

Department of English & Writing Studies

English 3351F (001)
Romantic Revolutions
Fall 2026**Instructor Information**

Instructor: Dr. Andrew Sargent

Email: asargen@uwo.ca

Office: University College 1423

Office Hours: Thursday 11:30am – 12:30pm

Course Description

This course examines Romanticism as a reckoning with “revolution” and its unprecedented possibilities and terrors which cast a shadow over the early nineteenth century’s literature, politics, science, and philosophy. The American and French revolutions of the late eighteenth century sever historical experience from established patterns and expose history to “a multitude of causes unknown in former times,” as William Wordsworth put it. We will explore how Romantic literature and thought engage with these social and political upheavals as what Percy Shelley calls the “gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present”—that is, signs of a never-before-seen future radically unbounded from the past. For some writers revolution points to a future liberated from the forces that have constrained humanity’s potential: oppressive political systems and institutions, class structures, sexism, racial hierarchies, even human biology. Yet for others revolution signifies darker prospects, such as an unanchored world racing toward annihilation, or perhaps worse, a world that can never really change at all. We will thus observe how Romantic texts’ pursuit of aesthetic, political, and scientific ruptures occasions both unprecedented optimism and ambition as well as profound disappointment and despair. On the whole, “Romantic Revolutions” heralds an encounter with the uncertain status of revolution—whether revolution ultimately brings utopian possibilities, wholesale destruction, or the return of the same—that continues to haunt our experience of change today.

Course Objectives

1. Think and write critically about Romantic literature and thought
2. Understand how Romantic writers represent and wrestle with the profound changes brought about by the revolution
3. Understand the historical contexts that shape Romantic writing
4. Understand how our contemporary notions of revolution and change (at the level of the aesthetic, the political, and the planetary) trace back to the Romantic period
5. Write critically and creatively in the contexts of essays and in-class written work

Required Course Materials

All course texts are available at the UWO bookstore (https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2026A&courses%5B0%5D=001_UW/ENG3351F). All readings not contained in the course texts will be provided on OWL. You are free to seek out used or online copies of the readings but be aware that for texts such as *Frankenstein* we will be quoting from the edition below in class discussions.

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Broadview, 2012 (\$16.30) (Note: Look for the 1818 version of the text if purchasing a different edition)

The Broadview Anthology of British Literature Volume 4: The Age of Romanticism – Third Edition, Broadview, 2018 (\$72.95)

Lord Byron, *Manfred*, Broadview (\$19.65)

Methods of Evaluation

Participation	15%
In-Class Text (2x)	15% x 2= 30%
Final Essay	30%
Final Exam	25%

Participation: In addition to regularly attending each class, students are expected to actively engage in in-class discussions. Alternatively, if some students feel uncomfortable speaking out in large groups, they may send their questions or relevant points they want to be discussed over email to me before class. **If students regularly show up to class but are not sufficiently engaged (e.g. they are routinely chatting, not paying attention, dozing off, etc.), this will be reflected in their participation grade.**

In-Class Tests: Each test will take one hour and will consist of one discussion question. The first test will be written on **Week 5**, and the second will be written on **Week 10**.

Final Essay (2000 words): For this paper students will write on one or more texts covered in this class. Students may write on a topic they developed on one of the tests, or they may use one of the test discussion questions as their essay topic. A minimum of three secondary sources is required. Essays must be written and formatted in proper MLA format. Final Essays are to be submitted on OWL by the end of Week 13.

Final Exam: The final exam will consist of short answer and short essay questions and will be scheduled by the registrar.

*****The Final Essay can be submitted one week after the deadline without penalty. However, assignments that are submitted after the first deadline will be given minimal or no comments and a grade. Any papers submitted after the second deadline will incur a penalty of 2% per day and will only receive a grade.**

Schedule

Week 1:

- **Sept. 10:** Introduction to Romanticism and Revolution

Week 2:

- **Sept. 15:** Immanuel Kant, “What is Enlightenment?” (OWL); Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Selections); Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (Selections); Quobna Ottobah Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* (Selections)
- **Sept. 17:** Cugoano, *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evils of Slavery* cont.

Week 3:

- **Sept. 22:** William Wordsworth, “Preface,” “Tintern Abbey”
- **Sept. 24:** Wordsworth, “Hart-Leap Well” (OWL)

Week 4:

- **Sept. 29:** Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison,” “Work Without Hope,” *Table Talk* (“The Ancient Mariner”), *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1817)
- **Oct. 1:** Coleridge, *Ancient Mariner* cont.

Week 5:

- **Oct. 6:** William Blake, “To the Public” (OWL), *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*
- **Oct. 8:** TEST 1

Week 6: READING WEEK

Week 7:

- **Oct. 20:** Anna Letitia Barbauld, “A Summer Evening’s Meditation,” *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven: A Poem*
- **Oct. 22:** Barbauld, *Eighteen Hundred and Eleven* cont.

Weeks 8 and 9:

- **Oct. 27:** Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
- **Oct. 29:** Shelley, *Frankenstein* cont.
- **Nov. 3:** Shelley, *Frankenstein* cont.
- **Nov. 5:** Shelley, *Frankenstein* cont.

