Literature of the Romantic Period I:
The purpose of this course is to develop an understanding of the literature of the early years of the Romantic period. In lectures and class discussions, we will address some of the continuities, and complexities, of the literary relations between a range of writers as well as their historical and literary context, from debates about the rights of the individual to the influence of the gothic. Two groups will be of particular, but not exclusive, interest: the Johnson Circle, a coterie of radical writers and artists that included Blake, Fenwick, Godwin, and Wollstonecraft; the Lake Poets (William Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge) and associated writers such as Hazlitt, Robinson, and Thelwall.

Required Texts:

Requirements:
Criticism Review: 1,250-1,500 words, due October 7th (20%)
Essay: 2,000-2,500 words, due November 13th (45%)
Examination: in examination period, as scheduled by the university in accordance with university policies (35%)

N.B.: This syllabus is intended to clarify the requirements for course readings and assignments, outline the regulations we all must follow, and offer some strategies for succeeding in the course. You are therefore responsible for knowing the contents of this syllabus.

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 one week or less for one written assignment will be granted automatically; a simple request will suffice, and no explanations, justifications, or documentation will be required to arrange that extension. 4) Longer or additional extensions will require documentation (for instance, a note from a doctor) that establishes a need for the extension. 5) Penalties of 2% per day of lateness will be deducted from essay grades unless you provide documentation for a cause that justifies an assignment’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 assignment after other assignments have been returned. (NB: If a paper is going to be more than a week 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 or alternative assignments. 8) Papers not handed directly to me must be dated by one of the staff in the department and placed in my mailbox. Do not place papers under my office door: such papers may be damaged, lost, or dated days after they were submitted.

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 with page or line
references as well as complete bibliographical information—and the textbook is no exception. 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, during my office hours or by appointment.

Guidelines for Written Assignments:

There are a number of advantages to reading critical sources: your argument might benefit from the results of someone else's research; you can refine your argument by thinking about why you agree or disagree with a point that another critic has made; critical sources often lead to more helpful critical sources; the best examples of critical argumentation and composition appear in print and so can help you to refine your essay-writing on a rhetorical and formal level (note that the conventions and methodologies of critical essays have changed over the years, so an essay published in the 1980s is a much better indication of current practices than an essay published in the 1930s). Consequently, the written assignments for this course begin with a review of an essay or part of a book-length study that is relevant to your selected essay topic.

Select your essay topic and then select one of the articles or chapters listed under that topic for your criticism review. In your review, you should offer a brief synopsis of the critic's argument (for example, theoretical approach, key points, conclusions [or absence thereof]) and then address, with specificity, what parts of the argument you find convincing, productive, useful, or not; thus far, your review will follow the form of most book reviews in academic journals. But, as a conclusion, also include a brief statement (250-300 words) about the material's relevance to the issues you expect to address in your paper. You are not required to follow that conclusion when writing your essay: the conclusion is a rehearsal of your engagement with the texts, the issues, and the criticism at that moment, and not a contract. You are, however, required to keep the same general essay topic, so choose carefully.

Your essay should take the review's conclusion as a launching-off point for your consideration of your essay topic (though, to reiterate, it is not necessary to land there at the end of your journey). You are strongly encouraged to consider further secondary sources. Good places to start include other articles listed below, other chapters in the books mentioned, and Romantic periodicals such as European Romantic Review, Studies in Romanticism, Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly and The Wordsworth Circle as well as good general periodicals such as ELH, PMLA, and Papers on Language and Literature; also consult the MLA Bibliography, available on-line in the library, and please feel free to talk to me about possible sources. Be careful to use secondary sources to develop your own position on the issues and texts, and not to replace or overwhelm your position. Secondary sources provide tools with which to hone your own reading, not answers. Note that secondary sources need not deal with the texts directly; there is little published on Fenwick's Secresy, for instance, but there is a lot on women's writing of the period, the epistolary novel, the influence of Wollstonecraft on Romantic novels, the gothic, and so forth, that would be relevant to an essay on that work.

