

**English 465: Later Romantic Poetry: 1815-1832**  
**Spring 2008**  
**Tu-Th 9:30-10:45 AM**  
**HCW 4281**

**Professor Theresa M. Kelley**  
[tkelley@wisc.edu](mailto:tkelley@wisc.edu)

**Office: HCW 6141**  
**Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-4 PM**

**NOTE: Students who took the Fall 2007 version of this course may take the spring version as well and get credit for both because whereas the Fall course focused on Early Romantic poets, the Spring one focuses on the Later Romantics. So, the topics do indeed vary. If you wish to take this course for honors credit, we must confer first about the specific course requirements appropriate for receiving honors credit.**

Across the entire Romantic era (1780-1832), poets negotiated an era of enormous public upheaval (from the French revolution, the consolidation of the British empire, to massive political reform) even as they sought to articulate what it means to be a writing subject, and an individual, speaking citizen and actor. For this reason, 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 both the Fall and Spring versions of this course is the way language assists or disturbs the Romantic effort to write across this divide.

This Spring 2008 course focuses on the second generation of Romantic poets: Lord Byron, Felicia Hemans, Percy Shelley, John Keats and John Clare. Briefly put, the second generation of Romantic poets critique or complicate the aspirations and traits of the first generation. Among those traits we might include: a celebration of nature (except for Blake); an emphasis on individuals and individual feelings; a rejection of the poetic tradition or, more precisely, the Neoclassical insistence on prescribed poetic norms, a nearly boundless hope for the future, and (early in the 1790's) a nearly boundless sense of hope for the changes wrought by the French revolution. The second generation is in many ways much more skeptical of these hopes for several reasons: the Reign of Terror after the French Revolution dashed most hopes for democratic new beginnings; massive labor unrest (Luddites and loom-breaking, etc.); economic hardship as result of fiscal demands of war taxation; followed by post Napoleonic war unrest and a sharpened sense of political and economic discontent and waves of agitation for major political and electoral reform which eventually led to the passage of the first reform bill in 1832. For the Romantic poets of this second generation, a sharpened longing for change and progress compete with apprehension about the possibility for both; the literary forms these poets devise continue and redirect the formal experimentation of the first generation, rethinking again the possibility of

epic, heroism, and how poetic forms, aurality, and figures convey meaning. In the last section of the course, students will perform selected scenes from Percy Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*.

**Required Text:**

Vol. 2A, *The Romantics, The Longman Anthology of British Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn. (2003).

**Unless otherwise indicated, readings are in the Longman anthology.. Note: always read the head note that precedes selections by each of the poets.**

**Recommended, not required:**

Adams, Stephen *Poetic Designs* (1997). [also on Reserve in College Library PE1505 A32 1997]

**Packet: College Library Reserves**

Starred (\*) readings are on the course packet, available online from College Library Reserves. Follow the link for this course on your "My UW" webpage. **Note: I do not use "Learn @ UW."** I do have a website, where you will find basic course materials and some images:

<http://www.english.wisc.edu/tkelley/>

Whether the readings are in the Longman or in the course packet, please bring them to each class session.

**About plagiarism: Don't do it. Acknowledge all texts you use. Make certain that you develop your own readings of poems, informed by course presentations. If you plagiarize, I am likely to find out and you will fail the course and face possible disciplinary action from the Dean of the College of Letters and Science. In my view, students who plagiarize cheat other students as well as themselves and I do not tolerate such unfairness.**

**Course Requirements:**

**Regular attendance and active participation** in classroom discussion. Participation includes completion of assigned reading, active contribution to class discussion. More than 2 unexcused absences will be noted and may affect your final grade.

**Commonplace book:** throughout the semester, you will keep an electronic commonplace book in which you begin with a term or constellation of terms, concepts relevant to the readings and focus of this course, which you will gradually develop via commentary and relevant texts. You will send me this book electronically twice during the semester and I will respond, perhaps by asking you to bring to construct sub-topics, developments, complications, reading for patterns and a developing understanding. The goal of this commonplace book is to develop the topic and shape of your final essay. 10% of final grade.

**Keyword response papers:** during the semester you will write **four** keyword response papers. Each should be typed, single-spaced and 300-400 words. As long as I get at least one of these from you before the midterm, you are free to choose when and on what to write each response. You need not have finished reading a text to write a response paper—indeed, it can be useful to write one mid-way through reading a text—and you may write more than one response paper about a text. I recommend writing these papers in response to texts you're particularly excited, intrigued, or puzzled about.

The aim of this assignment is to give you practice making observations and claims about ideas and arguments embedded in the readings. These response papers build the critical reading skills you'll use to write other essays for this and other courses. The response papers allow to gain analytical traction with texts. They provide start-up analyses that your essays will extend

and enrich. These response papers require careful and sustained thinking about the texts, but they are also meant to be fun to write.

