

English 220, Section 2, Spring 2005
Readings in British Literature:
ROMANTICISM

Mondays and Wednesdays 2-3:40
Keene State College, Morrison 87

Dr. William Stroup

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Office hours: M & W 1-2; T & Th 1.30-2.30 (and by appointment)

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Required Texts: (Available at the Bookstore in the Student Center. Everyone must own his or her own copy of these editions)

1. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Seventh edition, Volume 2A: The Romantic Period.* Edited by M.H. Abrams et al. New York: Norton, 2000.
2. *Rules for the Dance* by Mary Oliver. Houghton Mifflin, 1998

I also expect that students should have on hand a good dictionary, the *Writer's Handbook* by Diana Hacker from English 101, and I strongly recommend *A Handbook to Literature*, 9th ed., by Harmon and Holman.

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is an introduction to some of the major writers and themes developed in British poetry in the years of political, social, and industrial revolution from 1789-1832. The number of major poets whose careers overlapped in these years is nothing short of astonishing: William Wordsworth, William Blake, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Anna Barbauld, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, John Clare, and John Keats to name a few of the most prominent. Students will learn about cultural history, poetic form, literary analysis, the contentious development and constant rewriting of literary history, and hopefully be challenged and inspired by some of the greatest poetry ever written. The term "Romantic" has a double use: as a useful but reductive term to designate pre-Victorian but post-Augustan literature, and as a set of aesthetic practices which reject strict rationalism in favor of what William Wordsworth called "the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." Not all who wrote in these years adhered to this aesthetic aspect of Romanticism, and many artists who worked after 1832 would fit it just fine. This course will provide the key terms and texts for the ongoing study of Romanticism as both period and concept. All English courses are writing-intensive, and students will be assessed on the skill and care that inform several interpretive essays. This course fulfills the general education requirement in literature and is open to all students who have already taken English 101.

Grading: [Note: Though some assignments are worth more than others, you must complete ALL papers and exams to be eligible to pass the course]:

Three take-home exams: 45% (15% each)

Two short papers: 20% (10% each)

Third paper: 15%

In-Class Writings: 10%

Quality of preparation, consistency and thoughtfulness of participation: 10%

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Attendance: This course is designed to be cumulative: for example, by the time we discuss Shelley's poem "The Mask of Anarchy" we'll have other Shelley poems and a host of other texts to provide a meaningful context for that discussion. That all goes out the window for you—and for us all as a community of learners—if you're absent, or if you show up unprepared. Emergencies happen, I know: contact me as soon as you know you'll be forced to miss class, *before* the class in question. With a third absence, your grade will fall by a letter; missing five classes means you haven't really been in the course and cannot pass: you should withdraw in this case or receive the F you will have earned.

Class participation: Not the same as mere attendance, and not an option. This starts before you get to class through your active reading, note-taking, and preparation of questions: by the end of this class your books should be filled with marginal notes, post-it notes, and other evidence of your contact. Participation continues with your consistent and thoughtful engagement with our discussions, full participation with all in-class writing assignments, and asking questions at the appropriate times (about the reading, about assignments) to help you learn. You cannot do well in the class, nor will you learn much that you'll remember, if you come unprepared.

Memorization: This is considered very old-fashioned, but it has an inestimable value. For centuries, this is how people encountered poetry and one can only learn about poetics by entering that world. You will learn by heart at least two sonnet-length poems from the Romantic period this semester (or a substantial section of a longer poem) and you will need to recite them to the class with skill and feeling. At the beginning of each class, I will ask who is ready to deliver their poem and anyone may volunteer. This will be fun, and will be something you can keep with you from this semester. This assignment will not be graded, but it is required.

In-class writings: At most of our classes, we will have some kind of quiz or assignment that requires you to engage in detail with the day's reading. These topics will generate further discussion, but you must be prepared to write them when you arrive. We will do at least ten of these assignments, ten will count towards your grade, and these cannot be made up later.

Three Essays: These interpretive essays provide an opportunity to think analytically, read carefully, and explore connections. A key goal of this class is to help you to continue to grow in your writing skills. Please use my office hours, or make an appointment with me or with the tutors at the Writing Center, for advice and encouragement. A range of topics, relating to the crucial themes of the course, will be available for each paper; specifics and guidelines for each assignment will be distributed later. The first two papers will be fairly short (four pages or less); the third paper will be slightly longer and will develop out of your own engagement with our reading. Papers turned in after the due date will be marked down a full letter.

Three Exams: These take-home exams will provide an opportunity to think about the wide range of styles, themes, concepts, and authors studied in this course. All exams must be typed and strictly adhere to both page-limits (usually 5-6 pages per exam) and MLA style.

