Romantic Literature I:
The purpose of this course is to develop an understanding of the poetry and
critical prose of the early Romantic period, especially the poetry of Blake, William
Wordsworth and Coleridge. In lectures and class discussions, we will explore the
writings of these poets and some of their contemporaries in order to address some
of the continuities, and complexities, of the literary relations between a range of
writers as well as their historical and literary context. Key issues will include
experimentation with and the politicization of literary form, contemporary theories
of changes in literary values, the relationship between literature and politics in the
period, representations of disempowered classes (women, colonized peoples, the
rural and the urban poor), constructions of "the primitive," as well as the rubrics
under which these writers have been organized into different literary circles. Two
groups will be of particular interest: the Johnson Circle, a coterie of radical
writers and artists that included Blake, Godwin, and Wollstonecraft; the Lake Poets
(William Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge) and associated writers Dorothy
Wordsworth, Hazlitt, and Robinson. We will also study some of the poetry of Baillie,
Burns and Scott, three influential Scottish writers, as well as some selections from
Williams' writings.

Required Text:
Perkins, David, ed. English Romantic Writers. 2nd ed. Toronto: Harcourt Brace,
1995. (NB: The second edition is very different from the first in ways that
affect approximately 20% of the required readings; it has a silver cover and
is, unfortunately, unlikely to be found in used bookstores.)

Assignments:
Essay #1: 1,250-1,500 words, due October 13th (25%)
Essay #2: 2,000-2,500 words, due November 17th (45%)
Exam, during examination period (30%)

Notes Towards a Level Playing Field:
These rules will be strictly followed in order to ensure that we can all make
equally-informed decisions. 1) Saturday and Sunday as well as weekdays are
counted in all "per day" calculations. 2) Extensions will not be granted, or
discussed, on or after the due date and must be arranged with me in advance. 3)
Extensions for a period of ten days or less will be granted for one essay; a simple
request will suffice, and no explanations, justifications, or documentation will be
required to arrange that extension. 4) Longer or additional extensions may require
documentation (e.g., a note from a doctor) that establishes a need for the extension
and students should be prepared to provide it. 5) Penalties of 2% per day of
lateness will be deducted from essay grades unless you provide documentation for
a cause that justifies the paper's lateness and explains why an appropriate
extension was not secured in advance. 6) Compelling documentation would be
required before I could consider accepting an essay after other essays have been
returned. (NB: If a paper is going to be more than ten days late or will not be
submitted by your extension due date, you should let me know when you expect to
submit it; if you do not, then I cannot warn you if that submission date falls after
the date on which I will return the other papers.) 7) There will be no rewrites.

Essays should be well-written, well-argued and well-documented; you should
strive to select, develop, substantiate, organize and communicate your ideas and
insights persuasively in ways that are appropriate to formal academic writing. You
should make and keep a copy of the work that you submit, especially if you do not
give it directly to me. All students should carefully read the section on plagiarism
§1.7) in the MLA Handbook as well as the university policy on academic offenses
(printed in the Undergraduate Calendar). You must ensure that all primary and
secondary sources, whether quoted, paraphrased, or otherwise influential, are
properly documented according to the MLA system. I reserve the right to interview a student on her/his essay’s contents before assigning the grade. I recognize the distinction between sloppy documentation and the theft of material with an intention to defraud, but such sloppiness is still very serious and it will be treated as such. Documentation not only operates as a gesture of respect for the work of others and an indication that you understand where your ideas begin and end, but also situates course work in the context of the notion of intellectual property upon which many of the university’s evaluative assumptions and practices are based and is therefore essential to the fair treatment of the class as a whole.

If you have any questions or concerns about the above—or anything else (from readings, essays and lectures to the illegibility of my handwriting)—please drop by my office to discuss the matter with me. My office hours are posted on my office door, and I would be happy to arrange another time if those hours are not feasible for you. If there are extensive difficulties with the office hours that I have selected, I will consider changing them.

**Tentative Reading Schedule**

Please read the assigned material before the specified week’s classes, and note that this is not a lecture schedule. "Selections" and "from" designations refer to Perkins’ choices.

**Moving Forward: Revolution and Renovation**

Week 1 (Monday excluded): Blake, *Poetical Sketches*; Williams, from *Letters Written from France in the Summer of 1790 and Letters from France, 1792, 1795*

Week 2: Blake, *America* and from "A Vision of the Last Judgment"; Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*

Week 3: Blake, *Visions of the Daughters of Albion* and *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*


Week 6: Blake, "The Ecchoing Green" and "The Shepherd" in *Songs of Innocence*; Robinson, "The Old Beggar"; William Wordsworth, "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and "The Thorn"; Coleridge, Ch. XVII and Ch. XVIII of *Biographia Literaria*

**Turning Back the Clock: The Naive and the Exotic**

Week 7: Baillie, from "Introductory Discourse to Plays on the Passions"; Blake, the remaining poems in *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*; Baillie, "A Mother to her Waking Infant"; Dorothy Wordsworth, "To My Niece Dorothy, A Sleepless Baby"; Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight"

Week 8: William Wordsworth, "Anecdote for Fathers," "We are Seven," "The Idiot Boy" and "Tintern Abbey"; Coleridge, from Ch. IV, Ch. XIV, and Ch. XXII of *Biographia Literaria*


Week 10: Coleridge, "Christabel" and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner": Essay #2 due (November 17th)
