

Fall 2015

## **ENGL 6801**

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*University of New Orleans*

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English 6801; Section 1  
British Literature of the 1790s  
LA 296  
Fall Semester 2015

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## Course Introduction and Syllabus

Required books:

Blake's Poetry and Designs. Eds. Johnson and Grant. Norton, 2008  
Coleridge's Poetry and Prose, Eds. Halmi, Magnuson, and Modiano. Norton, 2004  
Godwin, William. Caleb Williams. Ed. Hindle Penguin, 2005  
Wollstonecraft, Mary. A Vindication of the Rights of Woman and The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria. Eds. Chao and Mellor. Longman, 2007.  
Wordsworth's Poetry and Prose. Ed. Halmi. Norton, 2013.

This course will examine the way in which the work of the first generation of Romantic writers both draws from and creates the "Spirit of the Age" during the years that saw the ascendancy of the French Revolution and its decline into the military dictatorship of Napoleon and the onset of 20 years of war between Britain and France. The reading schedule is organized chronologically and thematically, but with single authors isolated as much as possible, so that we can do three things: 1) stay on one writer long enough for us to get familiar with that writer's voice, stance, and concerns 2) study works more or less in chronological sequence, in order to see the unfolding and development of the central forms and themes of this group of writers, especially as their works arise in response to the historical conditions of this decade. To engage in that effort of the historical imagination that brings a vanished era back to us, we will give due emphasis to the cultural history of the 1790s, especially the most important event in the lives of the writers we will study, the Revolution in France. It shaped them and continued to influence them and their writing for the rest of their lives. We will therefore study much of their writing, especially Blake's work in the 1790s and the Lyrical Ballads project as complex ideological and imaginative responses to the decade of Revolution. This will not be the only historical frame of reference we will use, but it will be central in our exploration of literary art this semester. In that socio-historical context, we will perform close readings of works that exhibit the main features of Romantic literary culture: its poetic mythmaking, religious and metaphysical poetry, critical and philosophical prose, political writing, and literary form, genre, and language. By the end of the semester you will have taken in a good amount of knowledge on these topics, and a primary goal of this course is a synthetic grasp of the above. This should prepare you to write effectively on the relevant portion of the M.A. Comprehensive Exam in British Literature Post-1660 (if you have selected that area of concentration), or to read and reflect on and write usefully about these writers for years to come. These goals constitute what our accrediting agency refers to as the "student learning outcomes" associated with this course: the forms of knowledge and graduate-level skills which students who successfully complete the course should possess.

**Conduct of the Class:** This course will ask you to become actively involved in the discussion of the works on the syllabus. In order for us to talk meaningfully about the larger issues bound up in these works, we will need to lay the necessary groundwork in class meetings by coming to terms with the structure and content of individual works--a close engagement with the text. That will require careful and systematic reading before class. Depending on the degree of familiarity you show with the often-eccentric structure and style of these writers, I may or may not offer you some formal guidance in

preparation for each reading. In class, I will often comment informally, especially to develop the historical contexts in which we need to see these works. But the rest of the time I will look to you for active, involved reading and discussion. It goes without saying that graduate students, who are in their professional training, are expected to attend every class session. Only illness or emergency will offer acceptable reasons for missing class.

Papers and Exams. The culminating piece of written work in this course will be a 10-page research paper, to be turned in at the end of the semester. I will require you to submit a two-page double spaced prospectus or plan for the paper, and this prospectus will be weighted at 5% of your semester grade. The remaining written work for the course is intended to saturate your reading and thinking in relevant literary criticism: detailed abstracts of a series of critical articles and chapters I will assign at intervals in the first two-thirds of the semester. The abstracts should help you explore topics for your research paper, and they will also help you prepare for the final exam. On that occasion, you'll be given questions that use large-scale generalizations about the works we've read (the questions will be adapted from the M.A. Comprehensive Exam in British Literature after 1660), and you will have the task of linking works and ideas together to demonstrate that in this course you have achieved a synthetic grasp of the reading and its various contexts

### **Grading:**

2 page prospectus for Research paper	5%
15-page paper	25%
5 2-page abstracts of secondary reading:	25%
Attendance and participation	20%
Final exam	25%

Your semester grade will be determined by averaging the above percentages. Please make use of my office hours to address problems or questions you have, or to talk about anything else on your mind. Because I am often called to meetings without much notice, I ask that you make appointments to meet with me so that I can make sure to reserve time for you.

### **Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is fundamental to the process of learning and evaluating academic performance. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following: cheating, plagiarism, tampering with academic records and examinations, falsifying identity, and being an accessory to acts of academic dishonesty. Refer to the Student Code of Conduct for further information. The Code is available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.uno.edu>.

