Romantic Literature II:
In the Preface to *A Vision of Judgment* (1821), Robert Southey condemned some unnamed poets as "Men of diseased hearts and depraved imaginations, who, forming a system of opinions to suit their own unhappy course of conduct, . . . labour to make others as miserable as themselves, by infecting them with a moral virus that eats into the soul" (587). It is commonly believed that he was referring to Byron and Percy Shelley, but Southey only used the epithet, "the Satanic school" (587). Despite the hyperbole, Southey does make a useful point: the later Romantic writers exhibited an unusual concern with subjects that offended polite society during the latter years of the Regency and the reign of George IV. Emphasizing this shared concern, especially its association with anxieties about social progress and resistance to normative cultural practices (from marriage to genre), we will explore the prose and poetry of Percy Shelley, Byron, and John Keats, as well as, to a lesser extent, their associates, Mary Shelley, Thomas Love Peacock, Thomas Moore, and Leigh Hunt. Through lectures and class discussions, we will trace some of the complexities of the literary relations between this extended circle of writers (a circle that has been variously divided into the Shelley Circle, the Hunt Circle, the Cockney School, and the Satanic School, despite the close social and literary ties between its members). We will also address reactions to their verse by contemporaries such as Hazlitt, Lockhart, and Beddoes, as well as a small selection of other authors from the period, including Thomas De Quincey, John Clare, Felicia Hemans, and Laetitia Elizabeth Landon. (Work Cited: Southey, Robert. *The Poetical Works of Robert Southey*. Paris: Galignani, 1829.)

**Required Text:**

**Requirements:**
Test: February 9th (20%)
Essay: 3,000 words, due March 4th (50%)
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 five days or less will be granted automatically; a simple request will suffice, and no explanations, justifications, or documentation will be required to arrange that extension. 4) Longer extensions will require documentation (e.g., 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 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 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. No make-up test will be offered unless there is compelling documentation that establishes the impossibility of your attendance on that date.

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. A staple in the upper lefthand corner is the preferred binding.

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. 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.

**Week 1:** De Quincey, from *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*

**Week 2:** Hunt, "Lord Byron and Some of His Contemporaries"; Woodhouse, letter (October 1818); Lockhart, "On the Cockney School of Poetry"

**Week 3:** Keats, "To Byron"; Byron, from *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, from *Vision of the Last Judgment*, Dedication to *Don Juan*

**Week 4:** Byron, Canto the First from *Don Juan*; Hazlitt, "Lord Byron" from *The Spirit of the Age*

**Week 5:** Moore, all selections; Byron, "She Walks in Beauty," "Oh! Snatched Away in Beauty’s Bloom," "My Soul is Dark," *Manfred*

**Week 6:** Mary Shelley, "Transformation"; De Quincey, "Literature of Knowledge and Literature of Power"; Peacock, *The Four Ages of Poetry*, test (February 9th)

**Week 7:** Percy Shelley, *A Defense of Poetry*, *The Mask of Anarchy*; Byron, "Prometheus"

**Week 8:** Percy Shelley, *Prometheus Unbound*; Keats, "Bright Star" and "La Belle Dame Sans Merci"

**Week 9:** Keats, "The Eve of St. Agnes," all odes, letters (22 Nov. 1817; 21-27 Dec. 1817; 3 May 1818); essay due (March 4th)

**Week 10:** Keats, *Lamia*, *The Fall of Hyperion*, "This Living Hand"; Hunt, "Proem to Selections from Keats"

**Week 11:** Percy Shelley, *Adonais*; Beddoes, "Lines: Written in a Blank Leaf of the ‘Prometheus Unbound’"; Mary Shelley, Preface to the Last London Edition of *Frankenstein*

**Week 12:** Clare, Landon and Hemans (all selections)