



ELL 303 – 19th-century English and American Poetry

Asst. Prof. Michael D. Sheridan

Monday 14⁰⁰–16⁰⁰ / Friday 13⁰⁰–14⁰⁰

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Office Hours: Held online, made by email appointment

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Course Description

This course will examine texts and developments in 19th-century poetry written in the English language, with an eye toward better understanding poetic texts not only as literary texts (their form, style, content, etc.), but also as living documents that reflect their historical context(s). The course is divided into two broad units: Unit 1 covers British “Romanticism,” which was not an organized movement so much as a set of tendencies or attitudes expressed by a group of early 19th-century poets; while Unit 2 covers what might be called “Post-Romanticism,” reflecting the sea change that so-called Romantic poets effected upon the production of English-language verse. Yet it should be noted that these categorizations, like most categorizations, are problematic, and with that fact in mind, throughout the course we will be attempting as much as possible to question and critique the received wisdom regarding the texts that we read.

Course Format

Although there will be occasional lectures or mini-lectures outlining, for example, the historical and sociocultural background of the texts that we will read, for the most part this course is a reading- and discussion-based course. Therefore, you will be expected to come to each class having read, thought about, taken notes on, and prepared questions or comments relating to the assigned texts. The class will then proceed according to your preparation as we discuss, debate, and (hopefully) clarify your thoughts and ideas.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ recognize the major trends and styles in English-language poetry of the 19th century
- ✓ relate poetic (and, more broadly, intellectual) trends of the 19th century to their contemporary historical context(s)
- ✓ analyze and think critically and creatively about poetry in English, with a modern perspective
- ✓ conduct research independently and utilize the results of that research to produce analytical and critical work

Readings and Course Materials

All texts for the course will be provided for you via the course Moodle page, in either PDF format or via a URL link, as appropriate. You will be responsible for regularly checking the course Moodle page before class for assigned readings, updates, and announcements.

Most of the readings will consist of primary sources (*e.g.*, poems, contemporary essays, etc.), although introductory or analytical secondary sources (*e.g.*, book chapters, journal articles, etc.) will also be occasionally assigned.

You are also strongly encouraged to seek out and read, on your own, any other material that will help you. I am, of course, ready and willing and happy to point you in the direction of such sources, some of which may be found through the Department of English Language and Literature's "Useful Links for Students" page at <https://ell.tedu.edu.tr/en/ell/useful-links-for-students>: for example, biographies of the various poets whose work we will read are an indispensable resource, and the Poetry Foundation website (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/>) is one excellent source for these.

Grading

Your final grade will be determined according to the following criteria:

Ongoing (formative) assessment (30%)

- **Attendance and participation (15% of total grade)**

Because, as noted above, this is a reading- and discussion-based course, regular attendance at and active participation in class (and, if applicable, on Moodle forums) are expected and required. The attendance portion of your grade counts for 5% of your total grade (determined based directly on the percentage of class hours attended), while the participation portion of your grade counts for 10% of your total grade

- **Reading responses (15% of total grade)**

Over the course of the semester, you will write a total of five (5) short (approximately 350 to 500 words) reading responses to an assigned poem of your choice; each response will be worth 3% of your total grade. Some of these responses may be submitted separately, while others may be posted in an open forum on the course Moodle page; in any case, the content of and approach to adopt with each response will vary. More details about these reading responses will be provided in the first week of class, and periodically in class throughout the semester.

Summative assessment (70%)

- **Midterm essay (30% of total grade)**

You will be expected to write a midterm essay of approximately 1,000–1,500 words focusing on a poem of your choice (which must not be a poem that we have focused on in class). More details, plus a list of potential poems, will be provided via Moodle, email, and/or in class. Your midterm essay will be due no later than Friday, November 26.

- **Final essay (40% of total grade)**

You will be expected to write a final essay of approximately 2,000–2,500 words, which (if you wish) may be a continuation on and expansion of your midterm essay. More details will be provided via Moodle, email, and/or in class. Your final essay will be due no later than Friday, January 14.