### **Accommodations**

It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have disabilities that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Disability Services as well as their instructors to discuss their individual needs for accommodations. For more information, please go to <http://www.ods.uno.edu>.

See also the syllabus attachment posted on our course page in Moodle for additional information about resources available to UNO students.

## Syllabus

- Th Aug 20 Course Introduction; Introduction to Blake: There is No Natural Religion; All Religions are One (handout)
- T Aug 25 Songs of Innocence and of Experience: pp. 8-47; read headnote and the following poems from Songs of Innocence: “Introduction,” “The Lamb,” “The Little Black Boy,” “The Chimney Sweeper,” “Holy Thursday,” and “Infant Joy”; in Songs of Experience, read “Introduction,” “Earth’s Answer,” “The Clod & the Pebble,” “Holy Thursday,” “The Chimney Sweeper,” “The Sick Rose,” “The Tyger,” “London,” “The Human Abstract,” and “Infant Sorrow”
- Th Aug 27 Songs continued; **Abstract #1 due**
- T Sept 1 The Marriage of Heaven and Hell (pp. 66-82)
- Th Sept 3 The Marriage of Heaven and Hell
- T Sept 8 Mary Wollstonecraft, A Vindication of the Rights of Woman (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2 (pp. 23-56); **Abstract #2 due**
- Th Sept 10 Wollstonecraft, Blake, The Book of Thel (pp. 48-54)
- T Sept 15 Blake, Visions of the Daughters of Albion (pp. 55-65)
- Th Sept 17 Blake, The Book of Urizen (pp. 112-130)
- T Sept 22 Godwin, Caleb Williams Preface and Volume I, Chapters 1-7 (pp. 4-58)
- Th Sept 24 Godwin, Caleb Williams, Volume I, Chapters 8-12 (pp. 59-109); **Abstract #3 due**
- T Sept 29 Godwin, Caleb Williams, Volume II, Chapters 1-9 (pp. 111-170)
- Th Oct 1 Godwin, Caleb Williams, Volume II, Chapters 10-14 (pp.170-213)
- T Oct 6 Godwin, Caleb Williams, Volume III, Chapters 1-8 (pp. 215-268)
- Th Oct 8 Godwin, Caleb Williams, Volume III, Chapters 9-postscript (pp. 269-337) and Appendices (pp. 339-346); **Abstract #4 due**
- T Oct 13 Wollstonecraft, The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria, (Chapters 1-5 (pp. 249-289)
- Th Oct 15 Mid-semester break
- T Oct 20 The Wrongs of Woman, or Maria, (Chapters 6-Appendix (pp. 289-357); **Abstract #5 due (Option A)**

- Th Oct 22 Wordsworth, Letter to the Bishop of Llandaff (handout) and The Ruined Cottage (pp. 440-495)
- T Oct 27 Wordsworth, Lyrical Ballads: headnote and Advertisement to 1798 edition and Preface to 1802 edition, "Simon Lee," "Anecdote for Fathers," "We are Seven," "Lines Written in Early Spring," "The Last of the Flock," "The Mad Mother," "Expostulation and Reply," "The Tables Turned," and "Old Man Travelling" (pp. 3-61)
- Th Oct 29 Wordsworth, "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey" (pp. 65-70) "Not Useless do I deem" (handout), Coleridge, "Effusion XXXV" (pp. 17-20); **Abstract # 5 due (Option B)**
- T Nov 3 Coleridge, "The Wanderings of Cain" (pp. 211-217), The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (pp. 58-99)
- Th Nov 5 The Rime of the Ancient Mariner; **Prospectus for research paper due**
- T Nov 10 Wordsworth, "Prospectus to The Recluse" (pp. 444-447); The Prelude (Book I), pp. 161-183)
- Th Nov 12 Wordsworth, The Prelude; (Book II, pp. 183-195, and Book VI, pp. 251-254, ll. 426-548)
- T Nov 17 Wordsworth, "Strange Fits of Passion Have I Known," "A Slumber Did My Spirit Seal" (pp. 113-115), "The Two April Morning," (pp. 126-127), "My heart leaps up when I behold" (pp. 417), and "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" (pp. 432-439)
- Th Nov 19 Wordsworth, Michael (pp. 144-156); "Resolution and Independence" (pp. 397-401)
- T Nov 24 Coleridge, "Frost at Midnight" (pp. 624-629); "Kubla Khan" (pp. 619-623)
- Th Nov 26 Thanksgiving
- T Dec 1 Coleridge, Christabel; "Dejection: An Ode"
- T Dec 3 Biographia Literaria, Chapters 1, 4, 13, 14, and 17 (selections from pp. 372-505); "Organic and Mechanic Form" **Research Paper due**
- T Dec 8 Final Exam (10:00-noon)