Engl-GA.2620.001
Romantic Movement
Professor Lockridge

William Blake, William Wordsworth, Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, Mary Shelley, and John Keats are the canonical British Romantic writers considered in this seminar. Participants are free to pursue less familiar writers of the period if they so choose. Though a syllabus and set of discussion topics are shared by all, topics for term essays may reflect the particular critical and scholarly interests of participants working off syllabus.

Among standard topics to be discussed: Blake’s revolutionary satire and mythology; the literary relationship of Coleridge, Dorothy Wordsworth, and William Wordsworth; Romantic autobiography; Coleridge as philosophic critic; William Wordsworth and the uses of memory; Lord Byron as performance artist; Percy Shelley and the Romantic theory of mind; Mary Shelley’s questioning of Romantic ideology; Keats and cultural poetics; formal innovations in Romantic narrative, lyric, and drama; Romantic politics; representations of gender, race, and class; and issues concerning the Romantic canon. Such topics tend to be perennial; the seminar will seek out the state of current critical play concerning them.

Prominent schools of modern theory and criticism—from archetypal, formalist, psychoanalytic, and ethical to feminist, historicist, and deconstructive—have found in British Romantic writers a literature of great import. We debate a variety of such approaches.

Assuming a relatively small enrollment, participants will write four short essays (about three pages each) on topics set in advance and make brief presentations of them to the seminar. A term essay of 12-15 pages will be due shortly after the final seminar meeting.