

Eng 232 – Romantic Genders
Spring 2006, San José State University
Section 1: Th 4:00-6:45, SH 120

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

Girly girls, supermen, tough-talking viragos, queer fairies and cross-dressers are all part of the celebrated cast we'll meet this semester as we read poetry, novels and essays of the Romantic period. What was it about the 1790s that caused all hell to break loose in the field of British letters anyway? Edmund Burke blamed the French, but the revolutions on English soil were just as colorful if a lot less bloody. In this course, we'll be reading work by canonical big six – such as Wordsworth and Byron – and by their noncanonical – but just as fiery – counterparts such as Inchbald and Landon as we focus on the reactionary, radical, transgressive and just plain weird constructions of gender people created during one of the most explosive periods of British literature.

We will explore many digital representations of nineteenth-century culture in order to orient our historical context. In addition, we will be guided by selections from Marilyn Gaull's *English Romanticism: The Human Context*. This course serves as both an introduction to Romantic studies as well as an exploration of particular themes within its literature.

REQUIRED BOOKS & MATERIALS

Abrams, M.H., ed. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 8th ed. Heinle, 2005.

Edgeworth, Maria. *Belinda*. Ed. Kathryn J. Kirkpatrick. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1999.

Gaull, Marilyn. *English Romanticism: The Human Context*. W.W. Norton & Co., 1988.

Godwin, William. *Memoirs of the Author of Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Eds. Pamela Clemmit and Gina Luria Walker. Toronto: Broadview, 2001.

Hacker, Diana. *A Writer's Reference*. 5th ed. Bedford/St. Martin's, 2002. (*Recommended*)

Inchbald, Elizabeth. *A Simple Story*. Ed. J.M.S. Tompkins. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

Mellor, Anne and Richard Matlak, eds. *British Literature 1780-1830*. Thomson Heinle & Heinle, 1996.

Shelley, Mary Wollstonecraft. *The Last Man*. Ed. Morton Paley. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1998.

Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Letters Written During a Short Residence in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*. (Either find a used edition or print from UVA's E-Text Center

<<http://etext.library.adelaide.edu.au/w/wollstonecraft/mary/w864l/index.html>>)

Most of the above texts are on reserve at King Library. All of the secondary reading (articles, hypertexts, digital projects) will be available through our course website. Please print out the articles assigned and bring them with you to class so you may reference them during our discussions. For background material on the Romantic tradition/movement/writing/authors, refer to the Gaull text. For an explanation of poetic or prosaic terms, refer to the Abrams text.

GRADE DISTRIBUTION

10% Participation

15% Weekly Writings

30% Presentation & Short Essay

45% Final Essay

Class Discussion & Participation

Class participation is worth 10% of your grade. Since this seminar will be most effective as a discussion group (rather than 3 hours of lecturing), your participation in discussions is imperative. To receive an A or a B in participation, you must do more than just attend class. You must also demonstrate that you have been keeping up with the readings and thinking about the questions raised by various postings, lectures and presentations.

Weekly Writings

Each week, you will hand in one typed, single-spaced page of writing concerning that week's readings. Begin each Writing with a quote from the readings. Your response to this quote can incorporate a close reading, your thoughts or any connections you've made among the literature. This writing is a moment for you to ponder, muse and contemplate the literature that we will read throughout the semester. Each Weekly Writing will receive a grade based on its thoughtfulness and clarity of writing. If you do not attend class, you will not receive credit for your Weekly Writing (without exception). There are 13 in all. The 14th Weekly Writing will be in the form of a post to a national Romantics listserv (NASSR, see below).

NASSR Listserv Posting

One of your Weekly Writings will be done on your own and requires you to subscribe to a listserv that specializes in Romantic-era 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 (many of whom we are reading this semester). There is a particular etiquette to posting on a professional listserv, therefore before you post anything, observe this netiquete. (For instance, you might let them know that you're a graduate student.) 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.

Course Listserv

The purpose of becoming part of this listserv is to facilitate discussion beyond the classroom. It's also a handy way to keep in contact with all of your peers. To subscribe, send an email to: listproc@listproc.sjsu.edu Leave the subject line blank, but in the body (text area) enter the following request: SUBSCRIBE RomanticGender yourfirstname yourlastname. To post a message to the list, send an email to RomanticGender@listproc.sjsu.edu. Please subscribe before the second class meeting.

Presentation & Short Essay

Each week, 1-2 students will present on one article in the secondary readings and its relationship to the primary text – 15 minutes max. Your presentation will provide a critique of the article, not just a summary. To enhance your presentation, you may use handouts, digital information or dramatic performance. After your brief presentation, you will lead a discussion based on 3 (or more) questions that will be posted to the course listserv on the Wednesday prior to your scheduled date.

By the next meeting, turn in your presentation as a formal piece of writing (8pp max). Take advantage of the feedback and discussion offered by your classmates by including those suggestions in your Short Essay. The presentation will be graded on its effectiveness and clarity; the Short Essay will be graded on standard English Department grading policy (see below). As graduate students, I expect a higher level of writing and an understanding of MLA citation methods. For that reason, leave enough time to edit your writing and formalize your citations (and Works Cited). Further instructions will be given during our second meeting.

Final Essay

Your final 15-page essay will be based on a topic of your choosing that incorporates Romantic-era literature and secondary research. To help with progress on this project, a First Draft (4pp) and Annotated Bibliography will be due March 23. The Final Essay and an Abstract will be due at the final exam meeting where we will share our Abstracts and research with each other. Abstracts will also be distributed via the listserv prior to that final meeting. My office door is always open to discuss potential topics, give web designing tutorials or workshop a draft. Please stop by throughout the semester. (More thorough instructions will be distributed.)

GRADING POLICY

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the 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 shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students’ GPA.”

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. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance (no extra credit offered) and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of 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 construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of 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 descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight 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 weakness 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 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 usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.
- 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.

COURSE POLICIES

Late Policy

Since this is a seminar, you need to be prepared at every class meeting with the readings and writings. If you cannot meet a deadline, **you must contact me prior to our class meeting** to discuss the situation. Because an incomplete allows for extended time to complete the requirements of the course (and is unfair to your colleagues), a request for one is not generally granted.

Academic Honesty

All students are responsible for knowing and observing University policies regarding academic dishonesty. See University publication: “Academic Dishonesty and its Consequences.”

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of somebody else’s words or ideas and is considered an instance of academic dishonesty that instructors must report. Repeated instances of plagiarism will result in a student’s expulsion from the University. You commit plagiarism by

- buying, stealing, or borrowing a paper;
- hiring someone to write a paper;
- building on someone’s ideas without providing a citation;
- or copying from another source or using a source too closely when paraphrasing.

In other words, submit only your own work. To learn how to cite sources accurately and forthrightly, consult your handbook. If you have any questions about when or how to document a source, do not hesitate to ask me for clarification. The instructor reserves the right to revise the requirements and to notify students of such revision in a timely manner.

Classroom Environment

Respect your fellow students and I: Attend class, arrive on time (excessive tardiness will affect your participation grade) and do not partake in disruptive behavior. If you are late, wait for an appropriate moment to enter so you do not disturb the class. Turn off cell phones or put them on silent mode during the class period.

Email

Because we will use the course listserv for large announcements, email will be reserved for individual contact. (*Please provide an email address that you check daily.*) 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 232** to print the secondary readings, visit outside hypertextual projects, print copies of lost documents, find the campus computer rooms, check my office hours, find writing help, discover local literary events or double-check the meaning of “plagiarism.”

Disabilities Policy

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities register with the DRC to establish a record of their disability.