Course Description:
In this course we will read—and re-read—three novels by Jane Austen. Our first reading will track the development of Austen’s unique approach to the realist novel. Our re-reading will investigate how that unique approach participated in Romantic debates about art, personhood, and politics. Austen was an active participant in these debates, a sharp, subtle, and principled writer who tended to explore competing arguments and assumptions rather than render explicit judgments. She weighed in on aesthetic controversies involving beauty and the picturesque, the appropriate language for literature, the ethics of readers’ identification with characters, and the truth claims inherent in realism. She considered philosophical questions about how individuals come to know the world and themselves, and the value and danger of a complex inner life of emotion and imagination. She examined the competing claims her contemporaries made for the primacy of the individual, the family, and the community, and for local rootedness and cosmopolitan independence.

This course fulfills the English Department’s Literary History II requirement.

Structure:
Before the January session begins, we will read Pride and Prejudice, Emma, and Persuasion on our own. Our reading will be guided by six assignments, two for each novel. During the January session, we will re-read these three novels and encounter for the first time other works of Romantic painting, literature, and nonfiction prose. We will also have two optional Reading Teas in which we will gather in my office (or Downey Lounge) to read aloud from the next day’s materials, as would have been typical in the early nineteenth century.

Course Requirements:
• six pre-session reading and reflection exercises (5% each)
• three in-session reading and reflection exercises (5% each)
• three 4-5 p. essays (15% each)
• class participation (10%)

Policies:
• No computers are allowed in class.
• Please be on time. Repeated tardiness will lower your grade.
• Students may miss one session for any reason without penalty. If planned in advance, a second session may be missed without penalty if additional work is done to compensate for the absence. Additional absences will lower your grade. If you miss four or more sessions, I will ask you to withdraw from the course.
• Late papers will be penalized two points per day beginning the day they are due. No work will be accepted after Jan. 20.
Wed. 1/6: Romantic knowledge I: reason and imagination
Morning session (10:00-12:30):
- Shelley, from “A Defence of Poetry” up to the *** on p. 863 (Norton)
- Keats, “Ode to a Nightingale” (Norton)
- Keats, letters to Bailey (Nov. 22, 1817) and to George and Thomas Keats (Dec. 21, 27?, 1817) (Norton)
Afternoon session (2:30-4:30):
- *Emma*, vol. I

Th. 1/7: Transparent and literary language
Morning session:
- Locke, “Of the Remedies of the foregoing Imperfections and Abuses [of words],” from *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (moodle)
- Wordsworth, “We are Seven,” “I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud,” and [The Blind Beggar; Bartholomew Fair] from Book Seventh of the 1805 *Prelude* (Norton)
- Byron, stanzas 96-76 of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* and Canto I of *Don Juan* (Norton)
- Clare, “Pastoral Poesy” and “The Peasant Poet” (Norton)
Afternoon session:
- *Emma*, vol. II
Reading Tea (4:45-5:45)

Fri. 1/8: Home and close-to-home: the beautiful and the picturesque
Morning session:
- Dorothy Wordsworth, from Alfoxden and Grasmere Journals (Norton)
- Keats, “To Autumn” (Norton)
- Paintings by Girtin and others (moodle)
Afternoon session:
- *Emma*, begin vol. III
Sat. 1/9: The Romantic individual I: interiority
  Morning session:
  • Smith, *Elegiac Sonnets* (Norton)
  • Wordsworth, [“Emotion Recollected in Tranquillity”] from Preface to *LB* (Norton)
  • Coleridge, “Frost at Midnight” (Norton)
  • Keats, “On Seeing the Elgin Marbles,” “When I have fears that I may cease to be,” “Ode on Melancholy” (Norton)
  • Clare, “I Am” (Norton)
  Office hours 1:30-2:30
  Afternoon session:
  • *Emma*, finish vol. III
  Office hours: 4:30-5:30

Sun. 1/10: no class

Mon. 1/11: Reading
  Morning session:
  • PAPER ONE DUE
  • Blake, “Introduction” to *Songs of Innocence* (Norton)
  • Lamb, from “On the Tragedies of Shakespeare” and “Detached Thoughts on Books and Reading” (Norton)
  • Keats, “On First Looking into Chapman’s Homer,” “On Sitting Down to Read *King Lear* Once Again” (Norton)
  • Wordsworth, [The Dream of the Arab] from Book Fifth of the 1805 *Prelude* (Norton)
  Afternoon session:
  • *Persuasion*, ch. 1-12
  • Shakespeare, sonnet #73 (moodle)
  • Keats, “To Autumn” (again!) (Norton)

Tues. 1/12: The Royal Navy / The Romantic individual II: localism and cosmopolitanism
  Morning session:
  • Byron, Canto First of *The Corsair* (moodle)
  • Portraits of Lord Nelson (moodle)
  • Recommended: Willis, from *In the Hour of Victory* (moodle)
  • Recommended: Wilson, from *Empire of the Deep* (moodle)
  • *Persuasion*, ch 13-end
  Office hours 1:30-2:30
  Afternoon session:
  • Byron, st. 11-12 of Canto II of *Don Juan* (Norton)
  • *Persuasion*, ch. 13-end
  Office hours: 4:30-5:30
Wed. 1/13: no class

Th. 1/14: Romantic knowledge II: observation
   Morning session:
   - PAPER TWO DUE
   - Clare, “[Mouse’s Nest]” (Norton)
   Afternoon session:
   - Pride and Prejudice, vol. I

Fri. 1/15: Particularity and universality
   Morning session:
   - Christ, from The Finer Optic (moodle)
   - Clare, “The Nightingale’s Nest” and “Clock-a-Clay” (Norton)
   Afternoon session:
   - Pride and Prejudice, vol. II
   Reading Tea (4:45-5:45)

Sat. 1/16: Sympathy and identification with literary characters
   Morning session:
   - Smith, from Theory of Moral Sentiments (moodle)
   - Radcliffe, from Mysteries of Udolpho (moodle)
   - De Quincey, “On the Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth” (Norton)
   Office hours 1:30-2:30
   Afternoon session:
   - Pride and Prejudice, vol. III
   Office hours: 4:30-5:00

Sun. 1/17 and Mon. 1/18: no class

Tues. 1/19: PAPER THREE DUE at 2:00 p.m.