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Cornell College  
ENG 331, Term 5, 2018/19

**ENG 331: Literature of the Romantic Period  
and Mary Shelley’s *Last Man***

**Course Description**

This course will involve in-depth study Mary Shelley’s historical/futuristic novel *The Last Man,* a work that comments reflexively on multiple strains of thought about identity, aesthetics, politics, and philosophies of the Romantic literary period. Students will read the novel alongside, and in conversation with, shorter works by prominent Romantic authors, including William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Mary Wollstonecraft, William Godwin, Mary Robinson, William Blake, Felicia Hemens, Lord [George Gordon] Byron, Percy Bysche Shelley, John Keats, and others. While we will consider multiple aspects of Romantic period literature, we will pay particular attention to what the novel, and Shelley’s contemporaries, had to say about political crises, war, immigration, and refugees.

Students will complete a prosody quiz, two formal papers, present an academic article to the class, and participate in a group Digital Humanities paper mapping project. Students will regularly complete informal writing assignments in order to deepen engagement with the readings.

**Learning Outcomes and Cornell College EPO’s**

Course outcomes include the following:

* + In-depth knowledge of *The Last Man,* and its significance in Romantic literary history
  + Introduction to Romantic period debates about aesthetics, politics, and philosophy
  + Increased awareness of intertextuality and historicity
  + Introduction to prosody and scansion
  + Inquiry into the discourse of travel, homelessness, and refugees in Romantic period, and into the similarities to, and differences from, comparable discourses today
  + Development of close reading, academic writing, and oral communication skills
  + Introduction to Digital Humanities, in particular to digital mapping projects
  + Practice with project-based learning and development of teamwork skills

This course supports these educational priorities of the college: **Inquiry, Communication,** and **Intercultural (historical) Literacy.**

**Class Times and Class Format**

Class will meet daily from 8:30-11:00, unless otherwise noted in the schedule or in class. Each class period will begin with a writing exercise that will enable us to collectively summarize the readings due for that day. We will then work toward more in-depth analysis through class discussion and mini-lectures. You are expected to take careful notes on both discussion and lectures, which will provide the basis for the final exam.

**Required Texts**

* *The Last Man* by Mary Shelley (ed. available at bookstore)
* *The Longman Anthology of Romantic Literature* (ed. available at bookstore)
* Additional readings/videos will be posted to Moodle

**Notes on Participation**

Every student in this classroom is invited to share and test ideas in class discussion, and those who do are expected to take responsibility for their statements by listening carefully and thoughtfully to alternative viewpoints and to critique—practice an open-minded perspective where you might not only learn something important and new. Civil discourse, in class and in writing assignments, is expected at all times.

Please see me if you have any questions or concern about your participation or course dynamics so that I can help you to strategize, and if necessary, intervene directly.

**Attendance Policy**

Any absence after one missed class periods will result in the automatic diminishment of your final grade by ½ letter grade unless the absence is pre-approved or due to a *true* emergency (such as hospitalization). Exceptions: I will accommodate absences for college-approved activities (such as sporting events or moot trial tournaments) and for religious observances, provided that you let me know about them in the first couple of days of the course, or as early as possible, and if you are willing to make up any work that you miss. Perfect attendance will work in your favor should your final grade be a borderline percentage.

**Technology Policy**

Use of technology, including phones, will not be allowed in the classroom except as explicitly assigned, and students who use technology for non-class-related activities may be asked to leave.

**Contact Information**

It’s an understatement to say that the block can be unforgiving and staying on task is critical to success. If you begin to fall behind, see me as soon as possible, or seek assistance from other Academic Support Services like your advisor (for general guidance), the Writing Studio staff (for starting, developing, or revising papers), an academic librarian (for research advice), Brooke Paulson in the Office of Academic Advising (for issues like time management, or to set up content tutoring), and/or the Counseling Center (for help with stress, depression, or other health-and-happiness issues). Please seek support sooner rather than later—we could all use support at one time or another, and often it’s seeking assistance that makes the difference between learning and stagnation, or joy and pain, or satisfaction and frustration, or progress and backsliding.

