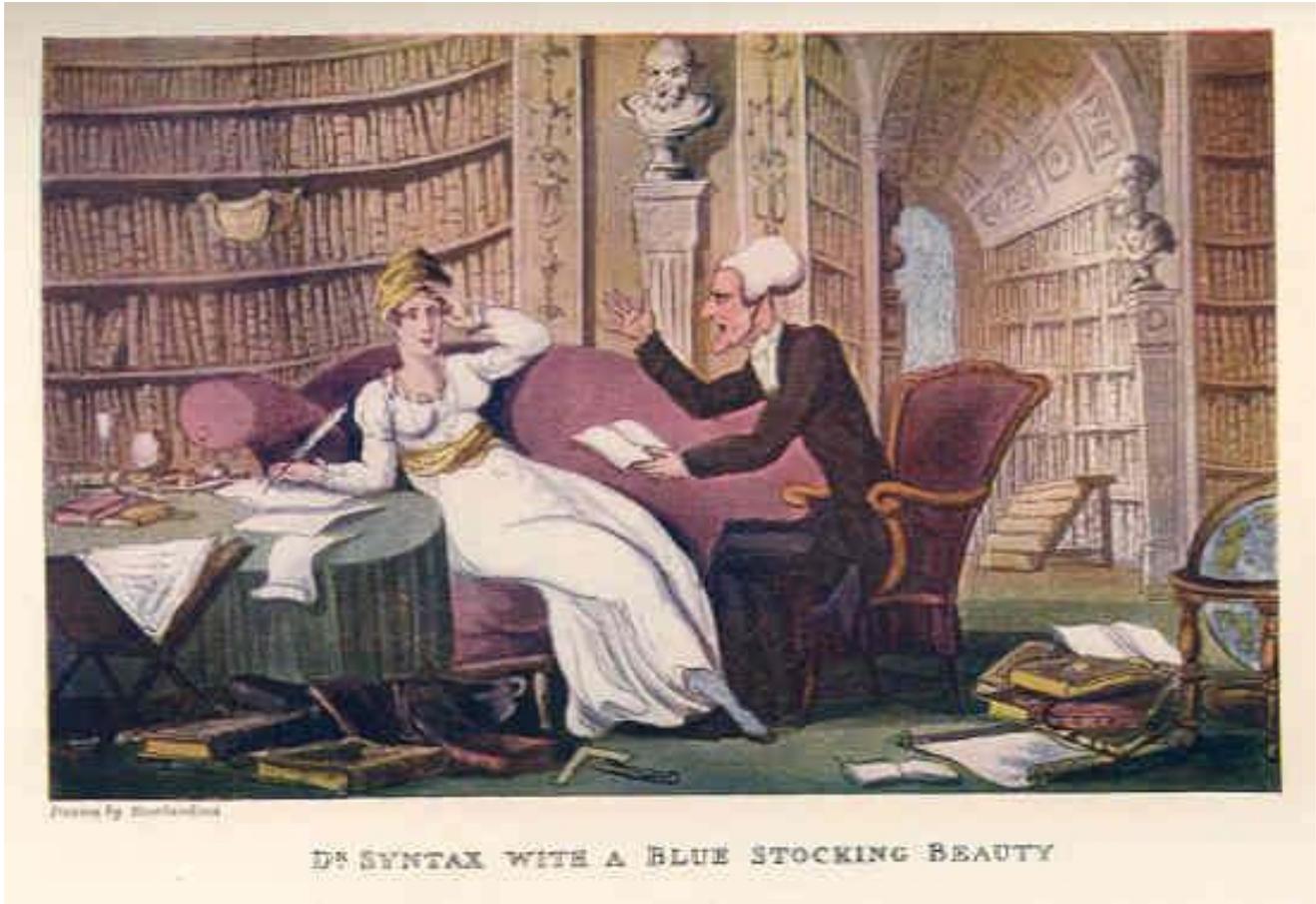


Chicks with Sticks Have Brains *and* Beauty



Sandra Alagona
English

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Chicks with Sticks Have Brains *and* Beauty: Women's Revolutionary Romanticism

Course Information

Instructor: Dr. Sandra Alagona

Office:

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Location:

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Course Website: [http:// salagona.com](http://salagona.com); <http://www.turnitin.com>

