

Vorlesung / lecture:

Romanticism

(= Survey British Literature and Culture, part 3)

TUE 16-18 // ZHSG (Zentrales Hörsaal- und Seminargebäude) 0.001

Office hours:

THU 12.30-13.30 // Room 5/E/20 – Please enter your name in the list next to my office door.

Course description:

Focussing on the British Isles, the lecture will offer an advanced introduction to the literature, culture and intellectual history of the Romantic period. We will thus investigate the critical decades around 1800 when an older aristocratic and agrarian order finally gave way to the onslaughts of the bourgeoisie, of industrialization and of new ideas about the place of humankind in the world. In particular, we will be interested in how literary texts contributed or responded to these dramatic developments.

The course is part of the lecture series "Survey British Literature and Culture" and will pick up from Prof. Karremann's last contribution to the series, "The Long 18th Century." (It is not necessary to have attended the former lecture in order to participate in the current one.)

In preparation for the lecture (i.e. before the first meeting), all participants should have read at least the following two chapters from Peter J. Kitson, "The Romantic Period," *English Literature in Context*, ed. Paul Poplawski, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017) 274-363: "Historical Overview" (279-293) and "Literary Overview" (293-313). These texts are available on the WueCampus site for the lecture. Please also note the suggestions for introductory and further reading below (in the lecture programme at the end of this syllabus).

22/10 Introduction

Organisational frameworks // Issues of periodization // Revolution & reaction: A first panorama of (cultural) history // Romanticism vs. neo-classicism // A first glance at two 'Romantic texts' // 'We' & Romanticism: Presentist and historicist perspectives // Approach and objectives of the lecture // Reading for & programme of the lecture

Key primary texts: S. T. Coleridge, "Kubla Khan" (1797/1816) // Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818).

29/10 'Romanticism' and 'Romantic poetry' – Conceptual and historical approximations

On the (ab-)uses of terminological categorization // The history of the terms 'romantic' and 'Romanticism' // Before Romanticism: Neo-classical literature & the Enlightenment // Towards Romanticism: The impact of Rousseau and Kant // Romanticism in the visual arts // Romanticism as a term in literary scholarship // Romantic poetry – and other modes of writing in the Romantic period // The (limitations of the) traditional canon // Newer approaches and problematizations // Wordsworth's "Preface" as a 'Romantic manifesto' // Epistemology, poetics & politics in the "Preface".

Key primary text: W. Wordsworth, "Preface" to the *Lyrical Ballads*.

05/11 Ruralism, supernaturalism & social critique – Wordsworth and Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads* (1798/1800)

Key primary texts: W. Wordsworth, "The Female Vagrant" / "Tintern Abbey" // S. T. Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner".

12/11 Blake and the world of the 'Industrial Revolution'

Key primary texts: From W. Blake's *Songs of Experience* (1794): "The Chimney Sweeper" / "London" // From Blake's *Milton* (1804-10): "And did those feet in ancient time".

19/11 "The master-theme of the epoch" – Literary responses & political reactions to the French Revolution

Key secondary text: David Duff, "From Revolution to Romanticism: The Historical Context to 1800," *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. Wu (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999) 25-37 [[accessible online](#) through the website of the university library]. – Note primary texts mentioned by Duff.

Further reading: P. M. S. Dawson, "Poetry in an Age of Revolution," *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 56-81.

26/11 "Rule Britannia" – 'Britishness', imperialism, and slavery

Key secondary text: Alan Richardson, "Slavery and Romantic Writing," *A Companion to Romanticism*, ed. Wu, 499-508 [[accessible online](#) through the website of the university library]. – Note primary texts mentioned by Richardson.

03/12 The 'second generation' I – Byron, Orientalism, and the Greek Revolution

Key primary text: Byron, *Don Juan* (1819-24).

10/12 The 'second generation' II – Percy B. Shelley and John Keats

Key primary texts: P. B. Shelley, "Mont Blanc" (1816/17) // J. Keats, "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1819/20).

17/12 Female perspectives and the tradition of 'the Gothic' – Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Key primary text: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818).

FR: Stuart Curran, "Women Readers, Women Writers," *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Curran, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 169-186.

07/01 A new sense of the past: Walter Scott

Key primary text: Walter Scott, *Waverley; or, 'Tis Sixty Years Since* (1814).

14/01 Towards the modern novel: Jane Austen

Key primary text: J. Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)

21/01 On the brink? – Britain and British poetry in the 1820s & 1830s

Key primary texts: Felicia Dorothea Hemans, "The Homes of England" (1828) // John Clare, "Remembrances" (1832/1908).

28/01 Romantic poetry: Why and wherefore? – A conclusion // Wrap-up

Key primary texts: W. Wordsworth, *The Prelude or, Growth of a Poet's Mind; An Autobiographical Poem* (1798-1850) // P. B. Shelley, "A Defence of Poetry" (1821/1840)

FR: Stuart Curran, "Romantic Poetry: Why and Wherefore?", *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Curran, 2nd ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2010) 209-228.

04/02 Final test

Introductory & further reading:

a) Romantic texts ('primary' texts):

Apart from looking at **poetry by key figures of the era** (such as Blake, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley or Keats) it is recommended that participants prepare for the lecture by **reading one of the following novels**: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Walter Scott's *Waverley* (1814) or Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818).

b) Texts on Romanticism (basic 'secondary' texts):

Peter J. Kitson's section on "The Romantic Period" in *English Literature in Context* – ed. Paul Poplawski, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017) 274-363 – offers a highly readable and useful basic introduction to both Romantic literature and its historical contexts. In preparation for the lecture (i.e. before the first meeting), all participants should have read at least the following two chapters from Kitson's text: **"Historical Overview" (279-293) and "Literary Overview" (293-313)**. These texts are available on the WueCampus site for the lecture.

A particularly useful and exhaustive handbook of Romanticism is **Duncan Wu, ed. *A Companion to Romanticism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999)**, which is accessible online through the website and catalogue of the university library. As an introduction to the lecture, the following two entries in this handbook are particularly recommended:

- **Seamus Perry, "Romanticism: The Brief History of a Concept"** (3-11) and
- **David Duff, "From Revolution to Romanticism: The Historical Context to 1800"** (25-37)

Michael Ferber's *Romanticism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010), provides a concise and student-oriented general introduction to 'Romanticism' from a *transnational* perspective.

For a good guide to 'reading' or 'dealing with' individual Romantic poems, see **Fiona Stafford's *Reading Romantic Poetry*** (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), which is accessible online through the website and catalogue of the university library.

Also accessible online and excellent, but considerably more research-oriented is the ***Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran, 2nd ed.** (Cambridge University Press, 2010).

A very good introduction in German is **Rolf Breuer's *Englische Romantik: Literatur und Kultur 1760-1830*** (München: Fink / UTB, 2012).

For a social history of the period, please see (as always) **James Vernon, *Modern Britain: 1750 to the Present*** (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2017), which constitutes vol. 4 of *The Cambridge History of Britain*. The relevant section is part I: "1750-1819: The Ends of the Ancien Regime" (1-109).