

ENG 318:
British Romantic Writers
Cedar Crest College
Fall 2009
Tuesday 7-9:30 p.m.
ALH 214

Professor Mary H. Snyder
Hartzel Hall 220

Office hours: MWTh 2:30-4 p.m.
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Course Description

This course will examine selected authors in poetry and prose during the British Romantic period, 1780-1832. These texts will be read in relationship to the political and cultural influences of the time in which they were written. While the course will include poetry of the most studied Romantic poets – Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats, it will include works from the currently expanding canon and a taste of more recent scholarship. Mary Wollstonecraft and her daughter, Mary Shelley, will be the focal points of this course, since each woman has proved central to her generation of Romantic writers in a myriad of ways. We will explore the lives and writing of the Romantic writers who rebelled against the strict morals imposed upon society at their time, to revision a new society that reveled in nature, the imagination, and the common “man.”

Texts

Damrosch, David, and Kevin J. H. Dettmar, eds. *The Longman Anthology of British Literature*. 3rd Edition. Volume 2A: *The Romantics and Their Contemporaries*. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2006.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*. 1818. Ed. J. Paul Hunter. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1996.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and the Wrongs of Woman, or Maria*. 1792 and 1798. Eds. Anne K. Mellor and Noelle Chao. New York: Pearson Education, Inc., 2007.

Honor Philosophy: The Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy states that students shall uphold community standards for academic and social behavior to preserve a learning environment dedicated to personal and academic excellence. It is based upon the principle that, as a self-governing body, students have the ability to create an atmosphere of trust and support. Within this environment, individuals are empowered to make their own decisions, develop personal regard for the system under which they live, and achieve a sense of integrity and judgment that will guide them through life.

Classroom Protocol: Appropriate classroom behavior is implicit in the Cedar Crest Honor Philosophy. Such behavior is defined and guided by complete protection for the rights of all students and faculty to a courteous, respectful classroom environment. That environment is free from distractions such as late arrivals, early departures, inappropriate conversations, and any other behaviors that might disrupt instruction or compromise students' access to their Cedar Crest College education.

A special note is appropriate here regarding the tone of our classroom discussions. An important strategy for producing more thoughtful writing is to approach ideas with an attitude of skepticism, whether those ideas come from readings, professors, or classmates. In order to better understand a way of fashioning the world, we must probe the basis for that point of view and examine what reasons and evidence may or may not support it. This is especially critical when it comes to our most closely held beliefs, beliefs that we might feel uncomfortable with placing them under too much scrutiny. As we engage in this process of inquiry, please remember that, while we should question and challenge each other's opinions, a sign of intellectual maturity is that we do so respectfully.

As we live in an age of increasing technological diversion—the call of cell phones, the click of mice, ringing in our ear—it becomes easy to forget the good manners of paying attention to those immediately around us. Please remember to shut cell phones off and refrain from checking your email or any wayward browsing of the Internet during class. ***Let me reiterate this: no cell phone, laptop, or Internet use – or any technological item use for that matter – during class, or I will ask you to leave.***

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the act of using someone else’s ideas or words and passing them off as your own without giving credit to the original source. Since a key goal of a college education is to develop and express your own ideas, plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offense.

It is dishonest to present oral or written work that is not entirely the student’s own, except as may be approved by the instructor. Students must follow the requirements of the instructor regarding when and how much collaboration with other students is permitted. Any language taken from another source, whether individual words or entire paragraphs, must be placed in quotation marks and attributed to the source, following the citation format specified. Paraphrased material from an outside source must also be attributed. In addition, if the student is indebted to another source for a specific perspective or a line of argument—regardless of whether the student has directly quoted the source or not—that debt must be acknowledged.

In this class, the penalty for plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty is a grade of F either on the individual assignment or for the entire course, to be determined by the instructor based upon the severity of the offense.

For an extended description of what constitutes plagiarism, please consult *Writing at Cedar Crest College: A Student’s Guide*.

Attendance: Simply put, you are expected to attend and participate in each class meeting. Improving your college writing skills requires sustained practice in class-to-class discussions and exercises, and missing class means that you’re missing activities that cannot easily be made up. For each absence beyond one penalty-free absence during the semester, your final course assessment will be lowered one letter grade (e.g. A- to B+). There is no distinction between “excused” and “unexcused” absences. If you miss a class, you remain responsible for the material covered. Missing more than 1/4 of the class meetings (4 classes in a semester) will result in a final grade of F.

Class Cancellation: If Cedar Crest’s campus is open, you should expect our class meetings to be held. If troublesome weather threatens to close the campus and thus cancel class, however, you should refer to Cedar Crest’s Inclement Weather Hotline at 610-606-4629 for notification. If I cancel class independently of the campus closing, due to weather or for other reasons, I will send a class-wide email to your Cedar Crest account.

College Policy Regarding Learning Disabilities: Students with documented disabilities who may need academic accommodations should discuss these needs with their professors during the first two weeks of class. Students with disabilities who wish to request accommodations should contact the Learning Center.

My Policy Regarding Late Assignments: I DO NOT accept late assignments. If you experience extenuating circumstances that prevent you from completing an assignment on time, you will need to have documentation of that circumstance and I reserve the right to make my decision. If it is an extenuating circumstance, you have 24 hours past the due date to hand in the assignment, both through email and a hard copy. Thus, no late assignments will be accepted unless proper documentation of an extenuating circumstance is provided and approved by me, and then only by getting the late assignment to me, both through email and hard copy, within 24 hours of the due date. A penalty for lateness will apply.

