

English 6870 A (CRN 2714)
Green Romanticism
Spring 2015
Liberal Arts 211
TR 2:10pm-3:25pm

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and by appointment
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Course Description and Objectives

Readers of British Romantic literature are quick to point out authors' consistent emphasis on nature. William Wordsworth, for example, was obsessed with nature; his sister, Dorothy, filled notebooks and journals with observations of plants, flowers, and weather patterns, often providing William with material for his poetry. Political discourses of the time argued for the "natural rights of man." Erasmus Darwin's highly popular scientific-poem, *The Loves of the Plants*, offered a scandalously sexualized vision of the natural world. The poet John Clare was also an amateur botanist (as were many other writers). Mary Shelley's apocalyptic novel *The Last Man* imagined a future world ravaged by ecological catastrophe. But what exactly did the Romantics mean when they used the term "nature"? Did they all mean the same thing? What roles did politics, science, and philosophy play in literary and artistic representations of "nature"? These questions will serve as a frame for the course as we approach the British Romantic movement through the lens of ecocriticism. We will explore what it means to read literature and art in an ecological manner, and we will reflect on how Romantic views of nature and the environment impact ecological and environmental thinking in our contemporary world. Our goal, then, will be not only to read and appreciate Romantic literature but also to understand our own ideas about nature, beauty, politics, and language.

Course prerequisites: graduate standing

Email

My main form of communication outside of class is email. You need to have a working AUM email account, and you need to check that account daily. You will be held responsible for all emails I send through the AUM or Blackboard systems with notifications of assignments, course schedule updates, and changes in classroom usage (such as a trip to the library or meeting in another location). You should stay connected to what's happening in this class at AUM, or you may find yourself struggling to understand what's going on. You can

also talk to me face-to-face, either by stopping in during my office hours or scheduling another time to meet with me.

Learning Center

The Learning Center provides free consultations for all students. The Center advisors will assist you with any piece of writing, at any stage of the writing process. All writers need readers, and the Center can be a valuable resource as you work through a draft. **You may visit the Center in connection with any writing project for this class.**

Accommodations

Auburn University at Montgomery attempts to make reasonable accommodations to meet the special needs of its students with disabilities. Students requiring special services should notify their instructor as soon as possible. Assistance is available from the Center for Disability Services, which is located in 101 Taylor Center. They can be reached at 334-244-3631 (phone) or 334-244-3754 (TTY/TDY).

Expectations

This is a reading- and thinking-intensive course. I want to push you to do more work and more thinking and more reading—this should be a difficult class. At the same time, I will help you in your efforts. I will talk with you (in person or by email) whenever you feel it necessary. I expect a lot from you for this class, and you have the right to expect much of me. If something is not working, either for the class or for you individually, I am willing to reconsider the approach. In order for me to be flexible, though, you need to talk with me. I will respond as quickly as I can to email (usually within 24 hours).

As graduate students, I expect a higher level of engagement in the class materials and discussions. I of course expect you to come to each class session prepared to participate in a thoughtful manner, but you should do so in a more sophisticated manner than your undergraduate colleagues. I also expect that you have some kind of working knowledge of Romantic literature from your undergraduate coursework.

Required Texts

The Longman Anthology of British Literature: The Romantics and Their Contemporaries (Volume 2A, 5th edition)

Frankenstein, Mary Shelley (Broadview, third edition)

The Last Man, Mary Shelley (Broadview)

Readings on Blackboard

Assignments and Weight Distribution

Option #1

Active Participation:	15%
Research Presentation:	15%
Blackboard Discussion Posts:	15%
Annotated Poem Project:	15%
Two Essays (8-10pp):	40% (20% each)

Option #2

Active Participation:	15%
Research Presentation:	15%
Blackboard Discussion Posts:	15%
Annotated Poem Project:	15%
Annotated Bibliography:	10%
Research Paper (15-20pp):	30%

Requirements

Conferences: I highly recommend you meet with me for individual conferences to discuss and work on your writing assignments throughout the quarter—whether we meet during the brainstorming stage or after you’ve completed a draft. I think you will find these individual conferences valuable and worthwhile. **You are required to meet with me during week fifteen to discuss your final project.** We will not meet in class during week fifteen; instead, you will sign up for an individual meeting with me.

