

Heather Anne Wozniak – Sample Syllabus

ROMANTIC BRITISH LITERATURE

Course Description

The meaning of “romanticism” has been hotly contested: does it denote any identifiable philosophical or artistic beliefs, or is it merely a convenient label for a historical period? In addition to reading selections from the six major poets (Wordsworth, Coleridge, Blake, Shelley, Keats, and Byron), we will encounter works by women writers, and examine a variety of genres—prose fiction, essay, drama, and autobiography. This range of readings will expose us to the social, political, and aesthetic debates shaping the literature and culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and enable you to formulate your own perspective on the essence of romanticism(s).

Course Requirements

1. **Participation** – Attentive listening and active participation is required. You must attend class in order to participate! (10%)
2. **Website Discussion** – You will be required to post a question or comment pertaining to the readings at least once per week on the course website. These comments may be used to guide in-class discussion, and you will find them useful in working out ideas for your papers. Further instructions on this requirement will be distributed in class. (10%)
3. **Quizzes** – There will be four unannounced in-class quizzes. These quizzes will allow you to practice the close reading and analytical skills needed for your papers and final exam. No make-ups for missed quizzes, but the lowest quiz score will be dropped. (10%)
4. **Papers** – Two papers of 5-6 pages, each requiring you to develop and express a critical argument in relation to an essay prompt. You should pay close attention to textual detail and use very specific passages and phrases to support your arguments. One paper may be revised and resubmitted for an improved grade. (40%)
5. **Final Exam** – Three sections will test your familiarity with the authors, texts, and themes covered in the course. Part 1 will ask you to define key terms, characters, and phrases. Part 2 will ask you to identify and explicate passages from the readings. And Part 3 will give you the opportunity to discuss how three writers address a given issue or problem. (30%)

Course Readings

Revolutions

Edmund Burke, selections from *Inquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*, selections from *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *Book of Urizen*

Mary Wollstonecraft, selections from *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Gothic Scenarios

Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*

Joanna Baillie, “Introductory Discourse to a Series of Plays on the Passions,” *Orra*

Olaudah Equiano, selections from *The Interesting Life*

Ann Yearsley, “A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave-Trade”

Ethics and Aesthetics

William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, “Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey,” “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” “The Thorn,” “Resolution and Independence,” “Nutting,” selections from *The Prelude*

Dorothy Wordsworth, selections from Notebooks

Samuel Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, “Eolian Harp,” “Kubla Khan,” “Christabel,” “Frost at Midnight,” selections from *Biographia Literaria* on plan of *Lyrical Ballads*

George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Manfred*, “The Giaour,” *Don Juan* Cantos 1 and 2

Percy Shelley, selections from *Defence of Poetry*, *The Cenci*, *Prometheus Unbound*, “Mont Blanc,” “Ode to the West Wind”

The Suffering Artist

John Keats, “Lamia,” “Ode to a Nightingale,” “Ode on a Grecian Urn,” “Hyperion,” “Fall of Hyperion,” selections from letters

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*

Felicia Hemans, “Homes of England,” “Casabianca,” “Properzia Rossi”

Letitia Landon, “Erinna,” “Love’s Last Lesson”