My Policy Regarding Email: I do not accept writing assignments over email, unless it is absolutely necessary and/or in case of an emergency. Also, email is fine in an emergency, or if it is timely or very important, but I recommend that you bring any concerns or questions to me before/after class or during my office hours.

Grading

Midterm Paper -	20%
Oral & Essay -	25%
Research Project -	30%
Participation -	25%

Midterm Paper

I will assign a topic for this paper, although you will have a choice between two options. The required length of this paper will be 5-7 pages.

Oral

At the beginning of the semester, you will choose a text to present to the class, or part of one. You will be required to research any aspect of the reading you choose that is of interest to you, present it to the class, and then open up a discussion. Thus you will need to have material to present, and questions prepared to lead a discussion. The oral should be 15-20 minutes in length (no more, no less, or the grade is automatically lowered). This oral will then be revised into a three- to five-page essay and submitted for a grade. The essay will be due a week after the oral is presented.

Research Project

You will complete a research project on a text, writer, cultural issue or theoretical concern of the Romantic period (1780-1830). This project in its simplest form can be a scholarly paper (10-12 pages) on one or more of the literary texts we will have studied; topics will be suggested as we go along. And, as we go along, feel free to come to me with any ideas you have for a topic. I am, however, open to other options, such as, a comparison of one of "our" texts or writers, to a text/writer we haven't discussed, perhaps even from another chronological period or nation; a study of a medium other than what has traditionally been termed "literature" (e.g. letters, diaries, newspapers or other periodicals, art, music); a fully-developed lesson plan with appropriate accompanying materials, geared to a particular student audience; or, a creative project informed by research into the period and its writers. Develop the project that most interests you, keeping in mind that, whatever project you do, you will be responsible for conducting thorough research of your subject. We will talk more about this project as the semester proceeds.

Participation

You will be required to participate in class, and be respectful and open-minded with others, including myself. I will be calling on students during discussions, so be prepared. In a small class such as this one, you won't be able to hide. So come prepared, ready to be engaged, and bring snacks and drinks to keep up the energy level. Your participation grade will also reflect attendance since it reflects your contribution to the intellectual environment of the class, which requires you be here to contribute. (See the Grade Criteria for Participation chart below.)

Grade Criteria for Participation

- A** Regularly demonstrates excellent preparation: has clearly read the assigned material and thoughtfully considered any suggested questions, etc. Brings original thought and perspective to discussion, making significant contributions that expand and extend our collective understanding and appreciation of the written work. Listens attentively to other class members and instructor and responds constructively. Maintains active involvement throughout the semester.
- B** Regularly contributes to class discussions and has clearly read the assigned material, considering any suggested questions, etc. Brings original thought and perspective to discussion. Listens attentively to other class members and instructor. Maintains consistent ongoing involvement throughout the semester.
- C** Contributions to discussion show that the assigned materials have been read. Listens attentively to other class members and instructor. Level of involvement variable, but can contribute when called upon.
- D** Doesn't often contribute without being called upon. Completion of assigned reading sometimes in doubt. Level of involvement consistently unsatisfactory.
- F** Does not contribute to discussion unless called upon. Contributions when called upon indicate that assigned materials have not been read.

Assignment Schedule

Have assignments ready for specified day. I reserve the right to change the schedule should I feel it necessary for any reason, including both additions and/or subtractions. Also, further details will be given in class for assignments listed; this is a general guide.

- 8/25: Introductions, syllabus, overview
- 9/1: Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (handout)
Burke, "Reflections on the Revolution in France" – pp. 103-112 (LA)
Wollstonecraft, "A Vindication of the Rights of Men" – pp. 112-121 (LA)
Paine, "The Rights of Man" – pp. 121-128 (LA)
Godwin, "An Enquiry..." – pp. 128-133 (LA)
Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* – Letter, Introduction (pp. 15-27)
- 9/8: Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* – II, III, IV
Critical essay (handout)
- 9/15: Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* – VII, VIII, IX, X, XI, XII
Critical essay (handout)
- 9/22: Blake
Songs of Innocence and Experience
"The Ecchoing Green" – p. 158
"The Chimney Sweeper" – I and E, pp. 161,174
"The Tyger" – p. 177
"The Lamb" – p. 159
"Nurse's Song" – I and E, pp. 164, 174
Marriage of Heaven and Hell, pp. 183-96
Visions of the Daughters of Albion, pp. 197-204
- 9/29: Wollstonecraft's *Maria, or The Wrongs of Woman*
- 10/6: Wordsworth and Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads*, Preface to Second Edition, pp. 408-20
Wordsworth
Coleridge
Romantic women writers
- 10/13: No class
- 10/20: Midterm paper due
Shelley's *Frankenstein* – Preface, Introduction, Volume I
- 10/27: *Frankenstein* – Volumes II and III
- 11/3: Mr. Shelley
- 11/10: Lord Byron
- 11/17: Keats
- 11/24: Review
The Last Man excerpt (handout)
- 12/1: Research project presentations

Research project due in its final form by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, December 4th, in my office (Hartzel Hall 220).