

English 4621: Romantic Poetry
MWTh 10:30-11:35
Ryder 155

Professor Rachel Trousdale
Office: Holmes 417
Office hours: MW 3-4, Th 12-1

Romantic Poetry: Syllabus

Course Description and Learning Goals

The period between 1780 and 1830 in Europe was a time of immense upheaval, both in the political world (revolution in France, the Napoleonic wars, the expansion of the British Empire, the abolition of the slave trade, the invention of the railway) and in the realm of the aesthetic. This course examines the formal and philosophical innovations of the British poetry of the period, with discussions ranging from scurrilous gossip to the Romantic Sublime. Topics will include gender and sexuality, conceptions of the divine, human perceptions of the natural world, poetic and prophetic authority, and whether, as Keats says, “the poet and the dreamer are distinct.”

Over the course of the semester, you will

- gain familiarity with the work of major British Romantic poets
- acquire and use vocabulary for discussion of formal elements of poetry
- improve your ability to write a literary essay, from the formulation of a topic question through the production of a polished argument
- become a more thoughtful and sophisticated reader of literature, attentive to the interplay of content, structure, and context

Required Text (available at the Bookstore)

Duncan Wu, *Romanticism: An Anthology*. Fourth Edition. Oxford: Blackwell, 2012.
Additional readings will be available on Blackboard.

Wednesday, September 4: Introduction.

Th 5: William Blake (174-185); “Rhythm and Meter in English Poetry,” on Blackboard

M 9: Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (186-212)

W 11: Blake, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (224-229)

Th 12: Charlotte Smith (81-87); *Elegiac Sonnets* (87-103)

M 16: William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (333-337); Advertisement, 337-338; “Anecdote for Fathers” (378-380); “We Are Seven” (380); “The Idiot Boy” (396-407); “Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey” (415-420)

W 18: William Wordsworth (420-425); Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (506-518); “There was a boy” (484-485); “Nutting” (485-486); “Strange fits of passion have I known” (487); “She dwelt among th’ untrodden ways” (488); “A slumber did my spirit seal” (488); “Three years she grew in sun and shower” (488-489); “Daffodils” (558)

Th 19: Wordsworth, *The Two-Part Prelude*, part I (457-469)

M 23: Wordsworth, *The Two-Part Prelude*, part II (470-483)

W 25: Wordsworth; *The Thirteen-Book Prelude* (561-570, 575, 578-582)

Th 26: Helen Maria Williams (291-296); “Part of an Irregular Fragment” (296-301); “A Farewell, for Two Years, to England” (307-312); **deadline for poem recitation**

M 30: Hannah More (55-59); “Sensibility: A Poetical Epistle” (59-69); Ann Yearsley (160-162); “Addressed to Sensibility” (163-164)

W October 2: Samuel Taylor Coleridge (611-617); Letter to John Thelwall (638); “Kubla Khan” (639-643); “Frost at Midnight” (644-649); *Biographia Literaria* (711-714)

Th 3: Coleridge, “Christabel” (659-675)

M 7: Coleridge, Letter to Thomas Poole (676); “The Day-Dream” (678-9); “A Letter to Sara Hutchinson” (683-692)

W 9: Coleridge, “Dejection: An Ode” (693-697); “Chamouny” (697-699); **first paper proposal due**

Th 10: Coleridge, “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” (714-731)

M 14: Columbus Day—no classes

W 16: Mary Robinson (250-253); “A London Summer Morning” (253-254); “The Haunted Beach” (255-257); “Mrs Robinson to the Poet Coleridge” (259-261); “The Savage of the Aveyron” (261-265)

Th 17: George Gordon Byron, 6th Baron Byron (862-871); “She Walks in Beauty” (874-875); “When we two parted” (875-876); “Prometheus” (912-914); **first paper due**

M 21: Byron, “Stanzas to Augusta” (914); “Epistle to Augusta” (915-919); “Darkness” (919-921) (recommended: begin reading *Don Juan* for next time)

W 23: Byron *Don Juan*, Canto I (959-1015)

Th 24: Byron *Don Juan*, Canto II (1015-1063)

M 28: Percy Bysshe Shelley (1070-1080); “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” (1101-1103); “Mont Blanc” (1104-1107); “Ozymandias” (1108)

W 30: Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind” (1131-1134); “England in 1819” (1134), “Lift not the painted veil” (1135)

Th 31: Shelley, “Epipsychidion” (1218-1232)

