

Course Objectives/Course Outline
Spokane Community College

Course Title: British Literature Since 1800
Prefix and Course Number: ENGL 209

Course Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, a student should be able to:

- Accurately assess the relationship between literary works and the historical contexts in which they were created and read, including the political, social, religious, and artistic milieu in which British authors wrote between the end of the Eighteenth Century and the present
- Paraphrase and demonstrate an accurate understanding of poetic, innovative, and/or otherwise unfamiliar or difficult language
- Identify characteristics associated with periods of literary history relevant to British literature since the end of the Eighteenth Century, such as Romanticism, Victorianism, Modernism, and Post-colonialism, and articulate ways in which specific texts reflect and are illuminated by these characteristics
- Identify and discuss relevant formal elements of poetry and prose, including genre categories (e.g., lyric poem, novel, well-made play); uses of figurative language; conventions of the sonnet and other poetic forms
- Articulate original critical positions and interpretations of post-1800 literary works, using textual evidence appropriately as support
- Locate, and demonstrate an understanding of, relevant critical or scholarly findings about works of British literature since 1800, and use these findings to advance insights about primary texts

Course Outline:

(Note: Authors and titles are meant to be illustrative, not exhaustive.)

I. Overview

- A. Historical context: Why 1800 as a cut-off?
- B. Continuity with the past, limitations of "period" studies
- C. Canonical and non-canonical works
 1. The importance of knowing the major figures
 2. Matthew Arnold and "touchstones"
 3. The value of encountering "minor" voices

II. Major Periods of post-1800 British Literature

- A. Romantic Period (1798-1832)
 1. What was the Romantic movement?
 - a. Rethinking the purpose of poetry
 - b. New attitudes toward nature
 - c. Passion, mysticism, and individualism
 2. First-generation Romantics
 - a. Mary Wollstonecraft
 - b. Samuel Coleridge
 - c. William Blake
 - d. William Wordsworth
 3. Second-generation Romantics

- a. John Keats
 - b. Lord Byron
 - c. Percy Shelley
 - d. Mary Shelley: Frankenstein and the invention of science fiction
- B. Victorian Period (1832-1901)
- 1. What did it mean to be a "Victorian"?
 - a. Queen Victoria's reign
 - b. Common misconceptions about Victorian Britain
 - c. Colonialism and the expansion of the British Empire
 - 2. Early Victorians
 - a. Alfred, Lord Tennyson
 - b. Elizabeth Barrett Browning
 - c. Robert Browning
 - d. Elizabeth Gaskell
 - e. Emily Bronte
 - f. Charles Dickens
 - 3. Late Victorians
 - a. Christina Rossetti
 - b. Matthew Arnold
 - c. Oscar Wilde
 - d. George Bernard Shaw
- C. Modern Period (1901-1945)
- 1. Turn-of-the-century imperialism
 - a. Rudyard Kipling
 - b. Joseph Conrad
 - c. E. M. Forster
 - 2. Modernism
 - a. Virginia Woolf
 - b. D. H. Lawrence
 - c. W. B. Yeats
 - d. James Joyce
 - e. T. S. Eliot
 - 3. World War II and literature
 - a. George Orwell
 - b. W. H. Auden
 - c. Christopher Isherwood
- D. Contemporary Period (1945-present)
- 1. Post-war writers
 - a. Samuel Beckett
 - b. Dylan Thomas
 - c. Seamus Heaney
 - d. Philip Larkin
 - e. Caryl Churchill
 - f. Harold Pinter
 - 2. Post-colonialist issues and views
 - a. Derek Walcott
 - b. Salman Rushdie
 - 3. Emerging voices at the turn of the century
 - a. Kazuo Ishiguro
 - b. Martin Amis
 - c. Zadie Smith

III. Conclusions

A. Continuity and change

B. Imagining the future of British Literature