Both assignments should be well-written, well-argued and fully as well as properly documented in accordance with the MLA style; you should strive to select, develop, substantiate, organize and communicate your ideas and insights persuasively in ways that are appropriate to formal academic writing. (It is expected that you will consult the appropriate reference work if you are not sure, for example, about the meaning of a word, the MLA format for citing a journal...
article, or the proper placement of a comma, and so you should have, at least, a dictionary, a grammar handbook, the MLA Handbook, and a dictionary of literary terms available for consultation while you are working on your assignment and essay.) In all course work (including the exam), avoid unnecessary descriptions of literary texts such as plot summaries, extended paraphrases, listings of characters; and so forth; refer to the text only insofar as is necessary to substantiate or illustrate your point. You can assume that I have read this material—it is your argument that is new to me, and it is your argument, and the evidence for it, that you should try to make clear to me.

You should make and keep a copy of the work that you submit, especially if you do not give it directly to me. A staple in the upper lefthand corner is the preferred binding and essays must have page numbers. Each page should have 1" margins on all sides and be double-spaced; one page in such a format, with a 12 cpi font, is usually about 250 words.

Essay Topics and Material for the Criticism Review:

Please note: all citations below are in proper MLA format except for the addition, in some citations, of a parenthetical reference to the specific chapter or set of pages assigned for the criticism review, so consider these models for your own citations. All books listed below are on overnight reserve but the periodicals will not be unless problems arise with the current library system of 3-day loans. None of the articles or chapters listed below focus directly on the topic and texts for that essay question: they were chosen because they offer relevant readings of pertinent texts or address issues related to the topic.

1. Discuss the representation and/or significance of restraint (and/or the absence of restraint) in two of the following (e.g., i and iv): i) Visions of the Daughters of Albion; ii) The Marriage of Heaven and Hell; iii) "The Sailor Who Had Served in the Slave Trade" and "Epistle to William Wilberforce"; iv) Wu’s selections from Williams’ Letters and Thelwall’s writings. (You may discuss any form of restraint, e.g., physical, moral, intellectual, perceptual, metrical, generic, institutional, gendered, racial, memory, etc.)

2. Discuss transgression and punishment in either i) Fenwick’s Secrecy or ii) Coleridge’s "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1817 version) and "Christabel" (for instance, how are they represented? which crimes or kinds of transgressions are emphasized? does the punishment fit the transgression? what message or warning is conveyed to the reader?).

3. Discuss the relationship between character and place in three or four poems from the readings listed for Weeks 6-8 (you may address, in addition, one or two poems from Wu’s anthology not listed in the course readings). You may, for instance, choose to discuss the speaker’s
identification with nature or the natural world, the significance of a memory of a particular location or region to a character, the narrator's association of a character with a particular setting, etc.


**Tentative Reading Schedule**

Please note that this is not a lecture schedule and that this schedule is "tentative": we can spend more time on some texts and less on others should the class's interest so incline. The designations "selections" and "from" refer to Wu's choices.

Please note: class is cancelled on October 23rd.

**Week 1:** Introduction; Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*

**Debating Rights**

**Week 2:** "The Rights of Man": Burke, from *Reflections on the Revolution in France*; Godwin, all selections; Williams, all "letters"; Alcock, "Instructions"; Thelwall, all selections; Dyer, both selections

**Week 3:** Colerige, "Fears in Solitude"; Paine, all selections from *The Rights of Man*; Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Man*

**Week 4:** "The Rights of Woman": Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*; Edgeworth, from *Letters for Literary Ladies*; Barbauld, "The Rights of Woman"; Coleridge, "Christabel"

**Weeks 5-6:** Slavery and Servitude: Barbauld, "Epistle to William Wilberforce"; Southey, "The Sailor Who Had Served in the Slave Trade"; Campbell, "On Slavery"; Blake, both versions of "The Chimney Sweeper" (57, 69) and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*

**Monitoring the "Other"**

**Weeks 6-8:** *The Pastoral and the Rural*: Southey, "Hannah" and "The Idiot"; Wordsworth, Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads* (1800); Wordsworth and Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) ("The Thorn," "The Idiot Boy," "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" and 2 poems chosen by the class by vote at the end of week 6); Coleridge, from Chapter 14 of *Biographia Literaria*.

**Weeks 8-10:** *The Exotic and the Gothic*: Baillie, "On Passion"; Robinson, "The Haunted Beach"; Blake, "The Mental Traveller"; Fenwick, *Secrecy*

**Weeks 10-12:** Coleridge, "Kubla Khan" and "Of the Fragment of 'Kubla Khan'"; Robinson, "Mrs. Robinson to the Poet Coleridge"; Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1817) and "On 'The Ancient Mariner''

**Review**

**Weeks 12-13:** Blake, *The Book of Urizen* (note: the last class will be devoted to discussion of exam format and sample questions)