

English 334: Reason and Romanticism

Fall 2009 (WEC/AA program)

Vol. 10, No. 1

Price 7 Pence

Vital Information About the Course and Instructor

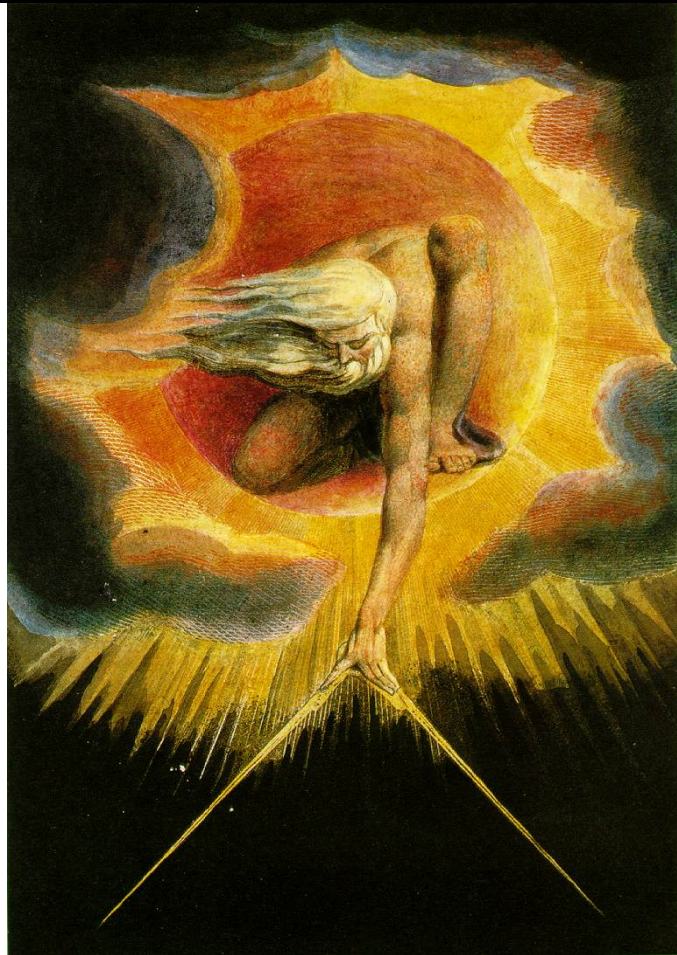
Latest Intelligence

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Weekend College weekends
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Texts (at bookstore)
Norton Anthology of English
Literature, 8th ed., vol. D
Austen, Pride and Prejudice
Shelley, Frankenstein

... And supplemental readings
online or in handouts

Assignments & Grading
20% Thoughtful letters (five)
contributed to the online
list, and reading quizzes
10% poetry presentation
10% theory & practice paper
20% critical conversation paper
20% final exam
20% active in-class participation



From the end of the eighteenth through the first third of the nineteenth century, Great Britain was fighting for survival against a clever and powerful foreign enemy. For most of that time, it was also haunted--or terrified--or enchanted--by the prospect of fundamental change in human affairs. Many of the writers we now call the Romantics believed that they were living in a crisis-period of human history: that their age was making discoveries about nature, imagination, and human potential that would fundamentally transform the world. At the same time, the age was divided politically, ideologically, and artistically between those who hoped to remake human affairs, and those who thought it was most important to preserve the values of their existing civilization. This course, an upper-level survey for English majors, studies the literature and culture of Great Britain during this remarkable time.

Prerequisites and Expectations

Students in English 334 must have taken a 200-level English course, and should have a solid foundation in academic writing (at least English 111). I will assume students in the class understand commonly observed rules against misuse of primary and secondary sources. Please remember that **plagiarism** is not a matter of intentions, but of how sources are actually used in the paper. Even a student who “did not mean to cheat” may fail an assignment, or even fail the course, for borrowing words or ideas inappropriately from sources. If you have any doubt about the rules of academic discourse, it is your responsibility to seek clarification *before* written work is handed in.

