

Romantic Women
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Fall 2009
FA 109
Th 6-8:40 pm

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Office hours T 1:30-2:30, Th 5-6, and by
appointment

Course Description

This course will examine the significant, but historically overlooked, contribution women writers made to the development of Romanticism. During our investigation we will encounter formal and thematic innovations women made in a variety of genres, including poetry, non-fiction prose, and the novel. Authors will include Jane Austen, Charlotte Smith, Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley, and Dorothy Wordsworth among others.

Texts

- *The Longman Anthology of British Literature: The Romantics and Their Contemporaries*, vol. 2A, eds. Susan Wolfson and Peter Manning, 2006
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, ed. Susan Wolfson, Longman, 2007
- *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen, ed. Kinsley, Oxford, 2008
- *The History of Mary Prince: A West Indian Slave Narrative* by Mary Prince, Dover, 2004
- Selected readings on e-reserves

Requirements and Grading

- In-class presentation 15%
- 3 email responses to reading 15%
- Thesis, outline, and annotated bibliography packet 10%
- 15 page final paper 25%
- Final examination 25%
- Participation 10%

Academic Integrity and Penalties

Refraining from plagiarism or cheating in any form fosters an environment of fairness vital to your academic success and that of your peers. Because “grey areas” can appear in a variety of situations, please review the Rutgers Camden academic integrity policy: <http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/RUCAM/Academic-Integrity-Policy.php>. You will be held accountable to this standard. If you have any questions about citations, group work, or exam preparation, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Late papers are subject to a reduction of 1/3 of a letter grade for each calendar day past the due date. For example, if the paper is due Monday and the student turns it in on Tuesday, the paper that would have been an A will now earn an A-. On Wednesday the grade will become a B+, on Thursday a B, and so on.

Being repeatedly absent from class (more than twice over the course of the semester) will seriously affect your participation grade. To receive an “A” for the participation portion, you must be both present and actively engaged with the class during discussion.

Assignments

Th 09.03 INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

- Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner, “Introduction,” *Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers 1776-1837* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994) 1-14. (e-reserves)
- Stuart Curran, “Women Readers, Women Writers,” *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 177-195. (e-reserves)

Th 09.10 CHARLOTTE SMITH and ANNA BARBAULD

- Kerri Andrews, “‘Herself . . . fills the foreground’: Negotiating Autobiography in the *Elegiac Sonnets* and *The Emigrants*,” *Charlotte Smith in British Romanticism*, ed. Jacqueline Labbe (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2008) 13-27. (e-reserves)
- Smith selections from *Elegiac Sonnets* and *Beachy Head*, LABL 82-91
- Barbauld poems and Croker’s response, LABL 63-81

Th 09.17 MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT and EARLY FEMINISM

- From *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, LABL 279-302
- From *The Wrongs of Woman; or Maria*, LABL 303-314
- Richard Polwhele, from *The Unsex’d Females*, LABL 322-326
- Mary Ann Radcliffe, from *The Female Advocate*, LABL 331-337
- Hanna More, from *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, LABL 338-343

Th 09.24 MARY PRINCE and THE ABOLITION CONTROVERSY

- Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince*
- Ann Yearsley, from *A Poem Written on the Inhumanity of the Slave Trade*, LABL 231-235
- Hanna More and Eaglesfield Smith, *The Sorrows of Yamba*, LABL 239-243

Th 10.01 JOANNA BAILLIE

- From *Plays on the Passions*, LABL 356-361
- *De Monfort* (e-reserves)
- Catherine Burroughs, “‘Out of the pale of social kindred cast’: Conflicted Performance Styles in Joanna Baillie’s *De Monfort*,” *Romantic Women Writers*, eds. Paula R. Feldman and Theresa M. Kelley (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1995) 223-235. (e-reserves)

Th 10.08 MARY SHELLEY

- *Frankenstein* vols. 1 & 2
- From Shelley’s journal, pp. 245-246 in Longman edition of *Frankenstein*
- William Godwin, from *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, ed. Pamela Clemit and Gina Walker (Peterborough, ON: Broadview, 2001) 112-122. (e-reserves)