Active Participation: This will be discussion-based course, so I want you to come to class prepared to ask questions, to answer questions, to offer your ideas and responses to the readings, to listen and respond to other students, and to contribute during small group work. I really want to hear your thoughts and responses to the readings each day, and I want us all to engage in productive, collaborative, and exploratory conversations about the readings. **To receive credit for participation, you must bring the readings to class.** If you don’t bring the readings during class, you won’t be able to follow along and you won’t receive points for participation.

Research Presentation: As emerging literary scholars, you should become familiar with research methods and scholarship in the field. To that end, you will make a 15-minute presentation on a work of scholarship related to a course topic of your choosing. You should use the library databases to find an article or book-length chapter related to an assigned reading or topic. Your presentation should provide a clear, concise overview of your research; a demonstration of how it relates to the assigned reading/topic; and facilitate a class discussion afterwards. You will sign up for a particular day/reading early in the semester. I can certainly help you in researching and organization the presentation, and **I do ask that you let me know what source you will be presenting one week prior to your presentation.**

Blackboard Discussion Posts: Instead of weekly quizzes or tests or exams, you will post two responses to the Blackboard Discussion Board each week. I will provide you with a series of discussion questions on the assigned readings every week, and you will select one (or more) of these questions for your discussion posts. We will use these questions during class discussions, so I may call on you to explain your responses. For example, “Who answered the first discussion question?” We will also use these questions for small group work, so it is essential that you bring them each class period.

Here’s how the official assignment will work: I have set up fifteen modules on the Blackboard Discussion Board corresponding to the fifteen weeks of the semester. For each week, you must post two responses (so, the grade works out to 1% each week, or 0.5% per post). If you are the first person to respond to a discussion question, you will create your own thread. If you’re responding to the same question as another student, you will frame your post as a reply. The idea is to keep the conversation going outside of class: we won’t be able to get to every single thing every class session, and you may have some great ideas about a topic or reading a few days after we discuss the material in class. You can post at any time during the week, but they must be in by 11:59pm on Saturday. I’ll contribute to the online discussion as well. There’s no set word requirement for the posts—they should be not too short, not too long. The important thing is to contribute to the conversation in a meaningful way. These are informal posts, but do write in Standard English please (no text talk!).

Note: You are free to draw from the discussion questions and/or your own responses in the critical essays. Of course, you can’t use someone else’s post (that’s plagiarism), but you can certainly use your own words and ideas.

Annotated Poem Project: As literary scholars, we annotate texts as we read: we take notes in the margins, we underline, we make connections, we pose questions, we **engage with the text** in order to understand it in a more sophisticated and enriching manner. In our increasingly digital world, these kinds of annotations have naturally moved to the digital sphere. Every year, there are more and more digital editions of literary works,

and more sites dedicated to sharing scholarship with a broader audience (see, for example, the Romantic Circles site [<http://www.rc.umd.edu>], especially its digital editions: <http://www.rc.umd.edu/editions>). For this project, you will contribute to this developing digital world of scholarship by creating an online annotated edition of an assigned poem using Weebly (<http://www.weebly.com>). Using Weebly is free and quite easy: the website is generated for you, so all you need to do is upload material and customize design elements.

