

English 318 Literature of the Romantic Period
Spring 2006 Tues. 7:00 p.m. – 9:45 p.m. Blaustein 211

James Mulholland
Office: Blaustein 323
Office Phone: (860) 439-5211
Office Hours: Tuesday 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
email: james.mulholland@conncoll.edu

Course Description:

This course is an introduction to the literature of the “Romantic” period. We will spend the semester looking at some of the significant authors of and issues in Romantic literature. The title of the course itself reveals a number of the questions. What is “romantic” about Romantic literature? What is the place of Romanticism in British literature, and among the contemporary writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? Why is it a category of literary study and what literature should this category contain within it? Beyond these issues of periodization, some of the significant literary issues we will address in the course will include the new attitudes toward poetry and related experiments in poetic form (the long poem, the ode, the sonnet, the “lyrical ballad”) and with the use of dialect. In addition, during a literary period that typically has been seen as dominated by poets and poetry, we will ask what the role prose plays in this period. We will also attempt to discover the author’s place in culture and society during this moment, paying particular attention to compare it with formulations of this role from preceding and ensuing literary periods. These largely literary issues will be combined with discussions of the major historical events of the Romantic period, events that are reflected in the literature, such as the debate about the status of women and the role of slavery in the modern world, forms of government and the expanding rights of the populace, industrialization and the “rise of the middle class,” and the French Revolution. The goal of this course is thus to create a broad understanding of the most significant authors, texts, and issues of the early Romantic period and come to some consensus about how to characterize the period as a whole. With this in mind, we will work intensively with individual texts and authors while simultaneously stretching to discern the larger patterns of the period.

Required Texts:

The Longman Anthology of British Literature, V. 2A: The Romantics and their Contemporaries (Second Edition), eds. Susan Wolfson and Peter Manning (Longman)
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, Written by Himself*, ed. Vincent Carretta (Penguin, 2003)
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, eds. MacDonald and Scherf (Broadview, 1999)

(All texts are available at the Connecticut College book store. Please be sure to get these specific editions of the books; check that the editor and the copyright date are correct, because other editions of the same title will not be acceptable for the course. I will provide additional readings throughout the semester.)

Attendance and Participation: This course is driven by your ideas about literature; therefore, coming to class prepared to discuss the readings is an essential part of this course. Please be sure to read all of the assigned material **multiple times** before you come to class. Students may be asked to read aloud and discuss the literature in class. **More than two absences may result in failing the course.** Excessive lateness or leaving early may be counted as absences, so please be sure to come to class on time. If you are unable to attend class, please contact me before the class to let me know.

Responses: As part of your attendance and participation requirement, you will be required to complete weekly response papers. They are intended to help you collect your ideas about the day's reading material and facilitate discussion during class. Use them also as an opportunity to develop ideas for your final paper. Each person will be assigned a group letter. Look on the syllabus. If you see your group letter mentioned you are obligated to initiate discussion by producing a ½ page response for that week. It should be posted to the class discussion site **by 5 pm on the Sunday before class.** Every other student in the class must read those responses and post a ½ page response that extends this discussion (which will likely mean referring to the writing, questions, ideas of the initial postings). These secondary responses are due by **5 pm the Monday before class.** While these are the minimum requirements, everyone should feel free to post more than once or to post after the 5 pm deadline on Monday. The idea is that this discussion both prompts the class discussion and continues the conversation outside of class. **Everyone, therefore, is required to read all of the responses.** These responses should advance initial questions and produce first readings of the material. While they can be written informally, they should be thoughtful and contemplative. They will be graded as part of your participation grade. **If you miss the deadline or forget to post a response, you will receive no grade for that post. Instead, come to class prepared to speak and be sure to complete your post on time for the next week.**

Using the Discussion Features of the Course Webpage: To post a response you will need to log onto the course webpage (organized off of the "Academics Home" link at the frontpage of Connecticut College's website). Once you have logged on, find the topic for that week and click "compose." Once you have written your response, click on "post" under the topic heading for that week's readings. Each week has a topic. All of the response for that week should be posted beneath that topic heading. (You are encouraged, however, to refer to earlier postings, class discussion, or readings.) In the process of composing your responses, you may either post a new thread or reply to the posts of other students. **Be sure to compose subject lines for each of your posts. These subject lines should be detailed; refer to authors, ideas, poems, or whatever other information is appropriate (think of these subject lines as like paper titles).** This will be a way for everyone to quickly identify the general scope of each post. By the end of the course, you should have at least one response posted for each week's topic.