I encourage you to attend my office hours in order to share how you’re doing in the course, to go over concepts you are shaky on, or just to say hello. My office will be held in South Hall 203 unless announced otherwise. If these days and times present conflicts, email me at [mmouton@cornellcollege.edu](mailto:mmouton@cornellcollege.edu) to set up an appointment. I will generally respond within 24 hours.

Please note that I do not respond to drafts over email because the possibility for misunderstandings is too great, though I would be happy to respond to drafts in person. You will have a better chance of finding me available for assistance if you schedule an appointment early and start working on assignments, including revisions, promptly.

**Accessibility**Cornell College makes reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities.  Students should notify the Coordinator of Academic Support and Advising and their course instructor of any disability-related accommodations within the first three days of the term for which the accommodations are required, due to the fast pace of the block format. For more information on the documentation required to establish the need for accommodations and the process of requesting the accommodations, see [Cornell’s Academic Support Page](http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml). (http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/disabilities/index.shtml).

**Academic Honesty**

Cornell College expects all members of the Cornell community to act with academic integrity. An important aspect of academic integrity is respecting the work of others. A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source.

If there is not *complete and appropriate* acknowledgement of sources (i.e., for this course, in correct MLA-style), I will treat the case as one of academic dishonesty whether the violation of policy is intentional or not intentional. I will report the incident to the Registrar, and you will earn an “F” on the assignment. If in my judgment the severity of the case warrants it—for example, if we have covered specific details on avoiding plagiarism in class or in conference and you fail to implement these; if you repeatedly fail to implement these correctly; if you copy someone else’s work without acknowledgement; or for unapproved assistance during an exam—you will also earn an “F” for the course. This means that it is *your responsibility* to be well-informed about what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.

We will cover basics in class, and I encourage you to seek additional information from me or the Writing Studio rather than “guessing,” or checking the internet, or asking a friend. A caveat: if your question about avoiding plagiarism is urgent in terms of timing, it’s probably better to visit the Writing Studio than to email me, as I might not see the email in time to be helpful.

As with all English classes, this one aims towards helping you tackle complex subjects in writing, while still communicating clearly and persuasively. For the purposes of this class, it is essential all *reviewers* of your work be acknowledged explicitly, along with the contributions they made to your papers. This can often be accomplished with an explanatory footnote, like this one: “Thank you to members of my writing group, Sarah Smith, Jane Taylor, and Bill Bryson, all of whom read and responded to this work in progress at multiple stages. I also wish to thank my roommate Oscar Renee, who made editing suggestions (largely for grammar and style) in GoogleDocs as the paper neared completion, many of which I accepted, but not after first doing my best to understand the underlying principle of each suggestion, because, well, he is an English major but only a second-year so his suggestions weren’t always accurate, though I did not explain this. I was still unsure about some so I called the writing studio. Now I know how to correctly use parallelism, as in the second sentence of my first paragraph. See appendix for the complete text of my paper with Oscar’s suggestions. I usually ask my mother to do this kind of editing but since this is a writing class I figured I should probably try some new methods.” OK, so this is a little exaggerated, but I do need to be able to distinguish what you are *learning* through the writing process—including what you are learning about revision and self-editing—from what you are merely *doing* because someone told you to do so. Acknowledge all sources, including reviewers. Being specific can help you to keep those lines between *peer-review* and *plagiarizing* straight, and to cover your bases.

This course policy was adapted from the college’s syllabus statement on Academic Honesty, which is available on Cornell’s website. The procedures regarding how the College deals with cases of academic dishonesty—as well as your right to appeal charges—appear in *The Catalogue* under the heading “Academic Honesty." I encourage you to check it out. Too few students are knowledgable about their rights as a student.