Here's the assignment: you will create your own Weebly website dedicated to one assigned poem, which you will sign up for during the first half of the semester. You will send me the url for your site, and I'll post a link on our shared course site (<http://greenromanticism.weebly.com>). On your site, which you can design in any way you see fit, you must include: (1) a brief Introduction to the poem; (2) the full text of the poem; and (3) at least 10 hyperlinks in the poem that take readers to separate pages on your site and/or to other websites, sources, videos, paintings, etc. These hyperlinks are the digital annotations. They could include biographical and historical details, definitions and explanations of Romantic-era terminology, references to scholarly articles on a specific aspect the poem, links to scholarly sites on the poem, paintings or other visual media directly related to the poem, and whatever else is helpful in understanding and explaining the poem. Your project is due by our last class session (May 5), and we'll share those in class. I will not accept late projects.

Note: You are free to choose a poem about which you are writing in any of your papers, but all of the work must be totally new (i.e., you can't cut-and-paste parts of your paper into your site).

Option #1: You will write two critical essays for this class. The first essay will be a standard academic essay in which you analyze one (or more) assigned text(s) using the knowledge, tools, and ideas as discussed during class sessions. This essay will focus solely on the assigned reading(s) and is due week eight. What I'll be looking for is your ability to develop an argument about an assigned reading supported through detailed analysis of the text(s).

For the second essay, you will focus on a connection between an assigned reading and an outside text or topic. That outside text can be anything from an historical event to a scientific discovery to a song to a movie to a contemporary political policy to a philosophical system to a literary text that we did not read in class. One important aspect of this course is thinking about the history and development of ecological thinking and environmentalism from the Romantic period to the present day, so you should develop that kind of connection in this essay. You can think of this as a dual focus paper: you're writing about Romanticism AND something else: "Romanticism and Environmentalism," "Romanticism and Buddhism," "Romanticism and the Local Food Movement," "Romanticism and Physics." I'm open to you taking this paper in any direction that is useful to your interests and area of study. For example, if you're focusing in creating writing, you could develop a creative piece with connections to Romanticism. If you're double majoring (or minoring) in English and Biology, you can develop a science-based project. You will need to perform some outside research for this final essay.

You are required to meet with me during week fifteen to discuss your final project.

Both essays should demonstrate critical argumentation and close reading—that is, they should contain a clear argument supported by your interpretation and analysis of the selected text(s). The essays should also demonstrate your command of Standard English. **You should plan to work through at least two drafts of the essays before submitting the final version.** I am more than happy to meet with you to discuss your essays at any point during the writing process (in fact, I strongly encourage it). You are free to develop any argument that meets the requirements of the essay. See the assignment requirements at the end of the syllabus for more details. I will not accept late submissions.

Option #2: For this option, you will undertake an extended research project on an assigned text, group of texts, and/or cultural topic/event. The project contains two separate assignments: an annotated bibliography (10%) and a research paper (30%).

First, you will perform extensive outside research and create an annotated bibliography consisting of 8-10 relevant secondary sources related to your project. You will write a ½ page annotation for the five most important sources in your bibliography. You will also include a brief proposal/outline (½ page) for your project. The Bibliography is due week twelve. Second, you will write the research paper using the material from your bibliography. I will help you in developing your project, both in performing research and crafting the paper. I will not accept late submissions.

Electronic Devices: I do not permit the use of electronic devices during class. This includes laptops, cell phones, iPads, Kindles, and any other versions of these kinds of devices. I want us all to be focused solely on discussion and reading of the assigned texts for the entirety of the class session (which, after all, is only one hour and fifteen minutes). **Please put away your devices completely before entering the classroom.** Yes, I know, you really need to check Facebook one more time before diving into Wordsworth, but this will inevitably lead to distractions. Please talk to me if you need special accommodations requiring an electronic device.

If you use your cell phone to text or check email or check Facebook or tweet during class, I will lower your final grade by one letter and ask you to leave. This will also count as an absence.