Weeks 10:

- **Nov. 10:** Percy Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind,” *The Triumph of Life*
- **Nov. 12:** TEST 2

Week 11:

- **Nov. 17:** Percy Shelley, *The Triumph of Life* cont.; Lord Byron, *Manfred: A Dramatic Poem*
- **Nov. 19:** Byron, *Manfred* cont.

Week 12:

- **Nov. 24:** Byron, *Manfred* cont.; John Keats, *Hyperion*
- **Nov. 26:** Keats, *Hyperion* cont.

Week 13:

- **Dec. 1:** Keats, *Hyperion* cont.; Alfred, Lord Tennyson, “The Epic” and “Morte D’Arthur”
 - **Dec. 3:** Tennyson, “Morte D’Arthur” cont.
- FINAL PAPERS DUE BY DEC. 4, 11:59 PM (FIRST DEADLINE)**

Week 14:

- **Dec. 8:** Review
- SECOND DEADLINE FOR FINAL PAPERS (DEC. 11, 11:59 PM)**

Additional Information

Attendance: Because students’ grades are partly dependent on participation, regular attendance is strongly advised. Students who miss an excessive number of classes without documentation will see a significant drop in their participation grade. The Instructor reserves the right to bar students who routinely miss class from the Final Exam.

Email Correspondence: I will try to respond to emails in a timely fashion. However, more in-depth questions concerning assignments and grades may merit face-to-face consultation. In the latter case, email should be used to schedule a meeting during office hours.

Policy on Late Assignments and Extensions: As stated above, any student needing an extension may submit an assignment one week after the assignment due date with no penalty. However, students who submit an assignment after its due date will receive minimal or no comments. Unless documentation is provided, any assignment submitted after this one week-grace period will receive no comments and will incur a penalty of 2% per day.

Academic Policies and Regulations

Generative AI Policy

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools (genAI) or apps (i.e., ChatGPT, Quillbot AI, Grammarly text generation) for writing or editing your work is prohibited. Representing one’s own idea, or expression of an idea, that was AI-generated is considered academic misconduct. AI does not produce university level work, and using it for seemingly benign purposes—brainstorming thesis statements, producing essay outlines, proofreading—detracts from the course’s aim of developing students’ critical thinking and essay writing skills. If students require help developing a thesis or structuring their argument, they are strongly encouraged to reach out to the instructor over email or during office hours, or explore further secondary sources to stimulate their thinking. **If AI use is suspected, the instructor reserves the right to request research notes, essay outlines, rough drafts, or any other documents that make up the writing process.** If these materials cannot be produced, the student will be required to discuss their essay with the instructor in a face-to-face meeting. Failure to adhere to these requests will result in a zero on the assignment.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholoff.pdf

Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations.

Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>). All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Missed Course Work

Students must familiarize themselves with the University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs posted on the Academic Calendar: <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>.

For requests for academic consideration pertaining to missed course work, students should consult Accessible Education: https://academicsupport.uwo.ca/accessible_education/

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.

Accommodation for Religious Holidays

Students should review the policy for Accommodation for Religious Holidays (https://www.westerncalendar.uwo.ca/PolicyPages.cfm?Command=showCategory&PolicyCategoryID=1&SelectedCalendar=Live&ArchiveID=#Page_16)

Where a student will be unable to write examinations and term tests due to a conflicting religious holiday, they should inform their instructors as soon as possible but not later than two weeks prior to writing the examination/term test. In the case of conflict with a midterm test, students should inform their instructor as soon as possible but not later than one week prior to the midterm. Religious Accommodation requests for final exams should be submitted via the Student Absence Portal.

Support Services

Academic Advising

Your Home Faculty's Academic Advising Office will support or refer whenever you have an issue that is affecting your studies, including information on adding/dropping courses, academic considerations for absences, appeals, exam conflicts, and many other academic related matters. Do not hesitate to reach out to them if you are struggling and unsure where to go for help.

Contact info for all Faculties is here: <https://registrar.uwo.ca/facultyacademiccounselling.html>

Mental Health Support

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<https://uwo.ca/health/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

Gender-based Sexual Violence

Western University is committed to reducing incidents of gender-based and sexual violence (GBSV) and providing compassionate support to anyone who is going through or has gone through these traumatic events. If you are experiencing or have experienced GBSV (either recently or in the past), you will find information about support services for survivors, including emergency contacts at the following website:

<https://www.uwo.ca/health/studentsupport/survivorsupport/get-help.html>.

To connect with a case manager or set up an appointment, please contact support@uwo.ca.

Learning Development and Success

Counsellors at the Learning Development and Success Centre (<https://learning.uwo.ca>) are ready to help you improve your learning skills. They offer presentations on strategies for improving time management, multiple-choice exam preparation/writing, textbook reading, and more. Individual support is offered throughout the Fall/Winter terms in the drop-in Learning Help Centre, and year-round through individual counselling.

USC

Additional student-run support services are offered by the USC, <https://westernusc.ca/services/>.