**Grading Policy**

I will not accept late submissions except by prior arrangement. It’s always better to submit something than nothing.

***Grading Rubric***: Papers and essays will be graded holistically according to the following rubric.

"A" = original (i.e., independently crafted and focused) thesis statement followed by a thoughtful and in-depth analysis of the text; highly convincing and memorable presentation of ideas with judicious use of evidence and accurate use of terminology and/or concepts from Rhetoric; clear and careful organization appropriate for academic readers; smooth and concise writing with very few or no errors; a style consistent with the expectations of academic writing;

"B" = good thesis statement, solid development of ideas, good organization, generally good writing with few errors;

"C" = presentation of ideas is adequate but still sketchy in some places, evidence may evidence “cherry-picking” in places; organization may not always be clear, writing may be rough in a number of places (major and minor writing errors);

"D" = attempt at thesis but incomplete development of ideas, unproved assertions, unclear organization, many errors in writing;

"F" = undeveloped ideas, little or no organization, lack of focus, multiple mechanical errors in writing (e.g., poor grammar, inappropriate choice of words, misspellings, etc.).

Your final grade will be based (roughly) on the breakdown below, though I may also take improvement into consideration. See assignment sheets for further details on expectations.

**Contributions**: This includes in-class participation, evidenced preparation for class,

*10% Contributions*

*5% Prosody Quiz (must pass in order to pass course)*

*15% Close Reading*, 1000 words

*10% Presentation* of Scholarly Article, 8 minutes maximum, plus 2 minutes for Q and A

*30% Final Paper,* 2375-3000 words

*15% FInal Exam*

*15% Digital Humanities Project*

**Preliminary Schedule**

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| --- | --- |
| **Day of Block** | **AM (8:30-11)** |
| **WEEK 1** |  |
| Monday | Course introduction |
| Tuesday | *The Last Man* (TLM), from Vol. 1.  Selective readings  Prosody workshop. |
| Wednesday | TLM, from Vol. 1  Selective readings  Prosody Quiz 1 |
| Thursday | TLM, from Vol. 1  Selective readings  Prosody Quiz 2 |
| Friday | Prosody Quiz 3  Selective readings |
| **WEEK 2** |  |
| Monday | TLM, from Vol. 2  Paper 1 **Due**, first draft, bring 3 hard copies to class.  Selective readings |
| Tuesday | TLM, from Vol. 2  Paper 1 **Due**, final draft. Upload to Moodle.  Selective readings |
| Wednesday | TLM, from Vol. 2  Selective readings |
| Thursday | Selective readings |
| Friday | Selective readings |
| **WEEK 3** |  |
| Monday | TLM, from Vol. 3  **Due**: Scholarly Article Presentations  Selective readings |
| Tuesday | TLM, from Vol. 3  Selective readings |
| Wednesday | TLM, from Vol. 3  Selective readings  Final Paper Due, first draft |
| Thursday | Selective readings |
| Friday | Final Exam |
| **WEEK 4** |  |
| Monday | Final Paper Due |
| Tuesday | Mapping project worktime |
| Wednesday | Mapping project unveiling. Yea! |

**Assignment: Close Reading**

**Task:** A “close reading” essay, otherwise known as an “explication,” of a prose passage in *The Last Man* of no more than 100 words. (Less is more!)

***Essay Length:*** 900-1000 words

**Implied Audience, Implied Rhetor, Purpose:**

The implied audience are well-educated readers generally familiar with *The Last Man*, but not intimately knowledgeable about the passage you’re analyzing. Your goal is to help your reader understand the passage in a deep, even surprising, and insightful way—and to persuade them that you know your reading of the novel is grounded in a deep understanding of Shelley’s purpose (which means understanding the novel as a whole), her language, and the cultural significance of the linguistic choices she makes—even if she herself is not always entirely aware of that significance. You are not trying to figure out her “intention” so much as arguing that the passage is rich in meaning in relation to the novel as a whole.