I did not decide to ban electronic devices on a whim, and I'm not doing this as an arbitrary "pay attention only to me" move (although I guess it is that a little bit). Rather, I made this decision based on years of in-class observations and research. Using electronic devices in class is an inescapable distraction—to you, to me, and to everyone in the class. I used to let students take notes on laptops, but here's the thing: the temptation of checking your email, or Facebook, or the time, or checking your schedule, or buying something on Amazon is just too strong. I know this for a fact: I've been in a meeting when my email lights up with a new message, and, before I know it, I'm checking that email (junk) instead of paying attention to the presentation. In addition to distracting the user, laptops distract other students in the class. It's just too hard *not* to look over the student's shoulder sitting in front of you to see what she is typing or doing on the web (I can't believe she's going to pay that much for a pair of shoes! Don't do it!). Recent research also shows that taking notes by hand is far more effective than taking notes on a laptop. See this essay: <http://www.scientificamerican.com/article/a-learning-secret-don-t-take-notes-with-a-laptop/>, and this one: <http://pss.sagepub.com/content/25/6/1159>.

Cell phones are even worse. Everyone can see you texting underneath your desk. Really. And just the act of observing someone using a cell phone distracts from the task at hand (What could he be texting right now? What kind of phone is that? I wonder if the professor can see him? [I can]). In addition to these observations, there is a growing body of research that shows digital multi-tasking to be all-around counterproductive. See, for example, this article: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2014/09/25/why-a-leading-professor-of-new-media-just-banned-technology-use-in-class/>.

Attendance is required. You are expected to attend all classes. Illness, however, cannot be planned, so you are allowed the equivalent of one week's absences from class (two class sessions). If you miss a third class session, I will lower your final grade by one letter (i.e., from a "B" to a "C"). If you miss a fourth class session, I will lower your grade by another letter (i.e., from a "C" to a "D"). **If you miss more than four class sessions, you will automatically fail the course.** After the fourth class absence, I will send you a notification that you cannot miss any additional classes. After the fifth absence of class, you will be assigned an "FA" ("Failure due to Absence") in lieu of a course grade. There is no room for negotiation on this issue. It is your responsibility to keep track of your absences.

I will assess a **half-absence** if: (1) you are more than ten minutes late to class; (2) you leave class early; (3) you spend any time in class doing other work; or (4) you fall asleep at any point during class. Please notify me in advance of a situation that prevents you from arriving on time or staying for the entire class. You should inform all of your instructors immediately when you know you will be late or have to depart early.

The only excused absences are those recognized by the university: official university events with excuses provided in advance by the head of the university unit involved; illness/medical emergency or medical emergency for a member of student's immediate family; death of a member of student's immediate family; military orders (notification should occur prior to the absence); jury duty or court subpoena (notification should occur prior to the absence); religious holiday (notification should occur prior to the absence); and weather emergencies or perilous driving conditions (with notification if feasible). These absences will require official university notification that students should provide instructors.

If I need to miss class for illness or an emergency, I will: send you an email and/or post the assignments on Blackboard, with appropriate assignments that will count in lieu of a class meeting; send the assignments to the English Department administrative associate (as back up); alert the Chair of the Department of English and Philosophy that I will need to be away from class; and arrange to have a sign posted to the classroom door alerting anyone to the situation. Classes may have substitute instructors or proctors for exams.

Tardiness: You are expected to be in class on time. Things come up, however, so you get two "freebie" late arrivals (less than ten minutes late). **For every session you arrive late after two, you will be assessed a half-absence.**

Make-up Policy: I only allow make-ups for excused absences. In those cases, we will meet to schedule alternate dates/times to submit missed work, discuss readings, and/or take exams/quizzes. I will schedule make-ups on a case-by-case basis.

Plagiarism is the unauthorized use of the words or ideas of another person. All writing submitted for this class must be your own writing and must be written exclusively for this class. Any use of quotations, paraphrases, or ideas from outside sources, including Internet sources, must be properly documented (in this case an "outside source" means anything other than your own unique creation). You may not recycle or reuse writing that you wrote for another class, including any other English course at AUM or another university—you also may not use any work from a class previously taken but not passed. While re-using your own text is not improperly using outside sources, it is academic dishonesty because it does not require new work specifically for this class, and it is subject to the penalties described below.