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays, 1:30p – 3:30p or by appointment

I. Course Description

Traditionally, English and American Romantic studies have divided Romanticism along gender lines, with men producing artistically and aesthetically more complex works and women limited either to romances that filled the literary marketplace or diatribes against women's place in society. However, such categorization is deceptive and ignores the complex ways in which women were using Romantic rhetoric to revolutionize the way they and others were treated and regarded in their societies, and to create a conversation that transcended national boundaries and generations, which would later be called "the woman question" and Feminist movement. We will track some of the ways in which women's Romantic efforts challenged the expectations of artistic, aesthetic, and intellectual prowess set by their male counterparts and, not infrequently, by other women in England and the United States. To this end, this course will allow students to gain a better understanding of the trajectory of women's writing and tackle the ways in which women's voices have been silenced historically. This course will challenge students to think about the issues and arguments centered on women's validity in society today and in the past.

II. Course Activities

This class will follow the seminar style. Classes will focus on group discussion and analysis of the reading assignments. Discussion will be student-centered resulting from individual work and work in small groups. Students will be asked to lead discussion as a team at least twice during the semester. These discussions will then result in a short literature review, four position papers, and a 10-12 page term paper. Quizzes, a midterm, and a final exam will make up the balance of the grade.

III. Course Goals and Objectives

The goals for this course are to give students:

- ✓ a better understanding of the Romantic period and its literary manifestations;
- ✓ a better understanding of the historical place of women writers within Romanticism, their activities, and the challenges they faced;
- ✓ a comparative understanding between British and American Romantic women writers through examination of mainstream and lesser known writers and their works

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ✓ define, describe, and then evaluate Romanticism (and its manifestations);
- ✓ define, describe, and then evaluate the labels used to categorize Romantic women writers, their works, and concerns;

- ✓ examine and evaluate the literary critical record connected with the selected authors, both historical and contemporary;
- ✓ analyze fiction, poetry, and non-fiction works within the body of women's Romantic literary production

IV. Course Texts (links to correct print editions, free online texts, and certain .pdf files available at my website)

Required:

- **Jane Austen**, *Emma* (1816) – Norton Critical Edition, ISBN: 0393972844; online text available at [University of Virginia](#)
- **Anna Laetitia Barbauld**, “[Eighteen Hundred and Eleven, A Poem](#)” (1812), *Sins of the Government, Sins of the Nation* (1793), “[Knowledge and Her Daughter, a Fable](#)” (1773) – online texts available at University of Pennsylvania and *Women Writers Online* database
- “**Declaration** of Sentiments and Resolutions from the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention” (1848) – online text available at [Rutgers University](#)
- **Maria Edgeworth**, *Letters for Literary Ladies* (1795) – online text at [University of Pennsylvania](#), [Google Books](#), and [Women Writers Online](#) database
- **Fanny Fern**, *Ruth Hall* (1854) – Penguin, ISBN: 0140189521; online text available at “[Voices from 19th Century America](#)” at merrycoz.org, maintained by Pat Pflieger, and [Google Books](#)
- **Hannah Webster Foster**, *The Coquette* (1797) – Oxford UP, ISBN: 0195042395; online text available at [University of Pennsylvania](#) and [Google Books](#)
- **Margaret Fuller**, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845) – Norton Critical Edition, ISBN: 0393971570; “American Literature; Its Position in the Present Time, and Prospects for the Future” (1846), online text available at [Virginia Commonwealth University](#)
- **Sarah Josepha Hale**, *The Lecturess, Or Woman's Sphere* (1839) – on reserve at the library and available at my website
- **Mary Wollstonecraft**, *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* (1787) – online text available at [Google Books](#); “On Poetry, and Our Relish for the Beauties of Nature” (1789) – on reserve at the library and available at my website

Required Criticism will be selected in part from some of the Norton Critical editions in use, from the *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism* reference collection, and from the various literature databases available from the library. Texts will be assigned based on each small group's interests.

Recommended:

Joseph Gibaldi, *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7th ed.

