

English 9184 (full year) *The 1790s and Their Afterlives: The Godwins and Shelleys*

Wed. 12:30- 3:30. UC 4415

Prof. Tilottama Rajan. Office: University College 2423; E.mail: trajan@uwo.ca. Office hours: after class or by appointment.

Course Description

Finding its centre of gravity in the Godwin-Shelley circle, which Julie Carlson has called England's first family of writers, this course will also be more broadly concerned with the revolutionary energies of the 1790s, the darkening of their claims to enlightenment in the 1790s themselves, and the complex survival of these energies and their resistances into the more conservative period of the Regency. In addition to texts by William Godwin, Mary Wollstonecraft, Percy Shelley and Mary Shelley, the course will therefore also include work by William Blake and Mary Hays (and will allude to other texts). The texts of the core Godwin-Shelley group are characterized by an unusual density of self-allusion and self-analysis, as well as by their discarding, repetition and working through of figures of each other, across the period from the 1790s to the cusp of the Victorian period. A loose envelope for the course is thus my own concept of "autonarration," in which writers project and revise themselves and other intimates as part-subjects and part-objects, in such a way that the issues they traverse in this psycho-analytic process remain under ongoing negotiation between and within their texts. However, the aim here is not to reduce the texts studied to a family romance. The family of texts studied here is best conceived as an open rhizome of intellectual and generic connections; the point of this course is precisely not to specify a topic that forces us to read for a single theme. Those connections include revolutionary politics, world history, the relations between prose and poetry and an experimentation with their boundaries, and the survival of the 1790s and Romanticism as a form of *dissensus* into the Regency as a form of consensus, and beyond that into our own time.

Readings (ordered at the bookstore)

William Blake, "Thel" and the Lambeth Books (will be supplied on pdf).

William Godwin, *Caleb Williams* (Penguin) [I ordered this edition because it was the cheapest, but there are many editions]

William Godwin, *Fleetwood*, ed. Gary Handwerk and A.A. Markley (Broadview Literary Texts)

William Godwin, *Mandeville*, ed. Tilottama Rajan (Broadview Literary Texts)

Mary Hays, *Memoirs of Emma Courtney* (Broadview Literary Texts)

Mary Shelley, *Valperga*, ed. Tilottama Rajan (Broadview Literary Texts)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*, ed. Stephen Behrendt (Broadview Literary Texts)

Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Shelley's Poetry and Prose*, ed. Donald H. Reiman and Neil Fraistat (Norton)

Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley, *Mary, Maria, Matilda*. (Penguin)

There will also be some theoretical and background readings, both contemporary and from the period. These will be made available as pdfs via Dropbox.

Assignments.

Seminar: Each student will give a seminar of roughly 25 minutes, which in gen will involve connecting two texts or taking up a text not intensively covered in class. By Monday morning of the week in which you give your seminar, please provide a detailed outline to your respondent and myself. The seminar

must be written up as a paper (with Works Cited), and should be handed in *in hard copy* one week after being delivered. The written version should take into account class discussion, and should *not* be identical to the oral version. 20% of the grade.

Response and Participation: Each student will serve as respondent to a seminar. The response is expected to be about 5 minutes but should not simply consist of a couple of questions. It may offer another point of view, or take up an aspect of the topic not covered in the seminar, but must offer something substantive as well as raise discussion points. Attendance in class is a minimum condition of participation. Assessment of participation will include quality of class participation, and the effort and thought put into the course, which may not always be obvious from direct verbal participation. However, anyone with more than two unexcused absences in a term, and/or anyone who persistently comes late will forfeit up to half this grade. 10% of the grade.

Two Research papers and a position paper:

Position paper: this paper should be two or three pages single-spaced, and should focus on a crux, a troubling episode, character in, or aspect of a text that functions as a loose end or renders the ideological closure of the text problematic. The paper must be on a text covered in class and should not overlap with the seminar or be on the same text(s). The position paper is due on **Nov. 13th**, and can be absorbed into one of the research papers. If your seminar is in the first term, or you very much want to write on a text we haven't yet covered, you may submit this paper no later than **Feb. 26th**. Of course you can also write on a text before we've covered it. I will not make extensive comments on these brief papers.

Research papers: Papers should be 5000 words each, should involve original research and show significant evidence of engagement with secondary and theoretical sources. One paper may overlap with the seminar, but should be significantly wider in scope and should go into more depth. The other may incorporate or be on the same text as the position paper. Papers should contain a bibliography, and should follow either the MLA or Chicago Style format for references. All essays **must** be submitted in **hard** copy. All essays should also be e mailed to me in MS Word 97-2003. The first paper is due on **January 7th, 2020** (though you are welcome to submit it earlier). The second will be due **on April 20th**. Total grade for written assignments: 70%-- 10% for the position paper, 25% for the essay drawing on the seminar, and 35% for the other essay. However, if you do not re-use seminar material in an essay, a different scheme can be worked out.

Late Penalties and Incompletes

Except in cases of documented illness or compassionate situations, there will be penalties for late submission of papers. Failure to give a seminar or presentation on the assigned date will result in a 10% deduction from the grade, and the seminar must be handed in in writing within a week. In documented exceptions, unless truly unanticipated, notice that the student will not be presenting must be given well in advance and arrangements to submit the assignment in written form must be made. Incompletes can only be given in consultation with the Graduate Chair.

Other Policies

Computers, i-pads and other devices are not allowed in class.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences, including but not limited to plagiarism (whether of direct wording or arguments), are taken seriously. Students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Website:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf

In addition, please note (with apologies for saying this if it is unnecessary) that a graduate course that

draws on the professor's published and unpublished research is not like an on-line undergraduate course which organizes existing information that is "in the public domain." Any arguments that you take from this course, which are not common knowledge, and which you use outside this class (e.g. in a thesis, conference paper or article) must be duly acknowledged.

Student Accessibility Services

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions, mobility impairments) are encouraged to register with Student Accessibility Services, a confidential service designed to support graduate and undergraduate students through their academic program. With the appropriate documentation, the student will work with both SAS and their graduate programs (normally their Graduate Chair and/or Course instructor) to ensure that appropriate academic accommodations to program requirements are arranged. These accommodations include individual counselling, alternative formatted literature, accessible campus transportation, learning strategy instruction, writing exams and assistive technology instruction.