OTHER COURSE POLICIES:

Plagiarism: A nasty word, but one that needs to be mentioned from the beginning. Here's what plagiarism looks like: 1) using a paper or a portion of a paper that someone else wrote (published or not); 2) using a paper or portions of a paper that you previously handed in to another class; 3) handing in the same paper to two different teachers at the same time; 4) using the thoughts, ideas, or words of another writer without giving that writer credit in your paper. Plagiarism could lead to expulsion from the College and will lead to failing this class. Don't do it. Develop your own voice, one you wouldn't trade for anyone else's. See me if you have questions or are unsure of whether or not you are plagiarizing.

Notice about disabilities and other needs: Students with disabilities who may need classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment with Jane Warner in the Office of Disability Services (358-2354). Please meet with me during office hours so that we can collaborate with the Office of Disability Services to provide the appropriate accommodations and supports to assist you in meeting the goals of the course.

Weather Policy: It's Winter. It's New Hampshire. The College tries to stay open except during the most extraordinary of snow emergencies. Local TV, Radio, and www.keene.edu all have info about campus-wide cancellations. Please access my outgoing voicemail message by calling (603) 358-2692. Unless I say explicitly that class is cancelled, it will be on as scheduled. Make safe decisions for yourself, of course, and use my voicemail to stay in contact.

A Friendly Note: In this course, as in other college courses, as in the world at large, neatness, promptness, attentiveness, kindness, and enthusiasm all "count."

Tentative Course Calendar

We will begin by reading Mary Oliver's *Rules for the Dance* along with numerous short lyrics from our anthology. After this introduction, the readings for the course are grouped around three keywords for our study of Romanticism: childhood, nature, and revolution. This structure provides a greater means for making connections between very different poets than if we read each major poet separately, or if the course attempted to move chronologically from 1789 to 1832. These themes are meant to be suggestive, not exhaustive.

Read the biographical introduction for each author on the first day that we discuss his or her poetry, and as the course progresses be sure to reread earlier poems in light of our developing discussions. The poems listed are the most important for that day (though we may also look at others), and I expect you to arrive to class having read the poem(s) several times, making notes, looking up unfamiliar vocabulary, and actively preparing questions to help you enter into our discussions. Unless otherwise stated, all readings are in the Norton edition on *The Romantic Period*, which you should bring to every class.

Jan 19: Intro to the Course: What is Romanticism? Why study the Romantics? What does this class have to do with "general education"?

Prologue: How to Read (and Write About) Poetry:

Jan 24: Read **Mary Oliver**, *Rules for the Dance* pages vii-49.

Jan 26: Oliver 50-105

Part One: Romanticism and the Invention of Childhood

Jan 31: **William Wordsworth**, "We Are Seven," "Lines Written in Early Spring,"
"Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey"

Feb 2: **Anna Barbauld**, "To a Little Invisible Being Who Is Expected Soon to Become Visible"; **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**, "Frost at Midnight." First short paper assigned.

Feb 7: The Language of Innocence: **William Wordsworth**, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"

Feb 9: **William Blake**, *Songs of Innocence and Experience*

Feb 14: Blake's Songs, cont. First short paper due.

Feb 16: Making the vow: **Percy Bysshe Shelley**: "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" and "To William Shelley" (handout). First exam assigned.

Part Two: Romantic Nature and the Roots of Modern Environmentalism

Feb 21: First exam due. Slide presentation on landscape art.

Feb 23: **Anna Barbauld**: "A Summer Evening's Meditation"; **John Clare**, Read all the poems in our edition

Feb 28: Natural music: **John Keats**: “When I Have Fears,” “Ode to a Nightingale”
March 2: Nature and the Supernatural: **Samuel Taylor Coleridge**: “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”

March 7: Coleridge’s Rime, cont. Second paper due.

March 9: Nature and the Family: **William Wordsworth**, “Michael”

Spring Break

March 21: The Wilderness has a Mysterious Tongue: **Percy Bysshe Shelley**: “Mont Blanc”

March 23: Violence in Nature: **Lord Byron**: “Darkness”; **William Wordsworth**: “Nutting”

March 28: Nature and the Defiant Self: **Lord Byron**, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*

March 30: The Burden of the Mystery: **John Keats**: “To Autumn”; **William Wordsworth**, “Elegiac Stanzas,” “Star Gazers” (handout). Second exam distributed.

Part Three: Revolution in the Nation and the Imagination

April 4: Read section on “The French Revolution” (pages 117-163). Second exam due.

April 6: Nature as a model for revolution: **Percy Bysshe Shelley**: “England in 1819,” “Ode to the West Wind.”

April 11: **Percy Bysshe Shelley**: *The Mask of Anarchy* (handout)

April 13: **Anna Barbauld**, “Eighteen Hundred and Eleven” (handout).

April 18: “Without contraries is no progression”: **William Blake**, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

April 20: Blake and Revolution, cont.

April 25: The Revolt Against Time: **John Keats**: “Ode on a Grecian Urn” (1060)

April 27: Third paper due. Concluding discussion. Third exam assigned.

Wednesday, May 4th, Third exam due in my office by 3pm