Supplementary Web Resources

“[The Women's Movement – Our History](#),” [Feminism and Women's Studies](#) website at [eserver.org](#)

[Portraits of American Women Writers, that appeared in print before 1861](#) website at [The Library Company of Philadelphia](#)

[Women Romantic Era Writers](#) website at Birbeck College, University of London, maintained by Dr. Adriana Craciun

[The Norton Anthology of Literature by Women: The Traditions in English](#), companion website to the third edition

Bibliographic Note

Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism* (Trenton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2001)

Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2004)

Feminist Literary Theory and Criticism: A Norton Reader 3rd ed. Eds. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 2007)

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination* 2nd ed. (New Haven: Yale UP, 2000).

F.O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1968)

Anne K. Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1992).

Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism, ed. Harold Bloom (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1970)

William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2007)

V. Course Requirements

1. All assigned readings and exercises
2. Attend class and participate actively through discussion, group work, and reading journal entries.
3. If necessary, read background material to help you develop a sense of the historical, cultural, and literary context for the works we will read. See the bibliographic note above for suggestions.
4. Ask questions freely in class about what interests you or about what requires further clarification. The exams will test your ability to discuss the works we read at least on the level of sophistication we achieve in class discussion.
5. Write four (4) position papers (4-6 pages, **minimum** 1,000 words, each) with appropriate documentation
6. Write one (1) short literature review (4-5 pages, **minimum** 1,000 words) on the contemporaneous body of criticism
7. Group-led discussion presentations (facilitated by reading journal)
8. One reading journal
9. Homework, quizzes, in-class response papers
10. One research paper (10-12 pages, **minimum** 2,500 words with *at least* ten (10) sources required); topics will be approved by turning in a one-page prospectus with annotated bibliography
11. Midterm exam
12. Final exam

VI. Grading

In evaluating your work, I will assess mastery in the following areas:

- clearly stated & thoroughly supported thesis
- sophistication of interpretation & analysis
- coherence & organization of essay as a whole
- college-level command of language & mechanics

Position Papers & Literature Review	30% of final grade
Research Paper	30% of final grade
Midterm	10% of final grade
Presentations	10% of final grade
Quizzes	5% of final grade
Reading Journal	5% of final grade
Final exam	10% of final grade

GRADE SCALE

A (4.0)	90-100%
B (3.0)	80-89%
C (2.0)	70-79%
D (1.0)	60-69%
F (0)	any grade below 60%

Note: A grade of Incomplete (I) is given only in a documented emergency situation which prevents you from taking the final exam. Be prepared to document this emergency by both a physician and a dean of the college or school in which you are enrolled.

Use of Computers: Plan to use your word processing skills when writing. Because word processing software facilitates revision, using one will enhance your ability to revise and may improve your grade. Computers are available for student use in the Computer Lab and in the Writing Center. As an added precaution, **save** all your work to a disk or thumb drive in labs, as well as to hard-drive on home computers.

Tutoring: English tutoring is available *free of charge* to university students in the Writing Center and also in the Tutoring Center.

VII. Course Policies and Course Activities Explained

A. In-class Response Papers

Every other week, we will end class by spending about a minute for you to write a 75-100 word response to a question, concepts, and ideas we've previously read and discussed in class. These will not be graded but will be used to direct class discussion as a way to further clarify and reinforce course material as needed.

B. Quizzes

I reserve the right to quiz you on any material presented or discussed in class or assigned as homework. You can expect a quiz at every class period though I may not always give one. Quizzes **cannot** be made up.

C. Reading Journal

To facilitate and improve your reading comprehension and critical analysis, you are required to keep a reading journal to record your thoughts, questions, reactions, and ideas raised by reading assignments. Entries do not have to be long, but should be detailed enough to help you recall the chapter or section of text you are responding to in the entry, noting anything that intrigues you and your thoughts on the text and connections to class discussion, your papers, etc. You will be responsible for sharing your questions generated in your reading journal at each class session, thus, you must bring your reading journal to each class.

D. Group-Led Discussion Presentations

During the semester, you and your group members will have the chance to lead the class's discussion at least once on the assigned reading(s) of the day with your questions, thoughts, insights, and/or issues with the reading(s). Each group member will be responsible for contributing two questions/insights to the presentation. Each class session will begin with a group-led discussion. The rest of the class will also be required to bring in their own questions and issues with the reading(s) in response to the group leading the discussion that day. These presentations will be exercises in critical and analytical reading and thinking.

