

ENGE2370 From Romanticism to Modernism 2nd term, 2020-2021
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Description:

The early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were important periods in the rise of modernity. The two most important artistic movements of these periods in Western culture were Romanticism and Modernism. The two periods will be studied and contrasted on this course. How does a writer describe the imagination, inspiration and love? How does a writer describe a person's connection with nature? How does a writer describe the experience of living in a city? These are questions we will try and answer.

On this course you will have to give close readings of poems and short pieces of prose. Each lecture will focus on the major themes and techniques of writing of selected works by one or two writers. We will also examine how political themes such as revolution, nationalism, empire, urbanization and poverty influence the writers and their characters. The course will also cover different poetic and narrative forms and techniques such as the ballad, the sonnet, the frame story, point of view, irony, stream of consciousness, and imagery.

Contents/fundamental concepts

1. Explanations of the terms Romanticism and Modernism.
2. The importance of imagination and of nature for Romantic writers.
3. The impact of modernity (e.g., modernization, urbanization, and institutionalization) and resistance to it.
4. The difference between the two terms modernity and modernism.
5. The interplay between content and form.

Learning Outcomes

1. To enjoy the reading of literary works and find their relevance to our everyday life.
2. To understand the close relationship between content and form, between what we say and how we say it.
3. To be able to assess the writers' literary representations of their times.
4. To be able to connect the works of different writers and also to connect their works with our contemporary configurations of modernity.

Assessment Scheme

Attendance & participation: 10 %

Presentation + outline 10 %

2 Papers:

Use font size 12 and double-space. Give the word count at the end of the paper.

Paper 1 (5 pages or 1500 words) 35%

Paper 2 (6 pages or 1800 words) 40%

Close reading:

One in-class close reading of texts (or a substitute assignment if circumstances require)
5%

There will be a serious penalty incurred for all late essays.

Required Texts

An e-file containing most of the texts will be uploaded onto Blackboard Learn. Students will then print out the file themselves.

Recommended Primary Texts

James Joyce. *Dubliners*. Penguin. Twentieth-Century Classics (with introduction by Terence Brown). Good introduction and notes.

Franz Kafka. *The Metamorphosis, In the Penal Colony, and Other Stories* (translation by Edwin Muir). A highly readable translation.

Mary Shelley. *Frankenstein*. Accessible online as an e-book on CUHK library catalogue and on Project Gutenberg.

Virginia Woolf. *Mrs. Dalloway*. Accessible online as an e-book on CUHK library catalogue and on Project Gutenberg.

Audios of Dubliners, Frankenstein, and Mrs Dalloway available in our library.

The Norton Anthology of English Literature, Vol 2. (The notes and introductions there are good and succinct.)

References on Reserve

M H Abrams. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*.

Stephen Bygrave. *Romantic Writings*. (The introduction and the first two chapters, "Romantic Poems and Contexts" and "Versions of British Romantic Writing," are quite readable.)

Peter Childs. *Modernism*. (The introduction is very informative.)

Other references (a preliminary list):

Abrams, M.H. *English Romantic Poets; Modern Essays in Criticism*.

Bradbury, Malcolm & James McFarlane, eds. *Modernism, 1890-1930*.

Eysteinnsson, Astradur. *The Concept of Modernism*.

Goldman, Jane. *The Cambridge Introduction to Virginia Woolf*. Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Menand, Louis. *Discovering Modernism: T.S. Eliot and His Context*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Seidel, Michael. *James Joyce: A Short Introduction*.

Discussion Schedule:**Jan 11**

Introduction: Romanticism and Modernism. Revolution and Alienation.

Jan 18 Innocence: Visionary Imagination.

William Blake. From *Songs of Innocence*: “Introduction,” “The Chimney Sweeper,” “Holy Thursday,” “The Lamb.”

Themes and Forms: States of mind, nature, the child, the ballad.

Jan 25 Experience: Reason and Exploitation.

Blake. From *Songs of Experience*: “Introduction,” “Earth’s Answer,” “The Chimney Sweeper,” “London,” “Holy Thursday,” “The Tyger.”

Themes and forms: Imagination versus Reason, contraries.

Feb 1 Nature, the “Self,” and the Sonnet.

William Wordsworth. “I wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” “Composed upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802”, “The World is Too Much with us,” from *The Prelude*, Book I, lines 1-45.

Themes and forms: Nature, the city, the “Self,” the sonnet, the epic, blank verse.

Feb 8 The sublime, inspiration, and revolution.

Percy Bysshe Shelley: “Ode to the West Wind.”

Themes and forms: The sublime, inspiration, revolution, rhymes, the ode.

Introduction to **Mary Shelley’s** *Frankenstein*. (“Introduction” by P.B. Shelley, and the letters by the frame narrator, Captain Walton.)

Feb 22 The Gothic

Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein* (chapters 1-5).

Themes and forms: Human aspiration, technology, education, the quest motif, the frame story, point of view.

Mar 1 *The Victorian Period and its Aftermath.*

Tennyson: “Ulysses.”

Conrad: “An Outpost of Progress.”

Themes and forms: the belief in progress, evolution, devolution, colonization, irony.

Mar 8 *Realism and Early Modernism.***James Joyce:** “Araby,” “Eveline.”

Themes and forms: Urbanization, colonization, realism in fiction, symbols.

Mar 15 *Modernist Fiction and Stream of Consciousness.***Virginia Woolf:** *Mrs Dalloway* (from the beginning up to the paragraph that begins with “Dear, those motor cars....”).Themes and form: *flânerie*, stream of consciousness.**Mar 22** *Modernist Poetry.***W. B Yeats:** “When you are old,” “The Second Coming.”**T. S. Eliot:** “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock.”Themes and forms: the apocalyptic, *flânerie*, alienation, fragmentation, dramatic monologue, free verse.**Mar 29****Reading Week****April 12** Societies and universal values.**Franz Kafka:** “In the Penal Colony.”

Themes and forms: the law, the other, the parable.

Apr 19**Recapitulation and consultation on paper.****Important**

Please read carefully the information regarding academic honesty on the following website: <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/> Fill in the declaration form and attach it to your paper.

FEEDBACK FOR EVALUATION

The lecturer will closely monitor the progress of students and get feedback through discussion with students and TA and through checking student performance in their papers and in the examination. There will be the mandatory end of term course evaluation, in response to which the lecturer will provide reflections on student comments. The external examiner of the English Department may also select the course to review its content and assessment.

Minor changes to this course description may be made if necessary.