Papers: During this course you will be required to write **two original papers** for the course. Each paper must be **8 pages** in length (double-spaced). I will provide possible topics for the paper from which students may choose. Students should also feel free to meet with me in office hours to further discuss topics, ideas and themes, and writing.

Grading: Your grade for the course will be calculated according to the following formula: **your written work will account for 50% of your grade, attendance and participation in class will account for 25% of your grade, and your postings to the course discussion page will account for 25% of your grade.** Please note you must complete all of the written work for the course (which includes weekly responses) to receive a passing grade.

Syllabus

Brackets indicate page numbers in the Longman Anthology. An asterisk indicates the readings on the course website. Other readings are books or will be distributed in class.

1/24 Introduction

William Blake, "There Is No Natural Religion" (a, 1794, b, 1795) [116-118]
William Wordsworth, "It is a beautiful Evening" (1807) [387]

1/31 Class Cancelled

2/7 Romantic Roots, Fissures, and Breaks

Susan Wolfson and Peter Manning, "The Romantics and Their Contemporaries" [10-22]
Jerome McGann, "Introduction" to *The New Oxford Book of Romantic Period Verse**
Thomas Percy, "Sir Patrick Spence" (1765) [321-23]
Robert Burns, "To a Mouse" (1786) [324]; "To a Louse" (1786) [325]; "Auld Lang Syne" (1796) [330]
Hannah Cowley ("Anna Matilda"), "To Della Crusca. The Pen" (1788)*; "Ode to Della Crusca" (1788)*
Anon., "Barbara Allen's Cruelty" (we will listen to a modern rendition of this poem)*
Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "Washing-Day" (1797) [35-7]
William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, from the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798, 1800, 1802): "Advertisement" (1798)*; "Preface" [356-62]; "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" both versions [526-543]; "Simon Lee" [338-41]; "We Are Seven" [341-42]; "Lines Written in Early Spring" [342-43]; "Expostulation and Reply" [350-51]; "The Tables Turned" [350-51]; "Old Man Travelling" [351-52]

Group A responds

2/14 Imagination and the Sublime

Edmund Burke, from *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756) [499-505]
Anna Letitia Barbauld, "A Summer Evening's Meditation" (1773)*
William Gilpin, from *Three Essays on Picturesque Beauty, on Picturesque Travel, and on Sketching Landscape* (1794) [505-11]
William Wordsworth, "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" [352-56]; selections from Bk. 6, 11, and Bk. 13 from *The Prelude* (1805) [414-20; 439-50]
Thomas Girtin, *Tintern Abbey* (1793) [2]
Edward Dyes, *Tintern Abbey from across the Wye* (1794) [506]
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Ch. 13 on "Imagination" from *Biographia Literaria* (1817) [573-76]

Group B responds

2/21 Revolution, Reaction, and Romanticism: The Rights of Man

Edmund Burke, selections from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) [67-76]
Thomas Paine, selections from *The Rights of Man* (1791) [85-91]
William Godwin, selections from *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and Its Influence on General Virtue and Happiness* (1793) [91-96]
William Wordsworth, Bk. 9 and Bk. 10 from *The Prelude* (1805) [424-36]; “I griev’d for Buonparte” (1802) [208]; “To Toussaint L’Ouverture” (1807) [208]
“The Friend of Humanity and the Knife-Grinder” from *The Anti-Jacobin* (1797) [97-99]

Group C responds

2/28 Revolution, Reaction, and Romanticism: Women and Revolution

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Fears in Solitude” (1798)*; “France: An Ode” (1798)*; selections from *Jacobinism* (1800) and *Once a Jacobin Always a Jacobin* (1802) [582-86]
Mary Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) [229-55]
Anna Letitia Barbauld, “On a Lady’s Writing” (1773) [33]; “On the Expected General Rising of the French Nation in 1792” (1792)*; “The Rights of Woman” (1795) [272-73]
Richard Polwhele “The Unsex’d Females” (1798) [276-80]

