

Mapping the Romantic Imagination

Instructor Mark Algee-Hewitt

Time/Location T/Th 3:00-4:50; 240-110

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Description

Place and space was particularly important to authors of the Romantic period. Whether it is the poetry of Byron or Keats, the Gothic novels of Radcliffe, or even the writing of Jane Austen, a sense of place is highly important to authors of this time. As characters in their writing move from place to place, from mountains, to cities, to forests, and across oceans, the geography of the writing informs their themes, plots and ideas. What kinds of writing could happen in what kinds of places? Did certain settings allow for different kinds of ideas? To answer these questions, we will combine critical reading with the new computational techniques of spatial humanities.

During the this class, we will build a XenoGraph: an interactive digital map of the places and geographic spaces that informed the writing of British Romantic novelists, poets and essayists between 1780 and 1830. We will use the techniques of ‘thick mapping’ to explore the concepts of the foreign and the familiar, travel and return, and the relationship of scenery to ideas. We will see how geography plays a role in the literary imagination, both for authors and the characters that they create, and we will explore its aesthetic, literary, and even political dimensions. Throughout the class, we will supplement our readings and discussions of Romantic literature with digital analyses as we create a new map of the physical and imaginative geographic interests of the Romantic period. Authors include Felicia Hemans, Lord Byron, Anna Barbauld, Ann Radcliff, and Sydney Owenson. This course fulfills the “Spatial Humanities” requirement of the Digital Humanities Minor.

Texts

Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*

Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

Sydney Owenson: *The Missionary: An Indian Tale*

Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*

Additional readings on the syllabus, primarily selections from poems and critical essays will be available to download/read from CourseWork.

Work and Assignments

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| 1. Participation (online and in class) | 20% |
| 2. XenoGraph Contributions | 35% |
| 3. Short Essay/Text Mapping (due Oct 25) | 20% |
| 4. Final Project/Paper (due Dec 6) | 25% |

Class Format

Since we will be thinking both critically and technically about the meaning of place in Romantic writing, we will divide our class time accordingly between discussing the work we are reading in a traditional seminar format and working together to build the XenoGraph through in class lab-work. In preparing for class, therefore, you will not only need to come prepared having read and, hopefully, understood the work we will be discussing, but also prepared with specific suggestions and ideas for how each work fits within the larger scheme of our class project. Moreover, since we will be designing the project together, we will also be discussing and creating certain technical aspects in class as well.

Participation

In a class of this size whose goal is to explore new ways of studying the humanities, you are all tasked with keeping the spirit of experimentation alive. This is another way of saying that participation is mandatory: your voice must be heard contributing, questioning or challenging. Not only will you have the opportunity to do this in class, but you will also have the option of participating in online discussion forums. The precise nature of these will be revealed in class.

The XenoGraph

As discussed in the course description, the goal of this class is to create the Romantic XenoGraph: a interactive and layered map of the geography of the texts that we will be reading together throughout the term. To build this, we will use GIS software to combine geo-spatial and historical information with critical analysis of the texts we will read. Much of our work on this project will happen during the class period, both together as a class, and in smaller breakaway groups. During our class discussions and lab work, however, we will only be able to cover some of the places discussed in each work. While we will build the XenoGraph in class together during our discussions and class meetings, some of this work will fall to you. For each class, therefore, one student will be responsible for noting the place names and locations in the texts that we did not have a chance to discuss and adding them on her/his own to the XenoGraph. Likewise, since these additional entries will not contain any critical data, you are all responsible for adding some critical information about these entries to the XenoGraph: each student will be required to add four additional critical entries throughout the term (one every other week). While you are encouraged to make additions to entries that we have not covered in class, once during the term you are also required to add some of our own analysis to one of the class entries as well. Given the importance of this project to the class, this will represent a full 35% of your total grade.

Short Essay

While further detail on this project will be given to you in an official assignment, your task in the short project (which is both an essay and a project) will be to duplicate our work together as a class by selecting an additional work from the period that has some geographical or spatial resonance and mapping it using the techniques we develop in class.

