

## English 463: British Romantic Poets

Professor Theresa M. Kelley

Fall 2004

TR 9:30-10:45 AM, meeting in B325 Van Vleck

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2:30-4 PM, Thursdays 11 AM-12:30 PM or by appointment

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This course investigates the poetry and relevant prose of the Romantic period in Britain (1780-1832). Reading Romantic poetry increases the stakes of questions we also ask about other cultures and times: how direct or indirect does poetry—with its powerful concerns for individual voice and poetic craft—situate itself in culture? How do poets differ from or respond to their eras? What is the work of *poesis*, the making of poems and, more generally, imaginative writing? Asking these questions about Romantic poetry begins with thinking about the role of *subjectivity*—the quality of being a subject or person—either that of the poet or of the individuals or characters that poems present. For Romantic authors, the expression of being a subject or a person was a task that was inseparable from the remarkable and disturbing era that was theirs, an era that included the French and American Revolutions, political unrest and cultural change in Britain and the global effects of European imperial expansion. In the midst of these events, Romantic poets developed a poetics divided between their impulse to mark the individuality of poetic subjects and their desire to speak for or with the course of the events. The focus of this course is the way language assists or disturbs the Romantic effort to write across this divide.

### Required Texts:

*Longman Anthology of British Literature, Vol. 2A (The Romantics and Their Contemporaries)*. Ed. Wolfson and Manning. 2nd edn. New York: Addison Wesley, 2002.

Packet of supplementary readings available at Bob's Copy Shop (University Square)

**Recommended but not required:** Adams, Stephen. *Poetic Designs: An Introduction to Meters, Verse Forms, and Figures of Speech*. Peterborough, CA: Broadview Press, 1997.

### Course Policies, Guidelines and the Writing Fellows:

**This is an intensive-writing course.** Because the work of this course is to help you develop as a reader of Romantic poetry, I do not require or even encourage you to consult critics other than those which appear in the packet. Students will write four essays during the semester. For the **first and second papers**, you will work with **peer writing fellows** who will evaluate the finished and typed drafts of these essays and meet with you in conference to make suggestions for revision. **The Writing Fellows are**

Sophia Estante

Jess Rao

1.

Writing fellows do not grade essays nor do they see the final grades I give revised essays. Instead, writing fellows look for elements of structure, argument and documentation that are necessary to strong writing. I have invited them to participate in the work of this course. Because peer editing is a technique all strong writers use to polish and develop their work, it is a privilege to be able to work with writing fellows and to have them work with you. I encourage you to bring questions about the topic and content of your papers to me well before the deadlines specified in the syllabus for draft or final versions of essays. **Deadlines** are not negotiable. All written work must be turned in on time at the beginning of the class in which they are due. The **drafts** of the papers you submit for your Writing Fellow to review must be complete, polished and typed. You should imagine them to be the final version, not a preliminary attempt to write the essay. **Note: be sure to bring your calendar with your draft so that you can schedule your conference time with your Writing Fellow at that time. Attach the cover sheet to your draft; I will give you these before the draft is due.** When you hand in the revised paper, staple to it the draft copy with your writing fellow's comments and a brief sheet (I'll give you the form later) in which you assess changes you made after you discussed the essay with your writing fellow).

Each written assignment should have 1" margins on all sides. Put your name and the course number and title on the top of the first page. Number pages and staple. Use parenthetical citations of poems discussed or quoted

(shortened title, lines and page) or any of the critics whose work is in the packet. At the end of the papers, include a “Work(s) Cited Page on which you list the work or works that you have cited in your text. For the Works Cited page, use the bibliographic form used in the example given below:

Blake, William. “A Poison Tree.” In The Longman Anthology of British Literature, Volume 2A: The Romantics and Their Contemporaries. Ed. Susan Wolfson and Peter Manning. 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. New York: Addison-Wesley, 2002, p. 125.

### Requirements:

- Regular attendance and active participation in classroom discussion, including: on-time submission of drafts to the writing fellow, scheduled meetings with the writing fellow, completion of assigned reading, active contribution to class discussion, the short essay, and weekly submission of critical observations. (25% of grade)
- A critical observation about the reading is due **every week by 6 PM on Wednesdays**. These observations, some of which will be chosen each week to guide our Thursday discussions, should be sent to Professor Kelley at [kelley@wisc.edu](mailto:kelley@wisc.edu). The subject heading should be “E463 observation” with the day’s date. **Warning:** do not misspell “Kelley” or you will flood another professor’s mail box with messages intended for me.
- Short essay (2-page close reading) due in class on **Tuesday, September 14**
- First paper (4-5 pages) due in class on **Tuesday, October 26** (25 % of grade)
- Second paper (5-7 pages) due in class on **Tuesday, November 23** (25% of grade)
- Take-Home Essay due on **Friday, December 17** (25% of grade)

### Schedule

**Note: readings marked by an (\*) are in the packet; read the relevant headnote introductions in the *Anthology* for each author that appears on the schedule**

September 2 (R)            Introduction: Romanticism, Then and Now; \*”Introduction” from *The New Penguin Book of Romantic Poetry*; \*Butler, “Introduction” from *Romantics, Rebels, and Reactionaries*

“It is not difficult to see that our epoch is a birth-time, and a period of transition. The spirit of man has broken with the old order of things hitherto prevailing, and with the old ways of thinking, and is in the mind to let them all sink into the depths of the past and to set about its own transformation. It is indeed never at rest, but carried along the stream of progress ever onward. But it is here as in the case of the birth of a child; after a long period of nutrition in silence, the continuity of gradual growth in size, of quantitative change, is suddenly cut short by the first breath drawn—there is a break in the process, a qualitative change—and the child is born. In like manner the spirit of the time, growing slowly and quietly ripe for the new form it is to assume, disintegrates one fragment after another of the structure of its previous world.”

