

English 340: Nineteenth-Century English Literature

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T/TH 2:40-4:10
340-23-801
Office Hrs.: W 5:00-5:45, &
by appointment

Course Description:

English 340 covers English literature during the Romantic and Victorian periods. We will begin by reading Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience and Visions of the Daughters of Albion. What were the political and social issues that informed the thought of Romantic writers? How can we distinguish Romanticism from Victorian literature? Throughout the course, we will be concerned with issues of genre and narration. How did the Romantic ode develop from Wordsworth to Keats? How were Victorian writers influenced by their Romantic predecessors? What is the role of narration in such novels as Wuthering Heights and Frankenstein? We will also address social and historical questions. How did the movement for political reform and Catholic emancipation affect the imagination of such writers as Byron and Shelley? In what ways was Mary Shelley influenced by the scientific advances current in her day? How did Emily Bronte respond to the phenomenon of Byronism through her portrayal of Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights?

Principal Topics Covered:

Poetry, Prose, Social History of England.

Instruction

Instruction will take place through a combination of lecture and discussion. Students will be asked to prepare oral reports and will have the opportunity to choose their own topic for historical and critical research.

Course Evaluation

2 five-page essays (50%), Mid-term (25%) and Final Exam (25%)

Required Textbooks:

Longman Anthology of British Literature, A New Literary Geography, Volume 2A isbn 0-321-06765-7

Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 2B, isbn 0321106695

Bronte, Emily. Wuthering Heights (Norton); *Frankenstein*

Attendance Policy and Late Papers:

3 or more absences will result in lowering your final grade for the course by 10 points. Late papers will be graded 5 points down for every day they are late. No papers sent by email will be accepted; no faxes are accepted. All papers should be typed, double-spaced, and stapled. Papers are to be turned in to me and placed in my hand or placed in the designated box in class.

Course Calendar

1. T, 3/27 Blake's Songs of Innocence and Experience
"Little Black Boy"; "Chimney Sweeper"; "London";
"Tyger"
TH, 3/29 "Visions of the Daughters of Albion"
"The Marriage of Heaven and Hell"
2. T 4/3 Preface to Lyrical Ballads; "Expostulation and Reply";
"The Tables Turned"
TH 4/5 Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey"
Wordsworth, "Intimations Ode"
3. T 4/10 Coleridge, "The Eolian Harp"
Coleridge, "Kubla Khan"
TH 4/12 Coleridge, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner"
4. T 4/17 Keats, "Ode to a Nightingale"
Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind"
TH 4/19 Byron, "Curse of Minerva"; *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, 1 (on-line)
5. T 4/24 Mid-Term Exam
TH 4/26 Frankenstein
Frankenstein (First Essay Due)
6. T 5/1 Wuthering Heights
TH 5/3 Wuthering Heights
7. T 5/8 Tennyson, "Lotos-Eaters"
TH 5/10 Tennyson, "Tithonous"
Tennyson, "Lady of Shallott"
8. T 5/15 Browning, "My Last Duchess"
Browning, "Porphyria's Lover"
TH 5/17 Browning, "Fra Lippo Lippi"
9. T 5/22 Ruskin, The Storm Cloud of the 19th Century
Ruskin, Stones of Venice

	TH	5/24	Walter Pater, "Preface", "La Gioconda," "Conclusion" <u>Renaissance</u>
10.	T	5/29	Arnold, <u>Culture and Anarchy</u>
	TH	5/31	Rossetti, "Goblin Market" (Second Essay Due)

Final Exam (focusing on weeks 6-10)

Essay Assignments: English 340, 4/26

Essay #1 4/26

1. Offer a close reading of a poem by Blake that compares both text and image. Consult at least one critic to perform your close reading and print out a copy of the poem to accompany your paper from one of the many Blake archives on the web. Your essay should pay careful attention to meter, diction, and genre, but also place Blake's poetry in the context of his ideas: his embrace and rejection of Emanuel Swedenborg, his response to the American Revolution, and his ideas about human sexuality.
2. Offer a close reading of Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." Focus on the poet's use of the supernatural and try to arrive at a coherent explanation of the poem's symbolism. Consider consulting essays by Robert Warren and Laurence Lipking (look their essays up on MLA Bibliography on-line) if you need assistance or would like to learn more about the poem.
3. What is the relationship between Wordsworth's Preface to Lyrical Ballads and the poems he actually wrote for that collection. Discuss three poems in Lyrical Ballads (one of these should be "Tintern Abbey") and explain their importance in terms of Wordsworth's Preface. Do they follow the rules of the Preface? Why or why not? What contribution did Coleridge make to Wordsworth's theory of poetry through his Biographia Literaria?
4. Some critics argue that Frankenstein is a critique of Percy Shelley's attitude towards science. In what other ways is this novel feminist? Choose at least three specific examples to support your point of view. Make sure to consider the preface to the novel as well as the novel itself. Consider how the novel might be read as a moral allegory--not just about science--but about human relationships as well. Find out as much as you can about Mary Shelley's life and Percy Shelley's life to make your reading of the novel credible.

Essay #2 5/31

1. Discuss the importance of narration in Wuthering Heights. Pay particular attention to the use of multiple narrators in the novel. Name as many as you can. Consider their importance. How do these narrators control our perceptions of characters. How do their narrations represent characters in particular ways? One way of considering the importance of each narrator--their distinctive contribution to your knowledge of the events that take place in the novel--is to do a

character sketch of each speaker. What aspects of their character are revealed by the narratives? What do they conceal? What do they reveal? What does it mean to be a suspicious reader of Bronte's novel? What does Wayne Booth mean by the term, "unreliable narrator." In what sense are the narrators in Bronte's novel "unreliable"? Consider J. Hillis Miller's essay at the back of your book in drafting your response.

2. Discuss the influence of Byronism on the creation of Heathcliff in Bronte's Wuthering Heights. In what sense is Heathcliff a Byronic hero. What evidence do we have that Bronte was influenced by Byron? Compare Heathcliff to Childe Harold, the Byron of Don Juan, or a character from one of the Oriental tales ("Bride of Abydos"; "The Giaour"; "Lara") to support your point. You can rely on "The Bride of Abydos" for your essay, but might want to read at least one other poem by him to get a better sense of what was meant by the Byronic hero. See also books by Andrew Elfenbein, Byron and the Victorians and Peter Thorslev, The Byronic Hero. Don't rely too heavily on critic's accounts, however, especially Thorslev's which is somewhat outdated. Draw on one of Byron's poems and Bronte's novel to make your points.

3. Compare and contrast Wordsworth's "Intimations Ode", Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", and Keats "Ode to a Nightingale" in terms of theme, structure, genre, and style. How does each poet make use of the genre of the "ode" only to depart from it and to leave his own stamp upon it? What distinctive features of Wordsworth, Shelley, and Keats can you discern by comparing their odes? For papers on genre, consider consulting Stuart Curran's *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* and M.H. Abram's *Glossary of Literary Terms*.