ENG 734: The Romantic Novel

Spring 2010

Thursdays 4:00-6:45 pm, FDH 608
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Office Hours: Wednesday/Thursday 2:00-3:30 pm or by appointment
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The novels of the years 1770-1830 are often overlooked because of the centrality of poetry to this period. Yet during these years novelistic production in Great Britain increased exponentially, books became cheaper, circulating libraries sprung up around the country, and new fictional subgenres (such as the Gothic, the historical novel, the national tale, and the Jacobin novel) flourished. In this course we’ll study some of the most important novels of this period in their historical and literary contexts.

Required Texts: (available at the bookstore or elsewhere)
Frances Burney, Evelina (Oxford)
William Godwin, Caleb Williams (Norton)
Maria Edgeworth, Belinda (Oxford)
Mary Shelley, Frankenstein (Oxford)
Jane Austen, Persuasion (Oxford)
Walter Scott, Ivanhoe (Penguin)
James Hogg, Confessions of a Justified Sinner (Oxford)
Honoré de Balzac, Père Goriot (Oxford)

Secondary readings available through Web Campus.

Course requirements: Presentation, weekly discussion questions, and a final paper.

Presentation: Each of you will be expected to present to the class on the scholarship surrounding one of the novels we’re reading. Using the MLA Bibliography, the bibliography I’ve distributed, and other resources, locate at least three critical articles or books on the novel you’ve signed up for or a topic closely related to it (such as historical fiction in the case of Scott, Irish writing in the case of Edgeworth, or radicalism in the case of Godwin). In your presentation you should summarize the arguments of the articles/books you looked at, highlighting key areas of critical debate, the use of different theoretical approaches, and the limitations of each approach. Your presentation should be no more than 10-15 minutes with time for discussion afterwards. For those of you presenting on novels we are reading over two class sessions, please confer with the other person presenting on that novel to make sure you will be covering different articles.

Discussion questions: Each week you will be asked to devise at least one (but no more than three) discussion question based on either the primary or secondary readings for the day. Your questions should raise broader topics for discussion,
identify a moment of ambiguity or contradiction within a text, make connections between primary and secondary readings, or make connections across historical periods. They should not be mere factual queries. You should email your questions to me at least two hours before class begins, so I can compile the questions and distribute them to the class.

**Final paper:** Your final paper will be written in the format of a 20-25 minute conference paper. You will need to submit an abstract for it by April 4th, and the last two class sessions will be devoted to presenting your papers as though you were delivering them for a conference, including a five-minute Q & A after your paper. If we do not get through all the papers in the last two class sessions, I reserve the right to hold an additional session during exam week. After you deliver the papers you will have a chance to revise and to integrate any useful feedback you receive from the class. You should turn in a final hard copy of your paper by

**Disabilities:** The UNLV Disability Resource Center (DRC) houses resources for students with disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require assistance, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), room 137. Their numbers are 895-0866 (voice), 895-0652 (TDD), and 895-0651 (fax). For additional information please visit http://www.unlv.edu/studentlife/drc
Schedule:

January 14: Introduction to the course, hand out syllabus, sign up for presentations.


February 4: Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, read up to vol. 2, chap. 9 (p. 163); Raven, “Britain, 1750-1830”

February 11: Godwin, *Caleb Williams*, to end; Kelly, from *The English Jacobin Novel*

February 18: Edgeworth, *Belinda*, chaps. 1-16

February 25: Edgeworth, *Belinda*, chaps. 17-31

March 4: Shelley, *Frankenstein*; Moretti, “Graphs”


April 4: Hogg, *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*; paper proposals due

April 15: Balzac, *Père Goriot*

April 22: Paper presentations, session one

April 29: Paper presentations, session two

Friday, May 7: Hard copies of papers due