Attendance

Since our course covers eight major authors in just eight sessions, we can't waste any time! It is crucially important that you attend every meeting. A single missed session may be made up by writing a make-up paper assignment, but missing two sessions will automatically reduce the course grade by one grade point. Missing three sessions (the equivalent of six weeks of day school class, remember) will result in automatic failure. Coming to class late, or without having completed the assigned reading, will count at the instructor's discretion as a half or full absence.

DISCUSSION will be our chief tool and most important method for investigating each writer. While lectures will occasionally be necessary to clarify historical or biographical background, I will keep them short so that you have time to articulate and exchange your own insights.

READING is the main business of a survey class, and a discussion class only works if readings get done on time. To help you keep up, your online letters to your classmates (see below) should always be done by the due date indicated. I will read late letters, of course, but you may not receive credit for them. I reserve the right to use reading quizzes at any time.

Reading and Assignment Schedule

All readings should be completed before class time on the day listed. The selections for each class period should be read carefully, the poems *at least twice*. Footnotes and headnotes in the Norton anthology should be read as well as the selections themselves, although the notes won't always be right – we'll talk about this in class. (The critical essays and apparatus in the novels are not required reading, however.) I reserve the right to delete readings or add new ones via handout, Moodle, web URL, or email depending on our developing needs as a class during the term. All assignments and dates are subject to change; a course of instruction, like an era or our understanding of an era, is always a work in progress.

Meeting 1. 11 September. Course introduction. Before class read **Austen**, *Pride and Prejudice*, complete.

By 18 September. Post a letter to your classmates using Moodle. Introduce yourself and share what you knew/know about this kind of literature before coming to our class, with your “first impressions” of Austen and/or Blake.

Meeting 2. 25 September. William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 110. From *Songs of Innocence*, "Introduction," 81, "The Lamb," 83, "The Tyger," 92; "The Little Black Boy," 84; "The Chimney Sweeper," 85; "A Chimney Sweeper," 90; "London," 94; "The Garden of Love," 94. *There is No Natural Religion*, 79, and *All Religions Are One*, 80.

By 2 October. Post a letter about Blake and/or Wordsworth.

Meeting 3. 9 October. William Wordsworth, From "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, all selections, 262; "Tintern Abbey," 258; "Expostulation and Reply," 250, and "The Tables

**Note on the graduation skill:
Critical Thinking**

Because this course fulfills a graduation skill in Critical Thinking, our investigations, discussions, and (especially) paper assignments will stress use of careful analytical investigation and reasoning.

Writing Lab

Augsburg's well-trained writing tutors and well-equipped Writing Lab are a valuable resource for this class. I will distribute a schedule of the lab's hours as soon as I receive it; we will probably also have a visit from a lab tutor early in the term.

CLASS / Disabilities Services

Students receiving the aid of the CLASS office and/or Disabilities Service are welcome in this course. Please let me know who you are, and how I can help you get the most out of the material we study.

Policy on Written Work

Students must complete all major assignments (the poetry presentation, two papers, and exam) to achieve a grade of 2.0 or better in the course. Papers are due by email, in class, or in my English Department mailbox by class time on the due date. Late papers that have not been granted an extension lose one letter grade per day (meaning calendar day, not weekday or class day). Plagiarized papers or letters receive no credit, and may also cause you to receive an immediate failing grade for the

Turned," 252; "The World is Too Much With us," 319; "Composed upon Westminster Bridge," 317; "It Is a Beauteous Evening," 317; "London, 1802," 319; "Ode: Intimations of Immortality," 306; "Resolution and Independence," 302. Dorothy Wordsworth, from The Grasmere Journals, 392.

By 18 October. Post a letter about Wordsworth and/or Coleridge.

Meeting 4. 23 October. Samuel Taylor Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight," 464; "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," 430; "Kubla Khan," 446; "Dejection: An Ode," 466. From *Biographia Literaria*, all selections, 474.

