

Course Outline: Romantic Literature and Visual Culture

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Note for students: This short course outline is provided for planning purposes only. Course information is tentative and subject to change; the final course syllabus will be available by the first day of classes.

Course Code

AP/EN 4562 3.0

Course Description

Taking a multidisciplinary approach to the study of British Romanticism, this course explores literary texts alongside various forms of Romantic visual culture. By considering the intertextual and transmedial relationships that exist among a range of works, the course situates Romantic literature within a wide network of converging artistic forms and media.

Peter de Bolla argues that the Romantics were obsessed with “visibility, spectacle, [and] display” (qtd. in Thomas 2). Visual forms of entertainments such as theatrical performances, scientific demonstrations, “art-exhibitions, prints, [...] illustrated books, and tourism associated with the rage for picturesque scenery” flourished in this period (ix). We will study such forms, as well as Romantic paintings, cartoons, and optical technologies (e.g., phantasmagoria shows, panoramas, dioramas, kaleidoscopes) and how they both shaped and reflect the period in which they were produced. Literary texts may include ekphrastic poetry, illustrated books and poems, Gothic novels and plays, and aesthetic treatises. Transmedia adaptation and storytelling will be a key concern. Topics may include the following: In what ways did the rise of Romanticism coincide with or respond to developments in art, science, and technology? How did Romanticism influence the visual arts? How do Romantic writers convey the popular aesthetics of the time? What are the enduring legacies of Romanticism in today’s visual media? What are the limitations and strengths of the written word vs. visual forms of representation? How do representations of gender, race, and sexuality differ in written vs. visual texts?

Course Delivery

Delivery Mode: SEMR

Course Materials

Book List (Tentative)

- Appelbaum (ed.), *English Romantic Poetry: An Anthology* (Dover) (selected poems)
- De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (Dover)
- Byron, *Manfred* (Broadview)
- Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Broadview) or Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Oxford)

Students will also be responsible for one film, *Belle* (dir. Asante, 2013).

Tentative Grade Breakdown and Deadlines

Assessment	Weight	Mode	Tentative Deadline
Participation (contributions to class discussions; reading responses)	15%	In person	Weekly
Short essay (1,000-1,250 words)	25%	Take home	Various
Presentation (on one of the weekly readings or on an aspect of visual culture)	25%	In person	Various
Comparative Analysis (academic essay format or presented in another format of your choice; 2,000-2,250 words or equivalent)	35%	Take home	TBA
	100%		

Category:	C
Historical Requirement:	Period II

Open To:	Yr 4 Hon (EN, ENPR, CRWR students only)
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