ENGL6115-01 British Romanticism: Home, Homeland, and Exile

Fall 2017

Dr. Lisa Crafton

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Office Hours: T, Th 9:30-11, 3:30-4:45
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Course Description:

British Romantic authors’ representation of place has been understood in terms of transcendental visions, critiques of industrialization, or Revolutionary politics—Wordsworth’s native Lake District, for example, is a site of visionary contemplation, a target for industrial expansion, and an egalitarian model—but the works of these writers also contend with the historical context of empire. In this seminar we will explore a different vision of place, home, and homeland by using postcolonial criticism in revisioning Romantic texts. Edward Said’s analysis of a split subject who experiences a rift between “self and native place” and Rushdie’s notions of imaginary homelands for exiles will inform our readings. In the poetry of Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Blake, we will examine natives and exiles, captivity narratives, border crossings, and slave memoirs. Wollstonecraft’s fiction offers us a wife abused by her husband whose only hope lies in her relationship with her jailor, and Austen’s novel exposes the world of
wealthy English gentry as dependent upon West Indies slavery. We will also examine how Roczema’s film version of Austen relies on visual art of the Abolitionist movement. [Including significant poetry and fiction of the period as well as cultural and critical contexts, the course contributes specifically to material for the British Lit section of the M. A. Oral Exam).

Required Texts and Materials:

William Wordsworth, select poetry online (specific versions specified)
William Blake, select poetry online (specific versions specified)
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, select poetry online (specific versions specified)
Mary Wollstonecraft, Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman
Austen Mansfield Park
Film, Mansfield Park, directed by Patricia Roczema

Online excerpts from slave trader memoirs (especially John Newton) travel narratives (especially Samuel Hearne), and postcolonial theory including Salmon Rushdie and Homi Bhaba.

Course Objectives:

1. Students will read, analyze, and discuss selected British literary texts from British Romanticism to consider the representation of home, homeland, and exile in terms of the perpetuation of or challenge to ideas of self and nationhood.
2. Students will consider theoretical premises about Romantic texts in postcolonial critical contexts in reconsideration of critical premises about Romantic “selfhood.”
3. Students will critically analyze an online archival text through Eighteenth-Century Collections Online and develop creative and critical questions for how these little-known texts raise questions/inform/challenge the literary texts.
4. Students will offer organized, focused and critically-informed oral presentations, both on a specific issue or text and a colloquia presentation of their research project at the end of the seminar.
5. Students will demonstrate in both oral and written work a discipline-specific critical facility through convincing and well-supported analysis of related material.
6. Students will demonstrate their command of academic English and the tenets of sound composition by means of thesis-driven analytical prose.
7. Students will conduct independent and meaningful course-related research and synthesize it in the form of a correctly documented research paper prepared according to current professional standards.

UWG Policies/Services for all courses: Read here

Course Requirements and Evaluation:
Specific prompts, requirements, and objectives for each assignment are included on the assignment sheets available in Courseden.

Seminar Paper (12-15 pp)
Brief response essays (3-4 pp each)
Oral Report (20 minute, power point)
Class discussion/in class workshops, outside assigned work

8/10 Introduction to course topic, syllabus, requirements / Myths and Assumptions about Romanticism / Excerpt from Wordsworth Now and Then, on “The Wordsworth Experience” / Wordsworth, “There Was a Boy”


8/24 Blake: From Songs of Innocence and Experience, read “The Little Black Boy” copy c here / view alternate visual versions copies L here and Z here / read in any online version “The Chimney Sweeper” from Songs of I and “The Chimney Sweeper” from Songs of E as well as “Garden of Love” and “London” / View Blake’s Engravings to Stedman here, ep. A Negro Hung Alive by the Ribs, Flagellation of a Female Samboe Slave, and Europe Supported by Africa and America / Report: Stedman’s Narrative and critical analysis of Blake’s engravings

8/31 Blake Visions of the Daughters of Albion (courseden) Excerpts from America here / Report: Blake’s poem and imperialism, Hutchings’ article

9/7 Coleridge: “Fears in Solitude” / Rime of the Ancient Mariner / Report: Coleridge’s poetry and the Slave Trade (esp. work by Debbie Lee and Helen Thomas) / Intro to travel narratives TBA

9/14 Wollstonecraft, Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman / Report: Wollstonecraft’s Vindication exemplified in the novel

9/19 This is the last day to withdraw from any course for this semester.


9/28 Captivity narratives, John Newton’s An Authentic Narrative, group presentations on archival texts/ Report: Newton and spiritual autobiography?
10/5 Fall Break

10/12 Wordsworth, Variant versions of “The Discharged Soldier” (courseden) / Sonnets: “To Toussaint LOverture” and “To a Negro Lady) / Report: Toussaint L’Overture and Haitian revolution, Wordsworth and race

10/19 Wordsworth “Michael,” “The Brothers,” “Tintern Abbey” / Report: Critical argument on “Tintern Abbey” (the Levinson / Vendler debate)

10/26 Intro to Austen’s novel / Read Mnthali’s “The Stranglehold of English Literature / Report: Colonial Contexts in the Novel, esp. significance of title and Said’s Culture and Imperialism

11/2 Austen, Mansfield Park

11/9 Discuss Roczema’s film version / Report: Critical Views on the film

11/16 I am at a conference: online work, partner critique work

11/23 Thanksgiving Break

11/30 Draft Colloquium