

Heather Anne Wozniak Course Proposal

Romantic Literature: Politics and Practices

In order to develop a sophisticated definition of “romanticism,” this course will examine the political relationships behind practices of writing in the romantic era. We will read selections from the six major poets as well as women and ethnic minorities in an effort to familiarize ourselves with the aesthetic and social debates shaping the literature and culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These readings will be drawn from a variety of genres—poetry, prose fiction, essay, drama, and autobiography.

Our readings will be organized into four thematic sections focused on different ways of distributing power. Gender will be an important category of difference in all four sections. In the first section, “Revolutions,” we will consider issues of class and nation in the context of the American and French Revolutions. In the second, “Gothic Scenarios,” the emphasis will shift to sexuality and race as we explore the interconnections between sexual exploitation and slavery. The third section, “Ethics and Aesthetics,” will concentrate on how authors construe the social responsibilities of the poet. Finally, in a section on “The Suffering Artist” we will examine how writers transform personal suffering into art and social commentary. By the end of the course students will be acquainted with the techniques of several individual writers and able to formulate their own perspective on the essence of romanticism.

Part 1: 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*

Part 2: 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”

Part 3: 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 Taylor Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, “Eolian Harp,” “Kubla Khan,” “Christabel,” “Frost at Midnight,” selections from *Biographia Literaria* on plan of *Lyrical Ballads*
- 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”

Part 4: 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”