

ENGLISH 9079A Romanticism and the Psychopathology of Happiness



Wednesdays 9AM to 12PM | University College 377

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Office Hours: 12PM – 2 PM Mondays; or by appointment

Course Description: What's so good about feeling good? Romantic thought, writing, and culture were crucial in articulating what Darrin McMahon, paraphrasing Jeremy Bentham, calls the "felicific calculus of happiness."

Following in the wake of Enlightenment moral philosophy, medicine, and literature, the Romantics staked out an instrumental training ground in how to be happy. But they also challenged this discipline. Reading various literary, critical, theoretical, philosophical, and medical texts we will examine how Romanticism made us happy – or not. One component of this course will be to examine the rise of both psychoanalysis and psychiatry in the Romantic period, and to ask how these disciplines both contribute to and contest our current obsession with wellbeing. We will also explore historical, cultural, and theoretical contexts, Romantic and contemporary, including "happiness studies." Be prepared to be depressed.

Required Texts:

Austen, Jane. *Persuasion*. Ed. James Kinsley and Deirdre Lynch. New York: Oxford World Classics, 2010.

Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Ed. and trans. David Constantine. New York: Oxford World Classics, 2012.

Hays, Mary. *Memoirs of Emma Courtney*. Ed. Eleanor Ty. New York: Oxford World Classics, 2009.

Wollstonecraft, Mary and Mary Shelley. *Mary, Maria, and Matilda*. Ed. Janet Todd. New York: Penguin, 1993.

Wordsworth, William. *The Prelude, 1799, 1805, 1850*. Ed. Jonathan Wordsworth, Stephen Gill, and M. H. Abrams. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1979.

Wordsworth, William. *The Ruined Cottage* (will be posted to Sakai course website).

All other readings will be posted to the Sakai course site.

ASSIGNMENTS

Seminar oral presentation (20-25 minutes) 30%. Your seminar should address the week's readings, both primary and secondary. Some students prefer to read out their seminar. This is good training for delivering conference papers, but don't feel that you *have* to follow this approach. The point of the seminar is not to rehearse texts (i.e. plot or article summaries, unless these are crucial to your argument). Rather, give your critical impression/response to the theoretical issues and tensions raised in the readings as they build upon, revise, or react against previous readings or contexts discussed. I schedule all seminar presentations at the beginning of class, so they should also orient and generate that week's discussion. Within ONE WEEK of your oral presentation, you can either submit to me a cleaned-up version of the seminar or simply pass along your notes at the end of that class.

Final paper (5,000 words) 55%. DUE: December 10

Write a paper on a topic of your choice relevant to the course material, properly citing criticism relevant to your topic. This paper can develop from, but should expand significantly upon, your seminar.

Participation 15%. This grade evaluates your weekly contributions to the seminar, including attention to and interventions in class discussion and my sense of how well you're prepared for each class. It's important that you come to class with concrete things to say about that week's readings. Except for extenuating circumstances (medical/health issues, family deaths, disastrous acts of a divine power), I expect you to attend all classes. Prolonged absence from class (3 or more classes) means you will forfeit this grade.

All assignments must follow MLA citational guidelines outlined in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* (7th ed.).

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically the definition of what constitutes Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site: http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf (Academic Handbook, Exam, Course Outlines Page 4 Issued: 2011 02)

Weekly Schedule of Lectures, Reading Assignments, and Due Dates

Always come to class having read that week's assigned readings, primary, secondary, and contextual. This is a tentative list of readings. I will be adding a more supplemental readings, which I'll post to the Sakai course website.

*Seminars (list to be distributed)

September 10	Introduction
September 17	Critical Introduction: Psychoanalysis, Psychiatry and Happy/Unhappy Romanticism <u>Context:</u> John Haslam, <i>Illustrations of Madness</i> (1817)
September 24	Historical Introduction: Romanticism and Romantic Happiness <u>Context:</u> Locke, Hume, Smith, Bentham (excerpts); Soni, <i>Mourning Happiness</i>
October 1	* Goethe , <i>The Sorrows of Young Werther</i> <u>Context:</u> Rousseau, from <i>Emile</i> ; Mackenzie, from <i>The Man of Feeling</i>
October 8	* Wordsworth , The two-part <i>Prelude</i> (1799); <i>The Prelude</i> (1805), Books 1 and 2. <u>Context:</u> Abrams, "Wordsworth's <i>The Prelude</i> and the Crisis-Autobiography"; Potkay, from <i>The Story of Joy</i>
October 15	* Wordsworth , <i>The Prelude</i> (1805), Books 5, 6
October 22	* Wordsworth , <i>The Prelude</i> (1805), Books 9, 11, 12
October 29	* Wollstonecraft , <i>Maria, or the Wrongs of Woman</i> <u>Context:</u> Freud, from <i>Civilization and Its Discontents</i> ; Ahmed, "Happy Objects"
November 5	* Wollstonecraft , <i>Maria</i> ; Shelley , <i>Matilda</i> <u>Context:</u> Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia"; Abraham and Torok, from <i>The Kernel and the Shell</i>
November 12	* Shelley , <i>Matilda</i> / * Hays , <i>Memoirs of Emma Courtney</i> <u>Context:</u> Rajan, "Matilda and the Political Economy of Romanticism"
November 19	* Hays , <i>Memoirs</i> <u>Context:</u> Rajan, "Autonarration and Genotext in Mary Hays' <i>Memoirs of Emma Courtney</i> "; Wilson, "Against Happiness"
November 19	* Wordsworth , <i>The Ruined Cottage</i> <u>Context:</u> Khalip, "The Ruin of Things"; Blanchot, from <i>The Writing of Disaster</i>
November 26	* Austen , <i>Persuasion</i> <u>Context:</u> Zunshine, "Why Jane Austen was Different"; Berlant, "Cruel Optimism"
December 3	* Austen , <i>Persuasion</i> <u>Context:</u> Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat"