

This class examined the culture of the English Enlightenment and of Romanticism. Through essays and class discussions, students were asked to analyze the ideas that informed these cultures as represented in literature and to seek out contrasts and parallels between cultural mores, to explore changing cultural perspectives and to integrate history, literature, religion, philosophy and art to build a comprehensive view of the English world from 1660 - 1850. The meanings of love, gender, beauty, truth and time were major themes.

Students read the following:

J.M. Roberts: A History Of The World (Chapter 6: Ideas New And Old);

Andrew Marvell: The Garden;

Thomas Hobbes: Leviathan (selections);

Jonathan Swift: A Modest Proposal; The Lady's Dressing Room;

John Dryden: Ode On St. Cecilia's Day

May Astell: Some Reflections Upon Marriage;

Daniel Defoe: Roxana (selection);

Anne Finch: The Answer, A Nocturnal Reverie;

Jane Kenyon: The Pond at Dusk;

Lady Mary Wortley Montagu: The Lover: A Ballad, Epistle From Mrs. Yonge To Her Husband, An Answer To A Love Letter;

John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester: A Satire Against Mankind, A Ramble In St. James's Park, A Letter From Artemesia in the Town to Chloe in the Country;

Alexander Pope: An Essay On Man, Epistle 2. To A Lady;

James Thomson: The Seasons (Winter);

Thomas Gray: Elegy In A Country Churchyard, The Bard, Ode on the Death of a Favorite Cat;

William Collins: Ode To Simplicity, Ode To Evening;

William Cowper: The Castaway;

Mary Wollstonecraft: A Vindication Of The Rights Of Women (selection);

Robert Burns: My Love Is Like A Red, Red Rose, Auld Lang Syne, Is There For Honest Poverty;

William Blake: All Religions Are One, There Is No Natural Religion, from Songs Of Innocence: Introduction, The Shepherd, The Ecchoing Green, The Lamb, The Little Black Boy, The Chimney Sweeper, A Cradle Song, The Divine Image, Holy Thursday, On Another's Sorrow, from The Songs Of Experience: Introduction, Earth's Answer, The Clod and The Pebble, Holy Thursday, The Chimney Sweeper, The Tyger, The Garden Of Love, A Poison Tree, A Little Boy Lost, selection from Milton;

William Wordsworth: Anecdote For Fathers, Lines Written in Early Spring, To My Sister, Tintern Abbey, Lucy Gray, selection from The Prelude, My Heart Leaps Up, The Solitary Reaper, The World Is Too Much With Me, She Was A Phantom Of Delight, I Wandered Lonely As A Cloud, Ode: Intimations Of Immortality;

Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Pantisocracy; The Aeolian Harp; The Lime Tree Bower, My Prison; Kubla Kahn, The Rime Of The Ancient Mariner, Christabel, The Nightingale, Frost at Midnight, Dejection: An Ode;

George Noel Gordon, Lord Byron: She Walks In Beauty, Prometheus, Stanzas To Music, selections from Don Juan;

Percy Bysshe Shelley: To Wordsworth; Hymn To Intellectual Beauty, Ozymandias, selections from Prometheus Unbound, Ode To The West Wind, Choruses From Hellas;

Mary Shelley: Frankenstein;

John Keats: On First Looking Into Chapman's Homer, The Eve of St. Agnes; La Belle Dame Sans Merci, Ode To Psyche, Ode to a Nightingale, Ode on a Grecian Urn, Ode on Melancholy, To Autumn;

Charlotte Bronte: Jane Eyre

Elizabeth Rigby: An Anti-Christian Composition (contemporary review of Jane Eyre);

William Shakespeare: As You Like It;

Charles McGrath: Glamorizing The Progress of a Notorious Rake (about Wilmot), NYTimes, 2005

The New York Times: review of Lyndall Gordon's Vindication, a life of Mary Wollstonecraft

Daphne Merkin: How The Brontes Became Romantic Icons, review of The Bronte Myth by Lucasta Miller

Clare Muller A Brother's Keeper: The Other Wordsworth, NYTimes about Dorothy Wordworth (2009)

We also listened to musical selections from Mozart and Beethoven and looked at visual art from the Enlightenment into the Romantic period, especially the art of William Blake and J.M.W. Turner.

Written Assignments:

There was one final substantial essay:

An assessment of the concept of time in terms of the roles of eternity, mutability and annihilation in Romantic literature and philosophy.

During the trimester, students wrote four shorter essays:

An assessment of Enlightenment ideas in Hobbes's Leviathan and Swift's A Modest Proposal to Enlightenment values;

An examination of Augustan attitudes toward gender and marriage;

An assessment of Romantic attitudes toward childhood, particularly in Frankenstein, Jane Eyre, Blake and Wordsworth;.

In class essay about Jane Eyre.

Students who missed a deadline did one extra essay:

- An extra poetry analysis.