Your reader should feel like they’re been taught something new and interesting about a key aspect of *The Last Man* by someone who is thoughtful and well-informed.

**Tools:**

You have multiple tools for help with this project, which include these:  
the novel itself, or at least the novel to this point in time—while you will not want to refer to other parts of the novel outside of your passage, except in the introduction and conclusion for reasons to be explained later,

* + The novel—see above.
  + The OED (online version which is available through the Cornell website if you’re on the Cornell network, or using Cornell’s remote services if you’re not). The OED provides insights into how words might have been defined and used in earlier periods, including in the Romantic period.
  + Google n-grams. This tool, which you can google to locate (google “google n-grams”), calculates and visualizes in a line graph how many times a word or phrase appears in books that Google has digitized. Consider for yourself how this might be useful, and how this might be, well, misleading. Examples?
  + Prosody handout. I’ll make this available to you. It summarizes the basics of the centuries-long process of “scansion”—a method of analyzing poetry—one that was common in the Romantic period. While it’s designed to help readers understand poetry, it also useful for thinking about how to analyze literary prose.
  + Prosody books. I’ll make these available to you from my personal library, and you can find additional resources on prosody through the library’s website. They go beyond my summary worksheet.
  + Urban dictionary. OK. Just kidding. Probably not relevant. But if you want to create one for the Romantic period, talk with me about that. A marketable if work-intensive idea.

**Introductory Paragraph**:

The analysis should begin with an introduction, usually a single paragraph, that sets up the argument to follow. It should provide concise background information—only what is necessary to clearly identify the text that will be analyzed, along with its relevance to the text as a whole, and should conclude with a thesis statement, usually one or two sentences. The thesis statement should make an arguable assertion—an assertion that answers this question: how does this passage work? Yes, I know, this is vague, but if your thesis statement does not even seem to answer this question, and if it’s not based on your own reading of the novel and close reading of the passage, and if it’s not debatable (i.e., it’s a fact rather than an idea about what the passage is doing), and if it doesn’t require evidence to be persuasive, then you do not have an original thesis statement. HINT: Use this paragraph as a checklist for your introduction! The thesis statement, moreover, should be broad enough to accommodate a true explication—an explanation of what the passage is doing, and elaboration on why that matters in the context of the novel as a whole. Often, a thesis statement will include, or be followed by, something that indicates how your argument will proceed, a kind of roadmap for where the essay is going.

**Body paragraphs:**

Each should begin with a topic sentence, a sentence that makes a debatable claim that supports the paper’s central thesis. The paragraph should go on to prove that claim: it will provide the evidence, and explain how the evidence supports the claim. If quoting from a secondary source, it should be clear how that quote/source relates to your own argument. Importantly, although this typically does not happen until the faint editing stage for most writers, each paragraph should logically lead to the next, and should serve to develop the analysis’s overall argument. So, be sure to put your ideasl/paragraphs in a logical order, and to write transition sentences—at the beginnings (not the ends!) of each paragraph. [If you’re not sure what a transition sentence is, let’s talk. Apparently this is a commonly taught high school technique, but unfortunately for many of us college profs students are taught to include them at the ends instead of the beginnings of paragraphs.)

**Organizational Structure:**

Never lose the forest for the trees. What is your overall organizational structure for the essay? Is it best, for example, to take your reader (see above on who your ideal reader is) through an understanding of the passage step-by-step, in the order that the passage appears, so that they understand how each moment in succession adds to the overall meaning of the passage? If so, a good structural strategy is to provide a claim, quote a passage, and then explication the passage; provide a transition at the start of the next paragraph, then rinse and repeat.

Or, is it better, based on what you’re arguing, to organize your ideas based on what literary elements you analyze? A paragraph on diction, a paragraph on the paragraph’s structure? A paragraph on rhythm and meter? And so forth? Well, that depends on whether this strategy is the best to prove your overall argument about what the passage means, in all of its details.

