

Eng 149 – The Romantic Era
Fall 2005, San José State University
Section 1: T/Th 10:30-11:45, SH 435

Dr. Katherine D. Harris

Email: kharris@email.sjsu.edu

Website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris>

Office: FO 115

Phone: (408) 924-4475

Office Hours: T/Th 12:30-2:30

Friday 12-1

Course Description & Student Objectives:

This course will explore the Romantic Era, a classic British period when British subjects began to experience disenchantment with the cynicism, satire, science and religion of their eighteenth-century predecessors (e.g., Swift & Pope). We will focus on poetry and prose written between 1789 (the Fall of the Bastille in the French Revolution) and 1837 (Queen Victoria's ascension to the throne). Between these two significant historical events, a philosophical upheaval caused many debates regarding the rights of men and women. Through representative authors, we will trace the movement of varying ideas of the self, society, religion, and gender roles, including Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindications* (1792) and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). We will contrast the "big six" against the authors who were not and are not constrained by the Romantic ideal of the "sublime." Like us, these British authors were overwhelmed with new inventions in technology, which caused them to question their beliefs, ideals, politics and religious commitment. By creating a conversation among these various authors, we will study their struggle to re-define themselves – a mystery which we struggle with even today.

Required Texts & Materials:

- *British Literature 1780-1830*. Editors Mellor & Matlack – Reserve
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. Ed. by J. Paul Hunter. Norton, 1996 – Reserve (?)
- *A Writer's Reference* by Diana Hacker, 5th ed. – Suggested
- Dictionary, Collegiate-level – Suggested
- Email Account

Grading Policy & Requirements

- 10% Class Discussion, Participation & 3 Questions
- 10% In-Class Response Essays & NASSR Posting (10)
- 10% Recitation & Explication Essay (3 pgs)
- 10% Hypertext Review (3 pgs)
- 20% Final Paper (10-12 pgs)
- 20% Mid-term Exam (Essay)
- 20% Final Exam (Essay)

Class Discussion & Participation:

Though the historical period that we're covering is brief, the readings can be dense, complicated and engaging. For these reasons, your participation during class is imperative. Since this class is largely discussion-based, arrive to class prepared with the proper readings. Bring the *British Literature* anthology to every class meeting unless otherwise specified. If you miss class, contact a classmate for notes, reading assignments and handouts – or check our Course Website.

Three Questions:

At the beginning of every class meeting, three questions (handwritten) about the day's readings are due. These questions are meant to help you think about the texts for that day's discussion as well as let me know if you understand the texts. I will collect, read and return your questions without

comments (except a check mark at the bottom to indicate credit). Keep these questions; they could potentially become an interesting topic for your final essay! You must attend class to receive credit for that day's questions.

In-Class Response Essays:

Every Thursday, we will spend the first 10-20 minutes writing an essay response to an assigned question about the current reading assignment. Each in-class essay will receive a grade based on the *quality* of your response. This weekly writing will also allow you to practice your in-class writing skills and prepare you for our essay exams. There will be no make-up for an in-class response essay.

NASSR Listserve Posting

One of your in-class response essays will actually be done on your own and requires you to subscribe to a listserv that specializes in Romanticism discussions. You need to subscribe to the NASSR listserv and post at least one message during this semester. The listserv's readers are scholars and academics who study all aspects of literature 1780-1837. There is a particular etiquette to posting on a professional listserv, therefore before you post anything, observe this netiquete. After posting your message (a question or response to the online community), submit a copy of your post (with all the email headers) to me by the last day of class. Instructions for registering are on our Course Website.

Recitation & Explication Essay:

Poetry dominated the Romantic Era and was overwhelmingly important to both authors and readers. In order to understand much of the poetry in this course, you will need to acquire an understanding of how to read, analyze and recite poetry. Each student will theatrically present a 14-line (or more) poem and lead a brief discussion on its relevance to that week's readings. We do this so each person has a chance to engage very closely with a poem and so that classmates may hear how a poem sounds. Rehearsing the poem will allow you to discover the intertwining relationship between poetic structure and poetic meaning. A 3-page typed explication essay will be due on the day of your recitation.

Hypertext Review:

Various hypertextual projects have given scholars a better understanding of the culture and lives of Romantic-era authors. We will explore some of these projects in conjunction with our weekly readings. For this 3-page typed essay, you will write a review of a Romantic-era hypertextual project. To prepare for this essay, early in the semester we will discuss how to effectively evaluate and review websites.