E. Essays

Your papers should be typed and titled appropriately following MLA standards. You will have five short essays (**position papers** and **literature review**) and one **research paper**. The first, the **literature review**, will be a written and researched review (1000-1250 words) of the contemporaneous criticism about one of the authors from the course reading list; you are free to choose which author. Two of the **position papers** (1000-1250 words) will present your assessments and reactions to current criticism on one of the British authors while the second paper will focus on the criticism surrounding one of the American authors; again, you may choose which authors. The final two **position papers** (1250-1500 words) will be close readings analyzing one work each from our course selection. You will analyze one piece from our "conservative" writers and one from our "progressive" writers.

Your **research paper** (2500 words minimum) will analyze up to three works by one of the writers we are studying (for essay and novelists, one work; for poets, three works); you may choose to work on any of the assigned texts OR alternate works by this author. Writing a research paper means that you do much the same thing as with the other papers (i.e., formulate a topic, study various aspects of the work), but then you supplement your ideas with the wisdom of others. This paper requires significant research: you must consult **at least ten sources** and list them among your works consulted—though you need not quote from them all. You should use the MLA format for citations. You are free to choose a topic, though it must be approved by turning in a one-page **prospectus with annotated bibliography** that is due on 3 November (in class). This prospectus constitutes an agreement between us about what your paper will cover and what sources you will use. Late papers will not be accepted without prior approval. The **research paper** is due (via turnitin.com) on Wednesday 10 December.

F. Rough Drafts and Peer Review

Rather than spend class time going over rough drafts, students will submit rough drafts

electronically at turnitin.com for peer review. I will provide a rubric for each assignment to assist in these peer assessments. Writers should be able to demonstrate their critical and analytical skills in their essays. Rough drafts must be in MLA format and should be a **minimum** of three pages, and should cite sources where appropriate. Each student **must** thoughtfully critique **two** classmates' drafts for quiz credit. Late drafts and late peer critiques will not be accepted.

G. Rewrites & Extra Credit

Students have the opportunity to rewrite **one** short essay (literature review or position paper) for a higher grade. These should include significant revision from the previous version, taking comments into consideration, and should not be an effort to correct the paper cosmetically only. Rewrites are *optional* and are due on 1 December. However, I do not allow extra credit, so please do not ask for any.

I. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is unacceptable and seriously treated in this class. Plagiarism is an intentional representation of the words or ideas of another as if they are your own. It not only cheats the author of his/her ideas, but it cheats you as well. Plagiarism will carry the penalty of automatic failure for the assignment and possible failure for the course. In addition, any instances of plagiarism will be reported to the English department and to the Student Affairs Office as per the University bulletin. A substantial difference in a student's writing raises suspicion of plagiarism. To avoid plagiarism, therefore, quote when necessary and **ALWAYS** acknowledge your source—this includes direct quotes, indirect quotes and paraphrasing.

NOTE: I HAVE ZERO TOLERANCE FOR THIS ACT.

- Week 10:
Oct. 27 Bluestockings
Sarah Josepha Hale, *The Lecturess, Or Woman's Sphere* (1839)
- Week 11:
Nov. 3 “The Woman Question”
Margaret Fuller, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (1845)
Position paper #3 rough draft due this week for peer critique
Research paper prospectus and annotated bibliography due
- Week 12:
Nov. 10 **No Class—Veteran’s Day**
Position paper #3 due
- Week 13:
Nov. 17 Literature and Politics
Margaret Fuller, “American Literature; Its Position in the Present Time,
and Prospects for the Future” (1846)
“Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions from the 1848 Seneca Falls
Convention” (1848)
Miss Austen Regrets (2008), running time 90 mins.
- Week 14:
Nov. 24 Working Girl
Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall* (1854) – Ch. 1 – 45
Position paper #4 rough draft due this week for peer critique
- Week 15:
Dec. 1 Working Girl cont’d
Fanny Fern, *Ruth Hall* (1854) – Ch. 46 - 90
Position paper #4 due
Research paper rough draft due this week for peer critique
- Week 16:
Dec. 8 Fruition
Final Exam
- Dec. 10 **Research Paper due** (via turnitin.com)

Happy Holidays!