Group A responds

3/7 Slavery and Abolition: Equiano’s Narrative

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, Written by Himself* (1789) [1-146]
[Look also at Appendix A, frontispieces and title pages to *Interesting Narrative*, 309-15]
Thomas Clarkson, “Stowage of the British Slave Ship,” Illustration from *The History of the Rise, Progress, & Accomplishment of the Abolition of the African Slave-Trade...* (1808) [205]
J. M. W. Turner, *Slavers Throwing the Dead and Dying Overboard, Typhoon Coming On* (1840) [Color Plate 5]

Group B responds Paper #1 Due

3/28 Slavery and Abolition: Equiano and other Abolitionists

Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, Written by Himself* (1789) [147-236]
James Thomson, “Rule, Britannia” (1740)*
William Cowper, “The Negro’s Complaint” (1778) [187-88]
Anne Yearsley, selection from “A Poem on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade” (1788) [181-85]
William Blake, “The Little Black Boy” from *Songs of Innocence* (1789) [121]
[Be sure to look at Blake’s two different engravings of the poem, plates 6 and 7]
Mary Prince, from *The History of Mary Prince, a West Indian Slave* (1831) [169-74]

Group C responds

4/4 Blake

Sir William Jones, "A Hymn to Na'ra'yena" (1785)*
Selections from *Songs of Innocence* (1789) [118-124]
Selections from *Songs of Experience* (1793) [126-135]
[Be sure to look at the images of Blake's engravings, color plates 8 and 9, in anthology]
The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (1790-1793) [135-48]
"To Dr. John Trussler" (1802) [154]
"To The Public" from *Jerusalem, Emanation of the Giant Albion* (1804)*
[Other plates are available on the course web page]

Group A responds

4/11 The Wordsworths and Coleridge: Major Writings

William Wordsworth, "Poor Susan" (1800) [367]; "Nutting" (1800) [368-69]; "Resolution and Independence" (1807) [450-53]; "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (1807) [453-54]; "The Solitary Reaper" (1807) [460-61]; "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" (1807) [455-60]; "Elegiac Stanzas" (1807) [461-62]; "Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, Sept. 3, 1802" (1807) [386]
Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "The Eolian Harp" (1796) [522-24]; "Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement" (1797)*; "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison" (1800) [524-26]; "Frost at Midnight" (1798) [562-63]; "Dejection: An Ode" (1802) [563-66]; "Kubla Khan" (1816) [545-47]
Dorothy Wordsworth, selections from *The Grasmere Journals* (1800-1803) [478-484]

Group B responds

4/18 The Romantic Novel I

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818) [3-143]

Group C responds

4/25 The Romantic Novel II

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818) [144-289]

Group A responds

5/2 Byron and Shelley

George Gordon, Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, Dedication and Canto I (1819) [667-717]
Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Mont Blanc" (1817); "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (1817);

“Ozymandias” (1818) [754-760]; “Ode to the West Wind” (1820); “To a Skylark” (1820); “Music, when soft voices die” (1824) [771-776]; “Stanzas written in Dejection, near Naples” (1824)*; *A Defence of Poetry*, selections (comp. 1821; pub. 1840) [800-810]

Group B responds

5/9 Keats, Hemans, and Tennyson

John Keats, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” (1817) [854]; “On Sitting Down to Read King Lear Once Again” (comp. 1818; pub. 1838); Sonnet [“When I have fears that I may cease to be”] (comp. 1818) [864-65]; “Ode to a Nightingale” (comp. 1819); “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (comp. 1819); “Ode to Melancholy” (comp. 1819); “To Autumn” (comp. 1819); [884-87]

Letters: “To Benjamin Bailey” [The Truth of Imagination] [900]; “To George and Thomas Keats” [Negative Capability] [901]; “To Richard Woodhouse” [Egotistical Sublime] [907]

Felicia Hemans, “The Rock of Cader Idris” (1822)*; “Properzia Rossi” (1828); “Indian Woman’s Death Song” (1828) [820-30]

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Palace of Art” (1832)*

Group C responds

Paper #2 Due