

British Romanticism.**Co-ordinator: Clare Clarke**

This module gives students the opportunity to study one of the most exciting periods of British literary and social history, when tumultuous political and social changes such as revolution and industrialisation produced a range of remarkable and enduring literary responses. The module examines British Romantic literature through the close study of a broad range of prose, poetry and non-fiction. The module is structured around examination of the work of the 'Big Six' high Romantic writers, whose work is read alongside that of non-canonical Romantic writers. It examines a wide range of literary genres from the period, including various forms of poetry, the novel, and non-fictional prose writing, and offers the opportunity to study both canonical and lesser-known authors.

The module will take a broadly historicist and thematic approach to the texts studied, examining them within the political, social, and cultural contexts of this revolutionary period and will study a range of critical perspectives on Romantic literature. Students will gain insight into the manifold ways in which Romantic literature engaged with a themes and issues such as: the French Revolution; industrialisation and urban massification; changes in education; slavery; evolving views on childhood; religion; and the natural world.

Learning Outcomes

Students will gain:

- close knowledge and understanding of a range of Romantic writers
- critical skills in the close reading and analysis of texts
- an ability to demonstrate knowledge of a range of texts, authors, and critical approaches within this literary period
- an ability to discuss a range of texts in their intellectual, historical and critical contexts
- an ability to articulate knowledge and understanding of concepts and theories relating to this literary period
- an ability to demonstrate skills in critical reasoning, including the ability to assess other critical readings
- effective verbal and written communication skills

Week 1: Introduction: Revolutionary manifestos:

selections from Burke, *Reflections of the Revolution in France* (1790);
 Paine, selected passages from *Rights of Man* (1791);
 Hannah More, “Village Politics” (1792)

Week 2: Nature and the countryside

William Blake, “Laughing Song”; “Spring” from *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1789-1794)
 John Keats, “Ode to Autumn” (1820);
 PB Shelley, “To a Skylark” (1820)

Week 3: Nature and Romantic childhoods

William Blake, “The Echoing Green” (*Songs of Innocence and Experience*, 1789)
 William Wordsworth, “We are Seven” (1798); ‘Intimations of Immortality’ (1804)
 Selected passages from Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

Week 4: Education I

Selected passages from Jean Jacques-Rousseau’s *Emile* (1762)
 William Blake, “The Schoolboy”; “Holy Thursday” (*Songs of Innocence and Experience*, 1789)
 William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* Book I
 Selected passages from Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

Week 5: The Gothic novel:

Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)

Week 6: Education II: women’s reading

Jane Austen: *Northanger Abbey* (1817)
 Selected passages from Hester Chapone, *Letters on the Improvement of the Mind, Addressed to a Young Lady* (1773)

Week 7: READING WEEK**Week 8: Cities and the urban**

Wordsworth, Book 7 *The Prelude* (1799); “Composed upon Westminster Bridge” (1807);
 Blake, “London,” *The Chimney Sweeper poems (Innocence and Experience)* (1789)
 Mary Robinson, “London's Summer Morning; January 1795” (1800)

Week 9: Liberty, Race, and Slavery

Selections from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, written by himself* (1789)

Anna Laetitia Barbauld, *Epistle to William Wilberforce* (1791)

William Blake, “The Little Black Boy” (1789)

Week 10: Romantic Orientalism

Thomas De Quincey, *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821)

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Kubla Khan* (1816)

Selections from Byron, “The Giaour” (1813)

Week 11: Nature and the sublime:

Shelley, “Mont Blanc” (1817)

Charlotte Smith, Sonnet 59 [Written Sept 1791, during a remarkable thunderstorm]; Sonnet 66 [Written in a tempestuous night on the coast of Sussex] (1786);

Selections from Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818)

Week 12: The supernatural:

Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1798)

John Keats, “La Belle Dame Sans Merci” (1819)

Mary Robinson, “The Haunted Beach” (1800)