

ENGL 02 471: English Romanticism

Dr. Christina Solomon

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The British Romantic period (late 18th to early 19th c.) is marked by revolution—political, social, and formal. The American Revolution and, more pressingly, the French Revolution heightened anxieties about politics and about England as a nation; at the same time, the British empire was expanding, and increased globalization further redefined England’s role on the world stage. The industrial revolution continued to impact class structures, and social conversations surrounding issues such as education gave rise to first-wave feminism. The turn away from the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment resulted in what we now understand as Romantic modes of thinking. In response to all of this, writers engaged literature—in new forms and in mixed genres—to explore, represent, and create fresh understandings of their day.

Adopting revolution as a framework, we can trace the contours of an incredibly dense, rich cultural and literary period. This course will read across genres, including political tracts, essays, letters, novels, poems, and longer verse narratives.

Course topics and themes will include:

- political revolution
- gender
- class
- form and genre mixing
- the gothic
- print culture and reception
- nature and the sublime
- empire and Orientalism

Possible authors will include:

- William Blake
- Mary Wollstonecraft
- Mary Robinson
- Anna Laetitia Barbauld
- Sir Walter Scott
- Samuel Taylor Coleridge
- William Wordsworth
- Robert Burns
- John Clare
- William Beckford
- Lord Byron
- Felicia Hemans
- Mary Shelley
- Jane Austen
- Percy Bysshe Shelley
- John Keats
- Thomas DeQuincey
- William Hazlitt