- Th 10.15 SHELLEY, continued
- *Frankenstein* vol. 3
 - Mary Poovey, "My Hideous Progeny: Mary Shelley and the Feminization of Romanticism," *PMLA* 95 (1980): 332-47 (available full-text through JSTOR)
- Th 10.22 ELIZABETH INCHBALD
- *Lover's Vows* (e-reserves)
 - Gill Perry, "Ambiguity and Desire: Metaphors of Sexuality in Late Eighteenth-century Representation of the Actress," *Notorious Muse: The Actress in British Art and Culture 1776-1812* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003). (e-reserves)
- Th 10.29 JANE AUSTEN
- *Sense and Sensibility*
- Th 11.05 Screening: *Sense and Sensibility*, Ang Lee, 1995
- Julian North, "Conservative Austen, Radical Austen: Sense and Sensibility from Text to Screen," *Adaptations*, eds. Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan (London: Routledge, 1999) 38-50. (e-reserves)
- Th 11.12 MARY ROBINSON and DOROTHY WORDSWORTH
- Robinson selections, LABL 266-77
 - Wordsworth selections, LABL 538-69
 - **Thesis, outline, and annotated bibliography packet due**
- Th 11.19 GOTHIC CHAPBOOKS
- Sarah Wilkinson, "The White Cottage" (e-reserves)
- Th 11.26 THANKSGIVING BREAK
- Th 12.03 FELICIA HEMANS
- Hemans's head-note, poems, and reviews LABL 877-78, 884-908
- Th 12.10 FINAL EXAM REVIEW
- **Final papers due**
- Th 12.17 **FINAL EXAM 6-9 PM, FA 109**

In-class Presentation

Each student will make a 15-20 minute presentation to the class. This presentation can be about any aspect of the reading that interests you and that you feel will benefit your peers to know more about. Possibilities include:

- Presenting relevant biographical information on the author; for example, how did Charlotte Smith's early marriage to a gambling reprobate influence her choice of poetic themes? What role did poverty play in her decision to become a writer?

- Reviewing a critical article about the assigned reading; for example, how might a psychoanalytic reading of *Frankenstein* elucidate aspects of the text particularly relevant to a discussion about gender?
- Showing the influence of theater, painting, or other literary works on the author; for example, how were women writers and actresses lampooned in cartoons? In the theater, what was the preferred acting style for leading ladies? How did that influence the subject matters women chose for their plays?
- Explaining the historical or cultural context of a specific work; for example, how did the goals of the abolitionist movement and early feminism coincide? How did the French Revolution influence women's thinking about the legitimacy of authority? What was the availability of birth control? Did reproductive issues influence women's artistic productivity?
- Evaluating cinematic representations of Romantic women; for example, in a recent adaptation of *Mansfield Park*, the characters are shown rehearsing Inchbald's play "Lover's Vows." How are visuals used to draw a contrast between Austen's and Inchbald's work? In "Becoming Jane" an apocryphal meeting occurs between Jane Austen and Ann Radcliffe. What type of female authorial lineage is the director trying to construct?
- Thinking about reception and authorship; for example, what can we learn about how women authors are perceived by reading reviews? Do these reviews differ in tone if the woman writes anonymously? Takes a male or androgynous pseudonym? How were women's texts published—cheaply or in gilt leather-bound volumes? How does the packaging influence the texts' reception? Did genre more than gender dictate how booksellers marketed specific texts?

These are just examples to get your mind turning. If you are not sure what direction to take, I would encourage you to speak with me about your presentation. I will be able to help you generate ideas for your project and/or suggest sources.

E-mail Responses

Three times this semester, you will post a response to the reading for that week. We will use these postings as the basis for our discussion of the texts. The postings should go out forty-eight hours before our class meeting--by Tuesday at 6pm--to give your busy classmates a chance to read them before coming to class. I will also read and grade the responses. An ideal response will ask a significant question that has come up during your reading and make an attempt to answer it briefly. It should be no more than two pages in length. You do not need to cite any external sources or even quote from the text; however, it would make sense to reference passages that might be useful in discussing your question more fully in class.

Thesis, Outline, and Annotated Bibliography Packet

A working thesis, general outline, and annotated bibliography will be due November 12th. I will give you feedback on your preliminary argument, suggest sources when relevant, and point out any pitfalls that you'll want to try to avoid in writing. Please note that this packet is worth 10% of your final grade, so a carefully chosen bibliography and a thoughtfully composed thesis/outline should be submitted. Of course, if you want to begin working on the topic earlier, I am always available during office hours or by appointment.

Final Paper

Each student will submit a 15-20 page research paper on the final day of class. The student should choose the paper topic based upon his or her interests. The paper should include cited secondary sources and a complete bibliography. Either the MLA or Chicago style is an acceptable format. I will be happy to read rough drafts of the paper if they are given to me *at least one week* prior to the due date of December 10th.