: Wordsworth “The World is too much with us” 244 / Excerpt Fight Club

T 15 Historical/Cultural Contexts of Revolution / in-class analyses of Price, Burke, Paine excerpts / Wollstonecraft excerpts


T 22 Blake, Slavery/Religion: Divine Image, Human Abstract, Garden of love/ Poison Tree, The Little Black Boy, / view illustrations of Stedman
Th 24  London / Begin *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (read text [here](#) / also view images from the Blake Archive [here](#))

T 29 Finish *Visions*

Th 31 Wordsworth, “Preface to LB,” select titles TBA

T  5  “Michael” / “The Brothers” (online [here](#))

Th 7 “Discharged Soldier” (versions on courseden) / V.S. Naipaul “Black Wordsworth” [here](#) / discussion postcolonial and Romanticism

T 12 Excerpts from *The Prelude* / slave/slave trader captivity narratives / “Tintern Abbey”

Th 14 Assign essay 1 / discuss sample essays: keys to effective analytical papers

T 19 Essay 1 workshop (full draft A, half draft C, no draft = 0)

T 21Coleridge  “ Aeolian Harp / Rime of the Ancient Mariner / essay 1 due

T 26 *Kubla Khan* / opium/addiction poems

Th 28 *Christabel* (Relation to Gothic)

9/29 Last Day to withdraw from any course

T  3  Keats, “La Belle Dame,” *Lamia (gothic, gender and sexuality)*

Th  5  Fall Break Midterm Exam

T 10 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*

Th 12 Austen, cont’d / Assign “My Jane Austen” artifact search

T 17 Austen / Narrative closure / Austen artifacts: The Austen “industry” / assign essay 2

Th 19 Byron *Manfred* / excerpt in class, Camus’ *Myth of Sisyphus*

T 24 Finish Byron / draft workshop essay 2

Th 26 M. Shelley *Frankenstein* / Essay 2 due

T 31  Shelley cont’d w
Th 2 Finish Shelley/ Visual art parallels, see Fuseli’s *Nightmare* [here](#)

T 7  The Frankenstein “industry” / Frankenstein as cinemyth / View samples here

- 1931 *Frankenstein* creation scene [here](#)
- 1935 *Bride of Frankenstein* blind hermit scene [here](#)
- 1994 *Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein*: watch from 51 minute mark to 59 [here](#)

Th 9  Research Paper: Topic selection, writing a prospectus, research FAQs / assign prospectus

T 14  Prospecti due in class / mandatory workshop

Th 16  Out of Town at a Conference: No Class / Research phase of your project / sign up for conferences after break

T 21, Th 23 THANKSGIVING BREAK

T 28  Conference on research paper M 27, T 28 and Th 29: email reminders sent out 11/27

Th 30  Final Day: Mandatory attendance and discussion of “Romanticism and Revolution” / *Final Exam Review * / take home portion of exam assigned in class

Final Exam: T Dec 5 2:00