I. Course Description

Welcome to English 200B. This is a required course for English majors in both the Literature and the Rhetoric and Professional Writing streams of the program. Its intent is to give you a broad sense of the history of British literature from the Romantic period to the 20th century and a detailed knowledge of selected literary works and authors representative of each historical period. We will also work on developing your analytical skills and your ability to articulate, using the technical language that is the foundation of literary criticism, how specific literary texts are put together and how they create meanings. We expect that any student in university English courses can identify themes and talk about the overall meanings of texts at this stage in their academic careers. Now the challenge is to look more closely at how those meanings are produced through specific language choices, as well as to situate those meanings in relation to relevant historical, political, aesthetic, and ideological contexts.

II. Resources

A: Required texts

Note: If you choose not to purchase the package, you'll still be responsible for acquiring and bringing to class copies of the works studied on that day. Copies of “the big book” version of the Norton Anthology 7th ed. volume 2 will probably be available in the used bookstore, as this book has been ordered in past years. The 6th edition of volume 2 would also supply you with most of the works we'll be studying. You could use The Norton Anthology of English Literature: Major Authors, but many of the texts we'll be studying aren't in there. You may also use any edition of Middlemarch, though it's always helpful to have the same edition as the instructor for easy reference.

B: Other resources

a) Norton has developed a web site that is a very useful companion to the Norton Anthology of English Literature. The web site includes additional information about many topics in English literary studies, excerpts from other texts not in the anthology, nifty illustrations, and links to other web sites. Here's the address: http://www.wwwnorton.com/nael. If you use it, remember to reference any material you take from the web site in your essays.
b) A good dictionary, a writing handbook, and a glossary of literary terms are essential tools in English studies. English majors in particular should acquire these reference works early in their programs. The bookstore stocks copies of *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, by M.H. Abrams, but any glossary or dictionary of literary terms will do. Dictionaries are essential, and you'll want to have a copy of one that you can bring to class. You should also get into the habit of regularly browsing on-line dictionaries: they provide fascinating etymologies of words and give you examples of usage. By all means expand your vocabulary, but ensure you get the meaning and spelling right. *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook* is recommended by the Department of English as a good guide to academic writing. Plus all royalties earned from the sale of the *Handbook* go to the department's scholarship fund. Please learn to recognize your own writing problems (I'll help you identify them) and use a writing handbook to learn the rules of grammar and punctuation if you are unsure.

III. Schedule of classes

*The Romantic Period*

**Background readings:** The Romantic Period (1-17; you may omit sections on essay, drama, and novel). Read author notes for all authors whose works are to be discussed.

Jan 3 Introduction to the course and to each other.


10 **The French Revolution & the Spirit of the Age.** Edmund Burke (121-28), Thomas Paine (133-37), and Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (166-92).


IN-CLASS TEST

The Victorian Period and the 1890's
Background readings: The Victorian Age (1043-1063); Author Notes for all authors whose work will be discussed.


7 Faith and Dying in the Age of Evolution. Alfred lord Tennyson, In Memoriam (1231-80).


14 The Function of Criticism. Matthew Arnold, The Function of Criticism at the Present Time (1514-28); Culture and Anarchy (1528-34).

19/21 Reading Week

26 Love and Marriage. George Eliot, Middlemarch.

* LAST DAY FOR ESSAY INTERVIEWS


Fall” (1655-56); Lewis Carroll, “The White Knight’s Song” (1668-70); William Ernest Henley, “Invictus” (1747); Rudyard Kipling, “Recessional” (1892-93).

Art for Art’s Sake. Oscar Wilde, “The Critic as Artist” (1752-60), Preface to the Picture of Dorian Gray (1760-61), The Importance of Being Earnest, 1762-1805.

No class

The Twentieth Century
Background readings: The Twentieth Century (1897-1909); Author notes for all authors whose work will be discussed.


ESSAYS DUE


Language and Psychology. Virginia Woolf, “The Mark on the Wall” (2143-48)

Language and Politics. George Orwell, “Politics and the English Language” (2462-71).

Fuse Drives the Flower" (2157-58); Philip Larkin, “High Windows” (2568-69); Seamus Heaney, “Digging” (2819-20).

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Review of Course

IV. Assignments

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Value</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In-class test</td>
<td>January 29</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay interview</td>
<td>no later than Feb. 14</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final examination</td>
<td>winter exam period</td>
<td>40%</td>
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A. In-class test
The test will cover only the Romantic period. You will be asked to analyze a poem that we have not discussed in class but written by an author we have studied. You should be able to analyze the poem in detail, as well as comment on its relationship to other works of the Romantic period. There will be a choice of poems.

B: Essay interview
You will be expected to choose one of the assigned essay topics and come and talk to me about your essay. Planning is an essential part of the essay writing process. You should come to the interview prepared to talk about: 1) the argument or thesis of your essay; 2) how you propose to structure your argument around specific ideas or points; 3) the kind of textual evidence you will use to support your analysis. Please note, this is NOT a research paper. I am much more interested in your learning to develop—and to trust—your own powers of critical analysis. There’s no need to go to the library for this assignment: there will be lots of opportunity to develop research skills in senior English courses. More important at this stage is learning to think for yourself.

C: Essay
In clear prose, compose an 8 to 10-page paper (2000 - 2500 words) on one of the topics given. The essay must be formatted according to MLA style conventions, which are outlined in the handbook or available from the MLA style guide (if you’re thinking of going on in English studies, you might want to acquire a copy of the MLA guide now). Even if you choose a more creative essay topic, your paper must still formulate an argument and be focused on the critical analysis of literary works.

