

Veranstalter	Dr. Philipp Hunnekuhl
Thema	Revolution and Reaction in British Romantic Literature [AA-V3a/b, ENG-12, AA7, AA10, LAA9, LAA12, AA-MA1, AA-MA2, AA-MA6, AA-W, AA-WB]
Art der Veranstaltung	Sem. II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53-550
Zeit	Do 12-14
Raum	Phil 1219
Beginn	22. Oktober 2015

Course description:

British Romanticism is notoriously difficult to pin down in political terms. Late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century Britain was under the spell of political revolutions abroad, in America and France, whilst undergoing profound social and economic changes domestically, in the course of the agricultural and industrial revolutions. Religion's claims to truth were coming under increasing scrutiny as philosophical and scientific discourse burgeoned. In this series of seminars we will explore the ways in which British writers engaged with the ample challenges of their day. Our aim will be to discern breaks and continuities between these writers, and thus assess them afresh in their historical context.

We will set out by discussing works of two authors who are traditionally seen as 'sentimental' or 'pre-Romantic' – William Cowper (selected poems, c.1785) and Laurence Sterne (*A Sentimental Journey*, 1768) – in order to develop an understanding of the concern with sentiment, or feeling, prior to the outbreak of the French Revolution. William Blake's *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794) will thereafter elucidate the revolutionary enthusiasm that many of Blake's contemporaries shared, as well as their struggle to come to terms with the course of the French Revolution. Matthew Lewis's 1796 *The Monk* will then show the early Gothic novel's potential not only to shock, but also to unsettle and agitate, against the backdrop of political events. With William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) and its turn to nature, solitude, and the imagination, we will subsequently discuss what many critics regard as the cornerstone of British Romanticism. Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* (1811) follows, sparking reflections on the 'sentimental' literature discussed at the beginning of the course. Austen's feminism (if this is indeed the correct term, in her case) will then be compared to that of Mary Wollstonecraft in her 1792 *Vindication of the Rights of Women*. From Wollstonecraft's prose we shall proceed to the essays of William Hazlitt and Charles Lamb. Selected poetry by Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats will round out our agenda.

Course requirements:

Regular attendance, detailed knowledge of assigned texts, a presentation, and one final essay (4,000–5,000 words in length).

Introductory reading:

Marilyn Butler, *Romantics, Rebels and Reactionaries: English Literature and its Background 1760–1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Sprechstunde in der Vorlesungszeit:	Di 17-18 Phil 1353
Sprechstunde in der vorlesungsfreien Zeit:	Di 17-18 in Phil 1353 oder nach Vereinbarung