M November 4: Shelley, “A Defence of Poetry” (1233-1247)

W 6: Shelley, “Adonais” (1248-1265)

Th 7: Felicia Hemans (1290-1295); “The Rock of Cader Idris” (1296-1297); *Records of Woman* (1298-1329)

M 11: Veterans Day—no classes

W 13: Letitia Elizabeth Landon (1512-1518); “The Improvisatrice” (1518-1519);

“Sappho’s Song” (1519); “Stanzas on the Death of Mrs Hemans” (1520-1522);

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, "Stanzas Addressed to Miss Landon" (1534); "L.E.L.'s Last Question" (1535-1537)

Th 14: John Clare (1271); "January" (1273); "June" (1274-1275); "To the Snipe" (1275-1278); "The Flitting" (1278-1283); "I am" (1286); "Little Trotty Wagtail" (1287); "Silent Love" (1288); "Oh could I be as I have been" (1288-1289)

F 15: **short papers option: second paper due**

M 18: John Keats (1384-1396); "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" (1397); "On the Grasshopper and the Cricket" (1398); from *Endymion* (1398-1403); Letter to George and Tom Keats (1404-1405); "When I have fears" (1406)

W 20: Keats, "Ode to Psyche" (1462-1463); "Ode to a Nightingale" (1464-1466); "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1466-1468)

Th 21: *Hyperion* (1425-1446); **long paper option: paper proposal due**

M 25: Keats, "Ode on Melancholy" (1469-1470); "Ode on Indolence" (1470-1471); "Lamia" (1472-1488); "To Autumn" (1489)

W 27: Thanksgiving Recess

Th 28: Thanksgiving Recess

M December 2: Keats, *The Fall of Hyperion* (1490-1502); "Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art" (1502); "This living hand" (1503);

W 4: Summary discussion

M 9: Final paper due by 3:00 PM

This syllabus is subject to change.

Course requirements:

Students will write two 8-10 page essays and memorize a poem.

Reading questions:

Bring a question about the reading with you to every class. These questions will be the basis for class discussions and paper topics.

Notes on the reading assignments:

Please bring your book with you to every class. If you have an electronic copy, be sure it is a form on which you can make annotations.

When reading seriously, it's a good idea to have a dictionary handy. It can also be useful to have a good reference guide to Greek and Roman mythology. Bullfinch's *Mythology*, available at <http://www.bartleby.com/>, is one useful resource.

If you get stuck on a difficult poem, try reading it out loud. You'll find it easier to catch both the poem's meaning and its beauty.

Attendance policy:

This class centers around discussion. If you don't participate in discussions, whether by contributing or listening to your peers, you haven't really taken the class. You will be allowed three absences over the course of the semester, but after that, your final grade will be penalized by one third of a letter grade for each absence. Since there can be no way to make up discussions, this policy applies even in cases where students have medical or other legitimate excuses. Excessive lateness will also result in a reduced grade. Participation grades do not reflect absences; rather, they reflect your performance once you've shown up.

Policy on Cell Phones, Laptops, Tablets, etc.

You are welcome to take notes on your laptop or tablet, but only if you first shut off the wi-fi. Texting / writing e-mail / checking Facebook / browsing the web etc. is strictly prohibited during class. Your cell phone should be invisible and silent for the whole 65 minutes.

Late paper policy:

You may have a three-day extension (i.e., from Friday to Monday) on one paper, no questions asked. Beyond that, late papers will incur a penalty of one third of a grade per calendar day past deadline. Failure to hand in one of the papers will result in failure of the class.

Academic honesty:

All students are expected to abide by Northeastern University's "Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy" (<http://www.northeastern.edu/osccr/academichonesty.html>). Violations will be taken very seriously. Plagiarism on a paper will result in automatic failure of the course. If you are unsure how to properly cite the work of others, please ask me for help.

Many students who choose to plagiarize seem to do so because they are afraid to turn in papers late; please remember that a late penalty is by far the lesser of two evils in this situation. If you're in over your head, contact me and we'll figure something out.

Grading:

Participation: 10%

Reading questions: 5%

Memorization: 5%

Paper 1: 40%

Paper 2: 40%

Office hours and how to reach me:

I will hold walk-in office hours on Monday and Wednesday from 3-4 and on Thursday from 12-1, and will be glad to schedule extra appointments. Come to discuss paper topics, to ask questions about the class, to get help with a confusing text, etc. To make an appointment, or for any other contact, it's best to e-mail me at r.trousdale@neu.edu.