D: Final Exam
The final exam will cover all of the material studied throughout the course. It will be in three parts: identify and interpret selected passages; essay question; identify and define critical and historical terms and concepts that we have used in the course.
V. Policies

1. Classroom work
   You are expected to attend all classes and to have read the material in advance. You will also be expected to participate in class discussion, which is a good way to get some practice expressing your ideas and perceptions — an important part of an English education. Questions will be welcomed and encouraged. I will sometimes ask randomly selected students to read aloud in class from the works we are studying.

Plagiarism and cheating
   Cheating, of which plagiarism is a form, will result in automatic failure of the assignment and could lead to other penalties, including failure in the course or consequences even more severe. Plagiarism is the presentation (whether deliberate or not) of another person’s work as your own. This includes obvious cheating, such as copying or downloading parts of or whole published essays, copying another student’s paper, and purchasing or downloading from the Internet an essay that someone else has written. Please refer to the attached page for the Faculty of Arts policy on plagiarism and other academic offenses, as well as to University Policy #71 in the calendar (also available online at http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infocals/UW/policy_71.html).

2. Late essays and missed tests and exams
   Because you get your essay topics on day one, and because you come to see me about your essay ahead of time, and because it’s important that you learn to schedule your time as a student, I think it’s fair to be strict about due dates. Of course, you have to write tests and exams on the scheduled days. The only exceptions will be for medical or other emergencies. In that case, contact me immediately to make alternative arrangements and know that you’ll have to provide official documentation to substantiate your incapacity. Computer problems do not count as emergencies. If you decide to hand in your essay late, you’ll have to pay a price: a late penalty of 3% (out of 100) per day, including weekends. Essays will not be accepted at all after the last day of classes.

VI. Essay topics and instructions

Write an original, thoughtful, and well-organized 2000 to 2500-word essay (8 to 10 double-spaced typed pages in 10-12 point font with 1 inch margins) on one of the topics listed below. As a general rule, you should discuss only those texts that are on the course syllabus or which I have directed you to consult. If you vary from this practice, you must gain my prior permission. But please feel free to read ahead of the class schedule and work on texts in this essay that we haven’t yet studied in class. In all cases, it will not be sufficient to simply recycle lecture material: you are expected to be able to show that you have thought independently about the works studied.

Give your essay a descriptive title that includes the title of the literary work or works analyzed. A separate title page is not necessary. All page references (or line numbers if you are quoting a poem; or act, scene and line numbers if you are quoting a play and they are given in the text) go in parentheses at the end of your sentence but before the period. A works-cited list is required, even if you have only quoted from the primary text. Look up how to cite works in anthologies and
editions of novels. It's your responsibility to learn how to do this correctly. Please remember to number your pages, and make sure that your name and the course number are on the first page. Please keep a copy of your essay for your own protection.

Topics

1. Imagine a conversation (or an exchange of letters) between any two of the authors we are studying in this course on a topic or topics of your choosing. Bring out concurrences and differences in their views. Use the works we have studied as the basis of the positions the authors take, and try to capture some of the authors' style of address; in other words, pay attention to language as well as content. You may, if you wish, introduce this “recently discovered manuscript” as though you were preparing it for publication.

2. Compare and contrast for both content and style two poems on a common theme (for example, Keats’s “Ode to Autumn” with Ted Hughes’s “The Seven Sorrows,” or Wordsworth’s “Daffodils” with Ted Hughes’s “Daffodils”). The objective here is to engage in careful textual analysis of both poems to explain how each poet seeks to achieve the desired meaning and effect. You may also wish to discuss how the lives of the poets or the times in which they wrote affected their viewpoint.

3. This is a two-part essay: 1) Create a journal entry of no more than four pages written in the voice of any character, narrator, or speaker of a prose or poetic work. The journal entry should represent further reflection on a particular issue that has been presented in the original text. The journal entry must also be consistent with the character’s or narrator’s or speaker’s diction and style, so you have to pay close attention not only to content but also to language. Quote selectively from the original work, but also use your own imagination to truly inhabit the character’s mind and, as it were, write beyond the original text. Keep in mind, however, that you must be able to substantiate everything you create in terms of the original text. 2) Then write a four to six-page analysis of your journal entry, commenting on why you made certain writing decisions, and stating what you were hoping to achieve. The emphasis is on analysis: don’t simply summarize what you have done in the journal entry.

4. From one of the longer poems we are studying choose a relatively short passage and demonstrate how it is central to an understanding of what the poem as a whole accomplishes both in meaning and form. The objective is to engage in close textual analysis, identifying and considering the overall effect of the poet’s stylistic choices. There are many techniques that might be discussed depending on the passage selected, but among them might be rhyme and meter, diction, line length, punctuation, syntax, tone, etc.
5. Analyze in depth and detail the narrative perspective and rhetorical style of any prose work that we have studied in the course. The purpose of this essay is to look very closely at how narrative works. Issues you might consider (which ones will depend on the text you choose) include the following: tropes, point of view, tone of voice, reliability and degree of omniscience of the narrator, narrative structure, shifts in narrative perspective, handling of narrative time, audience addressed, etc. In other words, consider how a story is told or an argument made, not just the content of the work.

6. With reference to any two literary works, prose or poetry, we are studying, consider how the author's or narrator's or speaker's gender affects content and style. Discuss how notions of maleness or femininity are disclosed in the two literary works. Compare and contrast the works analyzed, which means looking for similarities and differences in the presentation of ideas about gender. This will involve a close look at character, but also a look at matters of language. What descriptive words are used? Is there a gender point of view or sensibility implied by the text? Is there any ambivalence about what it means to be male or female?