

Major Field Exam in Romantic Literature

(UPDATED NOVEMBER 2024)

YORK UNIVERSITY

Student: _____

Supervisor: _____

Anticipated Exam Date: _____

Students are expected to familiarize themselves with a wide range of texts from the field. A core list is provided in each of the four categories, Prose Fiction, Poetry, Non-Fiction Prose, and Drama. Selections and substitutions can be made in consultation with the student's supervisor. The finalized reading list must be submitted to the Graduate Study Committee at least two months before the written examination. The list should be submitted alongside the default list below, annotated to make clear how the student has met the requirements here outlined.

The list is designed to help prepare students for various facets of their intellectual and professional lives, in addition to the dissertation: for example, teaching an introductory survey course in the field; being conversant with the field and its canons as they have emerged in the last one hundred years; and conducting scholarship in the field.

Please note: it is expected that students will supplement their readings with pertinent scholarship/critical writings about the texts and the field of Romantic literature. This research may include reading a judicious selection of critical writings or reviews from contemporary (Romantic-period) periodicals. The student's supervisor can offer suggestions and guidance on Romantic criticism.

Prose Fiction

PROSE FICTION	NOTES:
Anon. <i>The Woman of Colour: A Tale</i>	Students must select fourteen texts from this list of sixteen.
Austen, Jane Any three of her novels	
Beckford, William <i>Vathek</i>	
Burney, Frances <i>Camilla</i>	

PROSE FICTION	NOTES:
Dacre, Charlotte <i>Zofloya</i>	
Godwin, William <i>Caleb Williams, or Things as They Are</i>	
Hogg, Thomas <i>Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner</i>	
Inchbald, Elizabeth <i>A Simple Story</i>	
Maturin, Charles <i>Melmoth the Wanderer</i>	
Peacock, Thomas Love <i>Nightmare Abbey</i>	
Radcliffe, Ann <i>The Mysteries of Udolpho</i> OR <i>The Romance of the Forest</i> OR <i>The Italian</i>	
Scott, Walter <i>Waverley</i> OR <i>The Heart of Mid-Lothian</i>	
Shelley, Mary <i>Frankenstein</i>	
Walpole, Horace <i>The Castle of Otranto</i>	

Poetry

POETRY		NOTES:
Aikin, Anna Laetitia	From Epistles on Women: "Epistle I"; "Epistle III"; "On seeing the sun shine in at my window for the first time in the year"; "Ode to Ludlow Castle"	Students must select fourteen poets from this list of eighteen. Knowledge of all texts will be expected; in addition, students should be sufficiently familiar with three to four works by each poet to be able to discuss them in some detail during the examination.
Blake, William	<i>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</i> <i>The Marriage of Heaven and Hell</i> <i>Urizen</i> <i>Milton</i>	
Burns, Robert	"To a Mouse," "To a Louse," "Tam o'Shanter," "Holy Willie's Prayer," "Hallowe'en," "Address to a Haggis"	
Byron, George Gordon	Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Lyrics, a selection Don Juan, Books 1.4 & 11ff	

POETRY		NOTES:
Clare, John	"I am!"; "I hid my love"; "Pastoral Poesy"; "To John Clare"; "The Dying Child"; "All Nature has a Feeling"; "Autumn"; "Autumn (I love the fitful gust)"; "December"	
Coleridge, S. T.	"The Eolian Harp," "This Lime-Tree Bower My Prison," "France An Ode," "Kubla Khan," "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Frost at Midnight," "Fears in Solitude," "The Nightingale," "Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni," "Christabel," "Dejection an Ode"	
Cowper, William	<i>The Task (Book 1)</i>	
Crabbe, George	<i>The Village (Book 1)</i>	
Keats, John	"To Autumn," "Ode on Melancholy," "Ode to Psyche," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on Indolence," "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," "Eve of St. Agnes," "Lamia," "Bright Star," "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer," "Endymion"	
Landon, Letitia	"The Proud Ladye," "Revenge," "Love's Last Lesson," "The Little Shroud," "Sappho's Song," "Lines Written Under a Picture of a Girl Burning a Love letter"	
Moore, Thomas	<i>Lalla Rookh</i>	
More, Hannah	from <i>Cheap Repository Tracts</i> : "The Shepherd of Salisbury-Plain," "Black Giles the Poacher," "An Allegory, Showing how Robbers Without Can Never Get Into a House Unless there are Traitors Within," "The Black Slave Trade"	
Robinson, Mary	"January 1795," "Bounding Billow," "The Camp," "London's Summer Morning," "The Haunted Beach," "To the Poet Coleridge"	
Scott, Walter	<i>The Lay of the Last Minstrel</i>	

