

English 2301  
British Literature Survey  
2020-21

Jonathan Boulter  
Office: UC 3420  
Office Hours: TBD  
Email: [jboulte@uwo.ca](mailto:jboulte@uwo.ca)  
Class: Tuesday: 1:30-3:30; Thursday: 2:30-3:30

Lectures will be delivered asynchronously, online.

“Literature,” writes Ezra Pound, “is news that stays news.” Pound speaks of the continued urgency of literature, suggesting that true art maintains a critical relevance across time, perhaps even across cultural contexts. Our task here will be to attend to the various ideas that mark literature as urgent, as “news.” We will, for instance, consider ideas of monstrosity, of what constitutes the monster (*Beowulf*, Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*); we will ask how literature offers an understanding of what constitutes the self, the human subject (*King Lear*, Wordsworth’s “Tintern Abbey,” Eliot’s “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock”); we will wish to understand how literature offers ways of thinking about catastrophe, loss, and of mourning (Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, Beckett’s *Endgame*, Oswald’s *Memorial*); we will consider those complex, and fascinating, moments when the literature begins to reflect on its own status *as literature, as art* (Auden’s “Musée des Beaux Arts”; Yeats’ “No Second Troy”; Heaney’s “Digging”).

*The Norton Anthology of Major Authors, Volumes 1 and 2.* Tenth Edition.  
Beckett. *Endgame & Act Without Words.* Grove Press.  
Mitchell. *Ghostwritten.* Sceptre.  
Shakespeare. *King Lear.* Signet Classic.  
Shelley. *Frankenstein.* Norton.