Final Essay:

You have the option of writing a 10-12 page typed essay or creating a hypertextual project due at the end of the semester. No outside research will be required. To help with progress on this project, your thesis statement and first draft will be due at different points during the semester. My office door is always open to discuss potential topics, give web designing tutorials or workshop a draft. Please stop by throughout the semester.

Mid-term and Final Exams:

Each exam will consist of definitions, short answer and essay questions. The Final Exam will be comprehensive. You will be provided with a study guide just prior to each exam date.

Late Assignments/Essays

If you cannot meet a deadline, you must contact me prior to our class meeting to discuss the situation. If this is not done, for everyday that an essay is late, you will be penalized one grade step (A becomes A-, A- becomes a B+, etc.). Unless you have prior permission (or the assignment specifically requests it), absolutely no assignment will be accepted via email.

Departmental Grading Policy

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the official SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC, for No Credit, shall replace D or F.

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Essays in this class will be graded according to the following SJSU academic standards for assessment:

- The “**A**” essay will be well-organized and well-developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student’s ability to use language effectively and to construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free from grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.
- The “**B**” essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the “A” essay. The chief difference is that the “B” essay will show some weaknesses in one of those categories. It may neglect one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.
- The “**C**” essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weaknesses in fundamentals, usually development, with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the “B” essay.
- The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or too short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and/or usage errors that are serious and/or frequent enough to interfere substantially with the writer’s ability to communicate.
- The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

Classroom Environment

Prompt arrival is essential. Entering class late is disruptive to the discussion and disrespectful to other students as well as to me. Do not interrupt class if you are late. Wait until an appropriate moment in which to enter. If I see a pattern of absences or late attendance, we will meet to discuss the problem and the impact on your grade. While in class, please turn off or leave outside any pagers, cell phones or other electronic devices.

Email

I will amass a class email list and will occasionally send out information regarding our meetings or the readings. (Please provide an email address that you check regularly.) When emailing me, please consider it a formal communication: include the appropriate salutation, your name and your question/comment. Know that long conversations over email are not fruitful (merely because of the limitations of the technology). If you have an extended question or dilemma, please visit me during office hours.

Course Website – <http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/harris/>

As we move along in the semester, course materials will be posted on the course website. After you have entered, simply click on English 149 to print copies of lost documents, find the campus computer rooms, check my office hours, find Romantic Era sites or double-check the meaning of “plagiarism.”

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means representing any idea, expression of an idea, or work of another as if it were your own, on essays, exams, or other assignments. Plagiarism is a serious violation of academic standards and the rules of every university, including SJSU. Plagiarism is dishonest, since you steal the language and ideas of the person who honestly worked hard to produce this text. Sometimes students resort to plagiarism because of feelings of desperation caused by leaving the assignment to the last minute. Whenever in doubt, speak to me. Turning in plagiarized work may result in immediate failure in the course and could result in dismissal from SJSU, since I am required to report all cases of plagiarism to the appropriate university authorities. See King Library’s definition, University policy and tutorial: http://www.sjlibrary.org/services/literacy/info_comp/plagiarism.htm

Random plagiarism checks will be performed by asking students to submit various written exercises or essays to Turnitin.com, a service which scans documents for all references to Web sources and other essays (from paper mills).

LARC (Learning Assistance Resource Center)

The Learning Assistance Resource Center is an on-campus facility that provides peer tutoring for SJSU students. LARC offers assistance with writing, and if you feel as if you need intensive help beyond what I can offer during office hours, please request a writing tutor. The Center is located in The Student Services Center in the 10th Street Parking Garage, Room 600. The phone number is (408) 924-2587.

Disabled Student Services

Students who require assistance due to a disability should contact the Disability Resource Center as soon as possible. The Center is located at Admin. 110, and its phone number is (408) 924-5990. In addition, please contact me: I can assist you, and we can make any necessary accommodations.

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Indicate if you are an English major, minor or other. Are you a sophomore, junior or senior?
2. Do you have access to a computer at home? Yes No
(If not, become familiar with SJSU's computer labs.)
3. *Briefly* summarize the important policies presented on this syllabus.
4. Write one or two sentences defining "plagiarism."
5. Have you taken any literature courses on nineteenth-century British authors? If so, what course(s)?
6. Write a *brief* paragraph explaining what "literature" means to you.
7. Do you have a favorite author? Who? Why?

By signing below, the individual acknowledges receiving (and reading) a copy of the class syllabus that details the schedule of work, participation requirements, grading criteria and other important information. The individual also acknowledges understanding of plagiarism and its consequences.

Name: _____

Signature: _____