By 30 October. Paper Assignment Due.

Meeting 5. 6 November. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, complete.

By 13 November. Post a letter about Mary Shelley and/or Keats.

Meeting 6. 20 November. John Keats, "Bright Star," 898. Letters: to Benjamin Bailey, 940; to George and Tom Keats, 942; to J.H. Reynolds, 943; "Eve of St. Agnes," 888; "Ode to a Nightingale," 903; "Ode on a Grecian Urn," 905.

By 27 November. Paper Assignment Due.

Meeting 7. 4 December. Percy Shelley, "Mutability," 744; "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty," 766; "Ode to the West Wind," 772; "Ozymandias," 768; "Sonnet: England in 1819," 771. "Mont Blanc," 762; from "A Defence of Poetry," 837.

Meeting 8. 11 December. George Gordon, Lord Byron, "So, we'll go no more a roving," 616; "On this day I complete my thirty sixth year," Moodle; "She Walks in Beauty," 612; *Don Juan*, Fragment and Canto 1, 670. Letters to Thomas Moore, 736; to Douglas Kinnaird, 738; to Percy Bysshe Shelley, 740.

assignment or for the course.

Epistolary Discussion List

All students are responsible for posting at least FIVE quasi-informal --but thoughtful and substantial-- open letters to their classmates (each of 300 to 500 words) during the course. For one of these letters, you will use the MLA Bibliography to find and read a scholarly article about one of the texts we are currently reading, and then report to your classmates to explain the article's scope and thesis, offering a judgment on how persuasive or unpersuasive you believe it to be. All your postings should advance thoughtful and engaged remarks about one of the works or authors currently being discussed. They are due within a week before or after our in-class discussion of a work. You are also permitted (in fact, encouraged) to use your letters as a testing-ground for paper topics and even for paper drafts.

Please note that this class has two formal papers (the theory/practice paper and critical conversation paper) and two due dates, but does not require you to turn in a particular assignment on a particular date. You may begin with the longer research-oriented paper and end with the shorter close reading paper if you wish. We'll discuss this system (and how to use it to your advantage) at the first class meeting.

The Major Assignments

Papers. Please turn in one of the two paper assignments on each of due date. You must do both assignments, but can turn in either on either due date.

Theory and Practice Paper (Analysis)

Choose a short work by an author we have studied, but a work that we have *not* specifically discussed in class. In a well-focused paper of 3-5 pages, analyze the relationship between this work and that writer's artistic *theory* --his or her own explanation of the purpose or methods of his or her work or art. What connections (or disconnections) do you see between them? Does the poet, prose writer, or novelist practice what he or she preaches? If the work(s) you choose to write about is not in the Norton anthology, you must check with me before beginning this project (not a bad idea in any event). You may not use secondary sources for this close-reading assignment.

Critical Conversation Paper (Synthesis)

Choose one of the literary works *we have discussed* in class, and using the MLA Bibliography and the resources of Lindell or Wilson libraries, find at least three recent scholarly articles or chapters discussing the work. Use these articles to discover some of the current critical "conversation" concerning your text, and then in a paper of 6-9 pages enter this critical conversation by advancing a meaningful argument or interpretation of your own. (If you have never used an index to literary scholarship such as the MLA Bibliography, please see me before beginning this assignment.)

Exam. *Emailed final exam due*

- The exam will be cumulative (covering the whole term).
- It will emphasize the concepts and readings we have covered most intensively in class discussion, so your class notes will provide the best study guide.
- The five sections will ask you to *define* key terms, *identify* short passages from the readings, *briefly answer* comprehension-type questions, *analyze* a previously-unseen poem, and *write a developed, organized, thesis-driven essay* in response to a prompt.

Poetry Presentation. Easiest of all. Choose a poem of at least 20 lines by one of our authors that is not on our reading list. Memorize and present it appropriately to the class.