Or, another idea—maybe your organizational strategy is not chronological, or by literary element, but instead by “idea”—by the ideas that you want to convey, the ideas that all add up, when put together, to your thesis statement?

Whatever your organizational strategy, it should be clear to readers, hence the importance of topic sentences, concluding sentences, and transitions between paragraphs. Help your reader understand your logic and reasoning.

**Concluding Paragraph:**

The concluding paragraph should concisely summarize the central idea, and should refrain from raising entirely new questions and issues. It may, however, offer broader insights or implications raised by the analysis. It should remind the reader, in any case, about what is significant about the passage, and about your reading of that passage.

**Bibliography:**

Following the conclusion, the paper should have an MLA-style bibliography, titled “Works Cited.” Throughout the essay, sources should be cited using the MLA parenthetical citation style.

**Writing Process:**

**Mark-up:** The first step is working up your passage. We’ll talk more about this in class.

**Generating Pages:** Some class time will be devoted to generating ideas through brainstorming exercises, freewriting, debate, mind-mapping and other proven techniques for getting started. You should also consult the relevant chapter of your textbook, which will include a list of ideas that you should explore in writing before you decide on your ultimate focus. Should you use these techniques and still find yourself unsure of how to begin drafting, just write until you hit upon it! If that still doesn’t work, a trip to the Writing Studio can do wonders. Remember that the perfect is the enemy of the good—generate not just ideas but pages.

**Drafting**: Having decided on a focus, many writers find it helpful to begin the drafting stage with an outline, especially when you are writing brief papers and to short deadlines (as in this course). These are most helpful to develop if they read as a list of assertions (topic sentences) and not just as a list of broad topics. For example, “The graphic use of Old English font, spelling out chapter names in between scenes, gives the film an air of literary sophistication” is a better bullet point than “use of font.” It makes a point and if you do this kind of thinking (what do I want to argue?) during the outlining phase, your work while drafting will go more quickly. Other writers prefer to dive right in, and go back afterwards to organize their ideas so that they flow logically for a reader. Either method is potentially good—it’s just that one typically requires more upfront time and the other more reworking time. Experiment with both, but remain aware of your pacing. Refuse to indulge in that nasty habit all writers have—self-doubt and self-critique. Not at this stage in the writing process! If you do feel it, just keep going anyway. Don’t give into it, just let it exist where it is and keep working.

**Revision:** Good techniques for revising—seeing your work again—include reading it aloud with a pen in hand, having someone read it aloud to you, and printing it in an unfamiliar font. This is a great time, too, to reread the assignment sheet to be sure you haven’t forgotten something important. Did you remember your bibliography? Did you format the paper in MLA style? Did you look up that page number that you originally put a placeholder for? Did you remember to include your student ID number rather than your name (see below).

**Proof-Reading:** Use spell-check of course. But I STRONGLY recommend printing out your work to proofread it also—it will de-familiarize the writing, encouraging you to see it as someone else would, and discouraging your brain from filling in missing details and correcting errors. It’s more challenging to catch such errors on a computer screen.

**Submitting Your Work:**

It’s been stated that there’s no such thing as a good writer—only good revisers. Manage your time so that you can not only “correct” your paper but revise it—get feedback from real readers on how well it’s working, revise it accordingly, and THEN proofread (I strongly recommend printing it before proofreading) before submitting it.

When first drafts are due, bring three printed copies (not on computers!) to class for a peer-review workshop. Submit your final paper as a Microsoft Word attachment (important! not as pages, etc.), to Moodle, where it says “submit your paper here.” Remember first to (not only spell check) print and proofread first!

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Corrections to this syllabus (mechanical errors, like spelling, grammar, etc.):

Questions about the course after reading the syllabus:

Analysis/Writing Skills You Want to Develop Further (e.g., elaboration; grammar problems, specifically these…):

Paper Submission Checklist (personalized):