POETRY		NOTES:
Shelley, Percy	<i>Alastor</i> , “Hymn to Intellectual Beauty,” “Ozymandias,” “Lines Written among Euganean Hills,” “Ode to the West Wind,” <i>The Mask of Anarchy</i> , “The Sensitive Plant,” “To a Skylark,” “Letter to Maria Gisborne,” <i>Epipsychidion</i> , <i>Adonais</i> , “The Triumph of Life”	
Smith, Charlotte	from <i>Elegiac Sonnets</i> : “Written at the Close of Spring,” “To Sleep,” “To Night,” “Written in the Church-yard at Middleton in Sussex,” “On being cautioned against walking on an headland overlooking the sea,” “The Sea View,” “To the Muse”	
Southey, Robert	<i>Thalaba</i>	
Wordsworth, William	<i>Lyrical Ballads</i> ; Poems, 1807, a selection; <i>Poems</i> , 1815, a selection; <i>The Prelude</i> (1805); <i>The Excursion</i> (Book 1)	

Non-Fiction Prose

NON-FICTION PROSE		NOTES:
Abu Taleb, Mirza Kahn	<i>Travels of Mirza Abu Taleb Khan</i>	Students must select fourteen authors from this list of nineteen.
Baillie, Joanna	Introductory essay, <i>Plays on the Passions</i>	
Burke, Edmund	<i>Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful</i> , <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> (selections)	
Byron	Letters, a selection from the Longman and Broadview anthologies”	
Coleridge, S. T.	<i>Biographia Literaria</i> – selected chapters (1, 3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18) Shakespearean criticism, a selection (<i>Hamlet</i> , <i>Lear</i>)	
De Quincey, Thomas	<i>Confessions of an English Opium Eater</i> , “The English Mail Coach,” “The Literature of Knowledge and the Literature of Power”	
Equiano, Olaudah	<i>Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano</i>	

NON-FICTION PROSE		NOTES:
Hazlitt, William	“My First Acquaintance with Poets,” “On Gusto,” “The Indian Jugglers,” “Coriolanus,” “Character of Mr. Burke,” “A Farewell to Essay Writing,” “On a Landscape of Nicolas Pousin,” “On the Pleasure of Hating,” “What is the People?” <i>Lectures on the English Poets</i> The Spirit of the Age – selections (“Jeremy Bentham,” “William Godwin,” “Mr. Wordsworth,” “Sir Walter Scott,” “Mr. Malthus”)	
Keats, John	Letters, a selection from the Longman and Broadview anthologies	
Lamb, Charles	“On the Tragedies of Shakespeare” “Christ’s Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago,” “Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading,” “Old China”	
Paine, Thomas	<i>The Rights of Man</i>	
Peacock, Thomas Love	<i>The Four Ages of Poetry</i>	
Reeve, Clara	<i>The Progress of Romance</i> , Evenings I-VII	
Sancho, Ignatius	<i>Letters</i>	
Shelley, Percy	<i>A Defence of Poetry</i>	
Stedman, John Gabriel	<i>Narrative of a Five Years Expedition</i>	
Wollstonecraft, Mary	<i>Vindication of the Rights of Woman</i>	
Wordsworth, Dorothy	<i>Journals</i>	
Wordsworth, William	Preface to <i>Lyrical Ballads</i>	

Drama

DRAMA		NOTES:
Baillie, Joanna	<i>De Montfort AND/OR Orra</i>	Students must Student must select six plays or lyrical dramas from this list.
Beddoes, T. L.	<i>Death's Jest-Book</i>	
Byron	<i>Manfred</i>	
Inchbald, Elizabeth	<i>Lovers' Vows</i>	
Holcroft, Thomas	<i>The Road to Ruin</i>	
Shelley, Percy	<i>The Cenci AND/OR Prometheus Unbound</i>	
Walpole, Horace	<i>The Mysterious Mother</i>	

Updated November 2024