In cases where plagiarism or other academic dishonesty is clearly established, you will automatically fail the course, regardless of the value of the assignment. You will also be reported to the AUM Committee on Discipline, which may choose to impose additional sanctions. An "F" for plagiarism in a course will be clearly noted on your transcripts. Should students ever need to share their transcripts, to be eligible for employment or for an application to graduate school, there will be no question that they failed because they cheated. If you are confused or uncertain in any way as to whether your paper constitutes plagiarism, come talk to me before submitting your writing. Once you have submitted an assignment, there's nothing I can do. The full policy on academic misconduct can be found in the Student Handbook.

A note here: I have at least one student fail a class each semester due to plagiarism. Please don't be this student. If you are struggling to complete an assignment, come talk to me. If you are using outside sources and you're not sure if you're citing correctly, come talk to me. If there's any doubt in your mind at all regarding using outside sources, come talk to me.

Movie Nights: There will be 1-2 optional movie nights during which we will order some pizzas and view films related to the Romantic period. We can decide on the nights/times later in the semester if there is any interest.

Grading

You will need to complete all assignments in order to receive credit for the course. For any assignment, and for the course overall, I do want to stress that I consider **A-work** as exceptional. Such work goes above and

beyond the requirements; it shows not only an effort to wrestle with ideas, readings, and writing, but also a successful outcome. **B-work** is good, quality work. Such work pushes beyond the general requirements and shows thoughtfulness and time spent on the ideas, readings, and writing. **C-work** satisfies the requirements of an assignment. It is work that meets all the criteria, yet it does not step beyond those original goals. **C** is an average grade; most work generally falls near this category. **D** and **F** work is work not completed or work that fails to achieve the goals of the assignment.

You may talk with me at any point in the semester about your standing in class. If something is keeping you from completing work or attending class, let me know immediately. I can work with you if I am aware of a situation, but I cannot offer a retroactive solution at the end of the semester.

I reserve the right to make changes to this syllabus throughout the semester if necessary.

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Daily Schedule

Week One

T 1/13 – Introduction: Romanticism and Revolution

Introduction to the course, texts, and syllabus

First-day poems (in-class handout)

Longman, “The Romantics and Their Contemporaries” (7-33): read this after class

R 1/15 – Conceptualizing Nature

Kate Soper, “What is Nature?” (Blackboard)

Greg Garrard, “Positions” (Blackboard)

General Introduction to *The Green Studies Reader*

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?nobk=y&sid=5ecf4722-eba6-4c75-80f5-7d7ec0996d4c@sessionmgr4003&vid=1&hid=4207&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZQ==#db=nlebk&AN=60988>: no need to print this off—just read it before coming to class

Week Two

T 1/20 – No Class, Student Holiday

R 1/22 – Natural Rights and the Revolution Controversy

Helen Maria Williams, “Letters Written in France” (109-13)

Edmund Burke, from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (113-22)

Mary Wollstonecraft, from *A Vindication of the Rights of Man* (123-30)

Thomas Paine, from *The Rights of Man* (132-8)

William Godwin, from *Political Justice* (144-9)

Week Three

T 1/27 – Natural Rights and a Poetics of Democracy: Blake

William Blake, “All Religions are One” (172-4) and “There is No Natural Religion” (174-7)

Blake, from *Songs of Innocence*: “Introduction” (178), “The Echoing Green” (178-9), “The Lamb” (179-80), “The Chimney Sweeper” (181-2), and “Holy Thursday” (184)

Blake, from *Songs of Experience*: “Introduction” (189), “Holy Thursday” (190-1), “The Chimney Sweeper” (194), “The Tyger” (197-8), and “London” (199)

R 1/29 – Blake, cont.

