

English 9119B - Futures of Romanticism

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About the “burden of the past” (Bate), anxieties of influence and history (Bloom, Levinson, Liu), even a lyrical structure that insists upon revisitation—of time and place, of consciousness first and foremost, perhaps—we have heard a great deal. This course will have to encounter this time as well, but its primary concern will be to come to terms with Romanticism’s anticipation, perhaps better, its prefiguration, of the future, its own not least. Thus, we will be concerned with how that future relates to Romanticism, in particular with how Romanticism is taken up in by later periods, especially in the 20th century (and beyond). Even more, it will ask how Romanticism only becomes fully Romantic in that reading, just as those reading it are only able to conceive of themselves (as Modern, say, or even postmodern, or . . .) by way of a reading of Romanticism. Thus, for instance, Kleist will write a play “after” (both in the manner of and as a successor to) Molière and both Kleist and, through him, Molière will be written into the future and past by contemporary novelist John Banville. Less directly, but no less importantly, we might examine how Wallace Stevens takes up Romantic figures—of nature and art. A similar gesture will be made by much contemporary criticism, and we will attempt to trace the development of theory, deconstruction and New Historicism, in particular, in their relationship to Romanticism. Whether we are concerned with how Celan takes up Büchner, for instance, or how de Man reads Wordsworth, one of our concerns, no doubt our primary one, will be with language—and thus to read the texts, critical, poetic, and dramatic alike, as carefully as possible.

Assignments

Close Reading (15%)

For this assignment, you are to select between 3 and 23 lines (approximately) of poetry or drama, or between a sentence and a short paragraph of prose from one of the authors we are studying. In 5-7 pages, offer as close and careful a reading of that text as possible, paying attention to “what” it says, of course, but just as important to how it does so, that is, to its language, figures, gestures, and so forth.

Seminar (25%)

25-30 minutes. The seminar will take up a text to be discussed in class. The main point of the seminar is to offer a reading of the text, to engage with it critically, always with a mind to helping us all understand the work better and to generating discussion.

Though I say 25-30 minutes for the seminar, I would like you to field questions during subsequent discussion.

One week after the seminar, you are to submit a written version of the seminar. This should not

merely be a transcript of the seminar, but rather its rewriting into a short essay, complete with proper documentation.

Final paper: (50%)

Your paper does not necessarily have to take up one of the texts on the course. It should, however, deal with questions raised in the course. I encourage you to explore fields, texts, authors you have *not* taken up in your seminar; should you remain with work from your seminar, the final paper must not only expand upon, but diverge substantially from, the seminar. The essay should be thoroughly researched and refer to the relevant literature on the topic you cover.

Discuss your topic with me well in advance of handing in your paper (3-4 weeks in advance). Approximately 15-20pp.

Participation (10%)

The participation grade will assess the quality of your engagement in and contribution to the seminar. As such, it is not a measure of loquacity but rather of preparation, thoughtful and helpful interventions in class, attention to and engagement with the seminars and to class discussion more generally. Should you miss **more than 2 classes** without documented illness or compassionate grounds, you will forfeit this portion of the course grade.

Scholastic Offenses

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a 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

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Schedule of Classes

January 5:	Introduction
January 12:	Coleridge, "The Aeolian Harp," "This Lime Tree Bower My Prison," "Frost at Midnight"
January 19:	Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey"
January 26:	Coleridge, "Dejection: An Ode"; Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"
February 2:	Stevens, "The Idea of Order at Key West," "The Snow Man," "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"
February 9:	Büchner, <i>Woyzeck</i> , <i>Lenz</i>
February 16:	Reading Week: no class
February 23:	Celan, Meridian lecture
March 2:	Kleist, <i>Amphitryon</i>
March 9:	Kleist, <i>Amphitryon</i> ; Banville, <i>The Infinities</i>
March 16:	Banville, <i>The Infinities</i>
March 23:	Mary Shelley, <i>The Last Man</i>
April 30:	Mary Shelley, <i>The Last Man</i>
April 6:	Blanchot, <i>Le dernier homme</i>