Term Paper

You will have a paper or project of between 8 and 10 pages due on the last day of class. More details on this assignment will be given later in the term; however, being that our class is constructed around the points of contact between literary geographies and the physical world, your final project will require you to explore this boundary.

Attendance and/or Late Policy

There is no required attendance for this course; however, it is strongly encouraged. You should keep in mind, however, that participation forms a full 20% of your grade and this includes participation both in class AND online: if you aren't in class to participate, you forfeit a portion of this grade.

Papers are due on the date indicated, unless otherwise changed. Late papers will have grades deducted at a rate of 1% per day; however, extensions are certainly available on a case by case basis as long as you discuss this with me **BEFORE** the due date itself.

Students with Documented Disabilities

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE). Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. The OAE is located at 563 Salvatierra Walk (phone: 723-1066, URL:<http://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/oea>).

Honor Code

The Honor Code is the University's statement on academic integrity written by students in 1921. It articulates University expectations of students and faculty in establishing and maintaining the highest standards in academic work:

The Honor Code is an undertaking of the students, individually and collectively:

1. that they will not give or receive aid in examinations; that they will not give or receive unpermitted aid in class work, in the preparation of reports, or in any other work that is to be used by the instructor as the basis of grading;
2. that they will do their share and take an active part in seeing to it that others as well as themselves uphold the spirit and letter of the Honor Code.
3. The faculty on its part manifests its confidence in the honor of its students by refraining from proctoring examinations and from taking unusual and unreasonable precautions to prevent the forms of dishonesty mentioned above. The faculty will also avoid, as far as practicable, academic procedures that create temptations to violate the Honor Code.
4. While the faculty alone has the right and obligation to set academic requirements, the students and faculty will work together to establish optimal conditions for honorable academic work.

Class Schedule

Sept 26	Introduction Percy Shelley, "Fragment: To Italy" (distributed in class) Lord Byron, "Stanzas to the Po" (distributed in class)
Sept 28	Spatial Thinking /Spatial Technologies Introduction to the Xenograph David J. Bodenhamer, "The Potential of Spatial Humanities"

English 154 – Mapping the Romantic Imagination

- Oct 3 **Geography as Experience**
Coleridge, “Hymn Before Sunrise”
Percy Shelley, “Mont Blanc”
Felicia Hemans, “The Homes of England”
Kant, selections from *The Critique of Judgment*
- Oct 5 **Mediated Space**
Percy Shelley, “Alastor”
Michael Dear, “Creativity and Place”
- Oct 10 **Intruders in the Domestic**
Jane Austen, *Persuasion*
- Oct 12 *Persuasion* continued
- Oct 17 *Persuasion* continued
- Oct 19 **The Politics of Geographic History**
Percy Shelley, “Ode to Liberty”;
Lord Byron, “Thoughts on Freedom,” “On this Day I complete my Thirty-Sixth Year”
- Oct 24 **Gothic Spaces/Gothic Places**
Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*
- Oct 26 *The Mysteries of Udolpho* continued
- Oct 31 *The Mysteries of Udolpho* continued
- Nov 2 *The Mysteries of Udolpho* continued
Short Essay Due
- Nov 7 **Self and Place**
Mary Wollstonecraft, *Letters Written in Sweden, Norway and Denmark*
- Nov 9 *Letters Written in Sweden*, continued
- Nov 14 **Home and Away**
William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805)
- Nov 16 *The Prelude* (continued)
- Nov 21 & 23 **No Classes (Thanksgiving)**

English 154 – Mapping the Romantic Imagination

- Nov 28 **The Geography of Empire**
 Sydney Owenson *The Missionary*
- Nov 30
 The Missionary continued
- Dec 5 **The Prophetic Imaginary**
 Percy Shelley, “The Witch of Atlas”
 William Blake, “America a Prophecy”
- Dec 7 **Roadways and Journeys**
 Thomas DeQuincy, “The English Mail Coach”
- Final Essay Due**