Continue discussion of Blake (additional poems TBD)

Week Four

T 2/3 – Science and Ecology

Erasmus Darwin, selected readings (Blackboard) and *The Loves of the Plants* (ECCO)*

* You can access *The Loves of the Plants* using Eighteenth Century Collections Online via the AUM Library Databases. There are several different editions available: make sure to read the 1789 edition, or the version published as Volume II of *The Botanic Garden* in 1791. This is a very long poem, so I don't expect you to print it off or even read the entire thing. I do want you to read as much as you can and to take notes (and, of course, print off any pages that seems especially interesting to you). Reading the entire poem would be best as it's a very important work, but we're not going to look at every part during class. We will discuss the selected readings on Blackboard in detail: you must read all of these selections.

R 2/5 – Science and Ecology, cont.

Continue discussion of Darwin

Week Five

T 2/10 – Aesthetics: The Sublime, the Beautiful, and the Picturesque

Edmund Burke, from *A Philosophical Enquiry* (37-43)

Immanuel Kant, from *The Critique of Judgment* (44-6)

William Gilpin, from *Three Essays* (48-52)

William Wordsworth, "An Evening Walk" (Blackboard)

Charlotte Turner Smith, "Beachy Head" (Blackboard)

Paintings by Constable, Turner, and Friedrich (Blackboard)

Discussion of selections on listening list (Blackboard)

R 2/12 – Wordsworth and Smith: A Comparative Case Study

Continue discussion of Wordsworth and Smith

Week Six

T 2/17 – Wordsworth and *Lyrical Ballads*

William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (433-446), "Simon Lee" (412-5), "We Are Seven" (416-8), "Lines Written in Early Spring" (418-9), "Expostulation and Reply" (426-7), "The Tables Turned" (427-8), and "Old Man Travelling" (428-9)

R 2/19 – *Lyrical Ballads*, cont.

Continue discussion of Wordsworth (additional poems TBD)

Week Seven

T 2/24 – Supernaturalism and the Sublime

Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (634-49)

R 2/26 – The New Sublime: Wordsworth

William Wordsworth, "Tintern Abbey" (429-33)

Week Eight

T 3/3 – William and Dorothy: A Comparative Case Study

Dorothy Wordsworth, from *The Grasmere Journals* (605-11)

William Wordsworth, “Composed upon Westminster Bridge,” (475), “It is a beautiful Evening” (475-6), and *The Prelude*, Book 13 (535-41)

Ashton Nichols, “March” (Blackboard)

R 3/5 – The Shelley Circle and Travel Writing

ESSAY ONE DUE

Mary Shelley, *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* (<http://knarf.english.upenn.edu/MShelley/sixweek1.html>)

(<https://archive.org/details/sixweekhistoryof00shelrich>): read as much as you can

Percy Shelley, “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty” (875-7) and “Mont Blanc” (871-5)

Week Nine

T 3/10 – Shelley and Science

Percy Shelley, “Ode to the West Wind” (889-91) and “The Cloud” (911-3)

Cloud paintings by Constable and Turner (Blackboard)

Ashton Nichols, “April” (Blackboard)

R 3/12 – Shelley and Vegetarianism

Percy Shelley, *A Vindication of Natural Diet* and excerpts from *Queen Mab* (Blackboard)

Week Ten

T 3/17 – John Clare: The Northampton Peasant Poet

John Clare, “Written in November” (962-3), “The Lament of Swordy Well” (965-9), and “The Mores” (971)

R 3/19 – John Clare’s Sonnets

Clare, “The Mouse’s Nest” (969-70), “Swordy Well” (Blackboard), “Summer Moods” (Blackboard), and “Emmonsails Heath in Winter” (Blackboard)

MARCH 23-27, SPRING BREAK

Week Eleven

T 3/31 – Shelley, Keats, and Clare: A Comparative Case Study

Percy Shelley, “To a Sky-Lark” (891-3)

John Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale” (1006-8)

John Clare, “The Nightingale’s Nest” and “The Skylark” (Blackboard)

R 4/2 – Bird Poems, cont.