Hegel, The Phenomenology of Mind (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), p. 75.  
First published in 1807

### Part 1. Romantic Beginnings: Species, Rights, and Poetic Subjectivity

September 7 (T)            Barbauld, “The Mouse’s Petition,” Burns, “To a Mouse” and “To a Louse,” \*Updike, “To a Well-Connected Mouse”  
[this Tuesday only: no office hours; extra will be scheduled for week of September 14-16]  
**\*\*Assignment for Short Essay distributed in class**

September 9 (R)            **no class:** write two page essay

September 14 (T)            Blake, from *Songs of Innocence* (all included in text); \*Adams, *Poetic Designs*, pp. 30-35  
**\*\*Short (two pages) essay due**

September 16 (R)            Blake, from *Songs of Experience* (all included in text); “Rights of Man; Revolutionary Controversy” (pp. 56-67 and 70-71); extra office hours today: 2:30-4 PM

- September 21 (T) Barbauld, \* "Epistle to William Wilberforce," Cowper, "The Negro's Complaint"; \* "Abolition and the Slave Trade" (pp. 158-60)  
**\*\*Assignment for First Paper distributed in class**
- September 23 (R) W. Wordsworth, from *Lyrical Ballads*: "Simon Lee," "We are Seven," and selections from the "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*; \*Heaney, *Preoccupations*, pp. 61-65
- September 28 (T) Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads* continued, "The Thorn," "She dwelt among th' untrodden ways"; \*Heaney, *Preoccupations*, p. 52; \*Glück, *Proofs and Theories*, p. 3
- September 30 Wordsworth, "Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey" and "A slumber did my spirit seal"; \*Adams, *Poetic Designs*, pp. 110-12; \*Hartman, *Saving the Text*, pp. 146-48
- October 5 (T) W. Wordsworth, "Michael" and "Resolution and Independence"  
**\*\*Draft of First Paper (4-5 pages) due**
- October 7 (R) Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (both versions)
- October 12 (T) Women and Poetic Identity: Barbauld, "Inscription for an Ice-House," Hemans, "The Bride of the Greek Isle," "Joan of Arc, in Rheims," and "Women and Fame"; \* "The Wollstonecraft Controversy and the Rights of Women" (pp. 269-70)

## Part 2. Poetic Forms and Genres

### Epic and the Romantic Poet

- October 14 (R) W. Wordsworth, *Prelude*, Book 1 (pp. 389-395); \*Heaney, *Preoccupations*, pp. 61-71,  
 \* Davie, *Articulate Energy*, pp. 11-112
- October 19 (T) Wordsworth, *Prelude*, Book 1 continued
- October 21 (R) Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Selections from Books 5 and 6
- October 26 (T) Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Selections from Books 9 and 10  
**\*\*Revision of First Paper Due**  
**\*\*Assignment for Second Paper distributed in class**

### The Sonnet, Ode, and Other Poetic Forms

- October 28 (R) The Sonnet: C. Smith, "To Melancholy," "On Being cautioned ..."; Wordsworth, "Prefatory Sonnet," "The World is too much with us"; \*Adams, *Poetic Designs*, pp. 71-76 and 88-92
- November 2 (T) The Sonnet, continued: Wordsworth, "Composed upon Westminster Bridge"; Keats, "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer" and "On Seeing the Elgin Marbles"; Clare, "Written in November" (versions 1 and 2); \*Adams, *Poetic Designs*, pp. 124, 133-134
- November 4 (R) The Ode: Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"; Coleridge, "Dejection: An Ode," \*Adams, *Poetic Designs*, pp. 101-103
- November 9 (T) Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" and "Ode to Psyche"  
**\*\*Draft of Second Paper (5-7 pages) Due**
- November 11 (R) Keats, *The Eve of St. Agnes* (spenserian stanza); \*Adams, *Poetic Designs*, p. 82; Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* (selection)
- November 16 (T) Byron, *Don Juan, Canto 1* (ottava rima); \*Adams, *Poetic Designs*, pp. 81-82, 118, 129

## Part 3. Romantic Nature, History, and the Sublime

- November 18 (R) Clare, "The Lament of Swordy Well," "The Mouse's Nest"; \*Heaney, *The Redress of Poetry*, pp. 64-80
- November 23 (T) \*P. Shelley, (*P*) *Prometheus Unbound* Act I
- November 25 (R) **Thanksgiving Holiday**
- November 30 (T) P. Shelley, *PU*, Act I continued  
**\*\*Revision of Second Paper Due**

**Romantic Puns, Poems, Parody Time and Place TBA [December 1-9]**

December 1 (R) P. Shelley, "To a Skylark," "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty"; \*Adams, *Poetic Designs* p. 124

December 7 (T) P. Shelley: "Sonnet: England in 1819" and "Mask of Anarchy"; \* Adams *Poetic Designs*, pp. 137-39

December 9 (R) P. Shelley, "Mont Blanc," selections from *Defense of Poetry*

December 14 (T) Keats, *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*

**\*\*Assignment for Take Home Essay distributed in class**

**December 17 (F), 1:00PM      \*\*Take-Home Essay Due to Professor Kelley**