Statement on Academic Integrity

TED University is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity and ethical conduct. Such a level of ethical behavior and academic integrity will be expected in this course. Participating in behavior that violates academic integrity—e.g., unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments, plagiarism, multiple submissions of the same assignment and paper, cheating on examinations, fabricating information, helping another person to cheat, having unauthorized advance access to examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, or any other action deemed as giving an unfair academic advantage—will result in disciplinary action. For more information on what constitutes ethical academic integrity at TED University, please see the following page: <https://student.tedu.edu.tr/en/student/principles-of-academic-integrity>.

Also please note that, in this course, any form of discrimination and/or harassment based on race, color, religion, creed, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, sexual orientation, age, or disability, among other personal characteristics or choices, are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Attendance, Make-up, and Late Submission Policies

You are required to attend class regularly: as noted above, simple attendance counts for 5% of your total grade, but please note that more than 12 class hours of absence will result in failure of the course.

Except in cases of documented illness or emergency, there will be no make-ups for any of the assessments listed above. Late submissions (again, with the exception of documented illness or emergency) will be accepted, but at a penalty of 10% of the relevant assessment's overall grade per 24-hour period.

Tentative Course Schedule

Below you will find a thematic schedule outlining the basic topics to be covered each week, along with the names of the poets whose work we will likely be reading. The precise details of each class' and each week's reading will be provided via Moodle, email, and/or in class as the semester progresses, but please keep in mind that you are responsible for checking on and keeping up with the assigned reading before coming to class, in order to facilitate discussion.

Please note that, as indicated by the word "tentative" above, the schedule below is subject to change, with any changes to be announced via Moodle, email, and/or in class.

Week 1 (Oct. 4 + 8): Introduction

UNIT 1: "ROMANTICISM"

Week 2 (Oct. 11 + 15): Nature and Emotion before the Romantics

- Poems by Robert Burns, Thomas Gray, Thomas Moore, Alexander Pope, and Charlotte Smith

Week 3 (Oct. 18 + 22): Nature and Emotion among the Romantics

- Poems and other works by George Gordon, Lord Byron; Samuel Taylor Coleridge; John Keats; Percy Bysshe Shelley; and William Wordsworth

Week 4 (Oct. 25): Innocence and the Loss of Innocence

- Poems by William Blake and William Wordsworth
- Please note that we will not have class on Friday, October 29 due to the celebration of Republic Day.

Week 5 (Nov. 1 + 5): Imagination and the Poet as Prophet and Social Critic

- Poems and other works by Anna Laetitia Barbauld; William Blake; George Gordon, Lord Byron; Samuel Taylor Coleridge; John Keats; and Percy Bysshe Shelley

Week 6 (Nov. 8 + 12): Romantic Narrative Poetry

- Poems by George Gordon, Lord Byron; Samuel Taylor Coleridge; John Keats; and William Wordsworth

Week 7 (Nov. 15 + 19): Review and Prep for Midterm Essay

- Please note that your midterm essay will be due no later than Friday, November 26.

UNIT 2: "POST-ROMANTICISM"

Week 8 (Nov. 22 + 26): The Romantic Influence in the United States and Ireland

- Poems by William Cullen Bryant, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Edgar Allan Poe, and James Clarence Mangan

Weeks 9–10 (Nov. 29 + Dec. 3, Dec. 6 + 10): Victorian Poetry

- Poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning; Robert Browning; Christina Rossetti; Dante Gabriel Rossetti; and Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Weeks 11–12 (Dec. 13 + 17, Dec. 20 + 24): The Birth of American Poetry

- Poems by Emily Dickinson, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, and Walt Whitman

Week 13 (Dec. 27 + 31): Other Developments in the Mid- and Late 19th Century

- Poems by Stephen Crane, Thomas Hardy, Gerard Manley Hopkins, Algernon Charles Swinburne, and William Butler Yeats

Week 14 (Jan. 3 + 7): Review and Prep for Final Essay

- Please note that your final essay will be due no later than Friday, January 14.