Continue discussion of Shelley, Keats, and Clare

Discussion of selections from listening list (esp. Williams)

Week Twelve

T 4/7 – Frankenstein

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, Introduction (347-52), Volumes I-II (47-160)

R 4/9 – Frankenstein II

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY DUE

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* Volume III (161-221)

Week Thirteen

T 4/14 – Ecological Catastrophe

Lord Byron, “Darkness” (Blackboard)

William Blake, “The Tyger” (197-8)

Percy Shelley, excerpts (Blackboard)

Paintings by Turner (Blackboard)

Timothy Morton, “Romantic Disaster Ecology”

(<http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/disaster/HTML/praxis.2012.morton.html>)

R 4/16 – *The Last Man*

Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, Introduction and Volume I (1-127)

Week Fourteen

T 4/21 – *The Last Man*

Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, Volume II (131-245)

R 4/23 – *The Last Man*

Mary Shelley, *The Last Man*, Volume III (249-367)

Week Fifteen

T 4/28 – No Class, Individual Meetings

R 4/30 – No Class, Individual Meetings

Week Sixteen

T 5/5 – Conclusion to the Course

ANNOTATED POEM PROJECT DUE

Discussion of final projects

Reflection on what we didn’t get to – and what we did

Tearful farewells and other pathetic and sublime scenarios

Finals Weeks

T 5/12 – ESSAY TWO/RESEARCH PAPER DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY 5PM

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Requirements for Critical Essays

Both essays should be 8-10 full pages (double-spaced), and both should articulate an interpretation of a text or set of texts by analyzing in detail language, imagery, and ideas. Each paper should contain a clear, analytical thesis statement, and you should develop your argument through close reading and textual analysis. No outside research is necessary for the first essay, but you will need to perform some research for the dual focus essay. You are welcome to perform research for both essays. If you are having difficulty coming up with an idea for either paper, I can provide you with a few prompts regarding specific texts.

Your papers must follow MLA formatting; they must be double-spaced using 12-point Times New Roman font (or equivalent); and they must meet the minimum page length requirement. I will not accept papers that do not meet these requirements.

Your essays should include a crafted introduction and conclusion; a clear thesis statement that develops throughout the paper; analytical claims supported with textual evidence; logical structure and organization; and MLA citations. You should demonstrate the skills you learned in English 1020, but you should also move beyond first-year level writing. A strong critical essay contains the following:

A crafted introduction and conclusion

- * A strong introduction identifies the text(s) you will analyze; defines the topic of your essay; states why your argument matters; provides appropriate background/context; and contains a thesis statement that you will develop, expand, and/or explore in the paper.
- * A strong conclusion makes a judgment about your original question/topic (but does not restate your thesis statement); makes a point that ties everything together; and gives the reader a “send-off.”

A clear thesis statement that develops throughout the paper

- * A thesis statement is a crystallized and concise sentence or set of sentences that assert/s your argument (the overall argument is the thesis). Your thesis statement should appear near the end of your introductory paragraph.
- * Thesis development relies on effective and logical organization and close reading/s of your selected text/s. Your paper should evolve as a development and exploration of your thesis statement through direct quotation, paraphrase, discussion, and analysis of the text/s.

Analytical claims supported with textual evidence

- * Analytical claims are interpretations or ideas regarding texts (as opposed to opinions which offer no evidence); textual evidence is the documentation, paraphrase, or analysis of the text(s) linked to specific claims. Basically, this means close reading in which you link your ideas and statements about the text/s to specific words, phrases, lines, images, paragraphs in the text/s.

Logical structure and organization

- * Coherent paragraphs have strong topic sentences that develop systematically throughout the paper. Each paragraph should have a clear main point as well as effective transitions that provide a sense of coherence.
- * At the sentence level, you should demonstrate clear phrasing, apt word choice, and a command of Standard English.

MLA citations

- * See the *MLA Handbook*, the Purdue OWL, or another MLA resource.