A keyword is an image or a theme (e.g. “wanderer” or “Byronic hero/villain” or “home” or “poesis”), a concept (“mimicry”), or an aspect of a text (narrative structure, poetic devices and forms, time shifts) that seems important for illuminating the significance of that text. They offer a lens or frame through which to read and analyze a text. They allow us to see how various textual details, passages, and moments are linked, and they allow us to understand how particular features of a text function.

You can develop your account of the keywords you choose to consider in several ways. You can begin with a single keyword and analyze how the text makes use of and comments on it. Or you may begin with two keywords, then speculate on how they might be connected, and why this connection might be important in and for the text. Or you might begin by focusing on a textual echo—a pair or series of details, passages, or moments that seem linked—and, over the course of your discussion, come up with a key word that helps us see what larger idea this echo illuminates. However you choose to proceed, your response must draw on specific textual details, passages, or moments, always citing page numbers in parentheses.

These response papers are neither formal essays nor open-ended free-writing. You do *not* need in these responses to produce a logical, flowing argument, nor do paragraphs have to have topic sentences. However, you *do* need to focus your analysis on a keyword (or two) and you should also develop a (tentative) thesis or claim about what the keyword(s) reveals to be at stake in the text. Your prose should be clear and grammatically polished. Each response paper = 10%; total 40% of final grade.

**Take-home midterm:** essay format; topics tba = 5 pp. typed, topics tba = 20% of final grade.

**Take-home final:** essay format; 7-10 pp. typed, includes preliminary assignment for beginning of the essay; (30% of grade)

### **Schedule:**

Jan. 22: Introduction

#### **Part 1. Romantic Heroines, Heroines and Problems**

Jan. 24: Byron, “She walks in beauty,” “So, we’ll go no more a-roving”; selection from “Manfred and his time: The Byronic Hero” [pp. 638-41, up to and including *Lara* excerpt]

\*Wordsworth and Wordsworth, “Introduction: The Second Generation,” from *The New Penguin Book of Romantic Poetry*

Jan. 29: Byron, *Manfred*, Acts 1 and 2

Jan. 31: Byron, *Manfred*, Act 3  
Coleridge, *Longman*, pp. 644-45

Feb. 5: Byron, from *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* [CHP], *Canto the Third*

Feb. 7: Byron, *CHP*, *C. 3<sup>rd</sup>*, *continued*; *CHP*, from *C. 4<sup>th</sup>*

Feb. 12: Byron, *Don Juan* [DJ], *Dedication* and *Canto 1* [stanzas 1-85].

Feb. 14: Byron, *DJ*, *Canto 1* concluded  
\*Adorno, “Morality and Style,” from *Minima Moralia*

- Feb. 19: Byron, *DJ*, from *C. 2*  
**Midterm take home essays due**
- Feb. 21: Hemans, from *Records of Woman [RW]*: “The Bride of the Greek Isle” and “Indian Woman’s Death-Song”  
**Feb. 21, Prof. Deidre Lynch, “Canons’ Clockwork” 4 PM**
- Feb. 26: Hemans, *RW*, “Joan of Arc, in Rheims” and “Properzia Rossi”  
Feb. 28: Shelley, *Defense of Poetry*  
\*Adorno, from “On Lyric Poetry and Society”
- March 4: Hemans, “The Homes of England,” “Corinne at the Capitol” and “Casabianca”

**Part 2. Romantic Poesis, Innovation and Experiment**

- March 6: Keats, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer” and from *Sleep and Poetry*
- March 11: Keats, *The Eve of St. Agnes*  
March 13: Keats, *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*

**March 15-23: SPRING BREAK**

- March 25: Keats, *Ode to Psyche*, *Ode on a Grecian Urn*  
March 27: Keats, *To Autumn*
- April 1: Keats, begin *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream*, ll. 1-140  
April 3: Keats, finish *The Fall of Hyperion*
- April 8: Shelley, “To Wordsworth” and “Sonnet: Lift not the painted veil”  
April 10: Shelley, “Mont Blanc”
- April 15: Shelley, “England in 1819” and *The Mask of Anarchy*  
April 17: Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound [PU]*, Preface and Act 1
- April 22: Shelley, *PU*, Act 1: scene performed  
April 24: Shelley, *PU*, Act 2, sc. iv
- April 29: Shelley, *PU*, Act 2, sc.iv: performed

**Part 3. John Clare’s Romantic Nature and Art**

**Note: photos of Clare’s cottage and native village of Helpston will be on the website for this course, in the image gallery**

- May 1: \*Clare, two poems, early and late, titled “The Gipsy Camp”  
“Glossary of Clare’s language”
- May 6: Clare, “The Mouse’s Nest” and \*Clare, “The old pond” [sonnet]  
\*Heaney, “John Clare’s Prog” from *The Redress of Poetry*
- May 8: Clare, *The Lament of Swordy Well*  
Simpson, “A Speaking Place: The Matter of Genre in *The Lament of Swordy Well*”

**Thursday, May 15, HCW 6141 at 10 AM: Take-home final essays due**