**English 9068:  The Shock of the Old: Forms of Victorian Anachronism. Mon 12:30-3:30.**

Instructor:  Prof. Matthew Rowlinson, UC 265; email <[mrowlins@uwo.ca](mailto:mrowlins@uwo.ca)>

Office hours M, Tu, 3:30-4:30; Th 2:30-3:30

**Course Description:**

This course will have as its central concern the shock of modernity as it shapes mid-Victorian texts and images in a variety of genres. Marx and Walter Benjamin both argued that bourgeois revolutions are typically represented through anachronism; it was in writing about the French revolution of 1848 and its aftermath, which seemed to repeat the events of 1789 and the Napoleonic counter-revolution, that Marx coined his well known aphorism about historical events that happen twice, once as tragedy and once as farce. Our theoretical reading on anachronism will come from this work of Marx and from Benjamin; it will also include Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, the work on repetition and trauma that shaped Benjamin’s work on shock. In literature, we will begin—perhaps anachronistically—with Wordsworth’s *Prelude*, published in 1850, but drafted between 1798 and 1805, relating Wordsworth’s life and experience of the first French revolution. We will also read Dickens’ *A Tale of Two* *Cities*, which revisits the events of 1789 from the standpoint of the 1850’s, A. H Clough’s “Amours de Voyage,” an epistolary verse-novel set during the siege of the short-lived Roman Republic of the late 1840’s, and poetry by Swinburne from the 1860’s, which connects sexual libertinism to political revolution. We will read some politically reactionary poetry by Tennyson from the 1850’s, in which as in Swinburne politics and sexuality are linked; we will also read some poetry in translation by Charles Baudelaire. Finally, we will discuss photography by Julia Margaret Cameron.

**Required Books:**

Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Norton ISBN 0393007693.

Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities,* Penguin ISBN 0141439602

Wordsworth, *The Prelude* Norton ISBN 039309071X

**Schedule**:

**Week 1** **Sept 12:** Introduction; from Marx, *Critique of Political Economy*. William Wordsworth, “Lines Written a few Miles above Tintern Abbey…”

**Week 2 Sept . 19:** Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1850). Bk 1; Bk 2. 198-376; Bk. 4. 231-472; Bk 5 1-165, 364-613; Bk. 6 557-640.

**Week 3 Sept. 26**: Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1850). Bk. 10. 1-120, 236-299, 481-603. Bks 11, 12, 13, 14.

**Week 4 Oct. 3:** Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*. Ch. 1. Pp. 37-38. Ch. 7.

<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf.htm> Walter Benjamin, “Some Motifs in Baudelaire”; extracts from “Paris, Capital of the Nineteenth Century” (section V, Baudelaire”); extracts from *The Arcades Project.*

**Week 5 Oct. 10:Thanksgiving**

**Week 6 Oct. 17:** Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities.*

**Week 7 Oct. 24:** Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

**Week 8 Oct 31:** Baudelaire, from *Les Fleurs du Mal*. “Au lecteur,” “Correspondances,” ‘Je te donne ces vers,’ “A une passante,” “Les sept vieillards,” “Le soleil,” “Le cygne,” “Les petites vieilles,” ‘La servante au grand coeur,’ “Le vin du chiffonier.”

**Week 9 Nov 7:** Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle.* Zizek; *The Sublime Object of Ideology* pp. 55-64.

**Week 10 Nov. 14:** Tennyson, *Maud*. Andrew Marvell, “The Nymph Complaining for the Death of her Faun.”

**Week 11 Nov. 21:** Swinburne, “Laus Veneris,” “The Triumph of Time,” “Hymn to Proserpine,” “The Leper,” “The Garden of Proserpine,” “Dolores,” “Ave Atque Vale.”

**Week 12 Nov 28:** Clough, *Amours de Voyage.*

**Week 13 Dec 5:** *Amours de Voyage*, cont. Photography of Julia Margaret Cameron.

**Assignments**:

-- A 5000 word paper on a topic of your choice will be due one week after our last meeting, on Dec. 12; please choose your topic as early as possible in consultation with me. You may if you wish submit a formal description of your paper topic any time up to November 22 and I will return it with comments. The finished paper is to be submitted as if for publication, with full scholarly apparatus in accordance with either the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* or the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

--Once during the term each of you will give a 15-minute presentation in which you will introduce a topic to be discussed in that day’s seminar.

--A 1500-word paper on Wordsworth’s *The Prelude* to be submitted on October 7. I will offer you a choice of topics for this paper; if you wish to write on a topic of your own, please consult with me.  
  
--Throughout the term, and above all, read the material assigned on the syllabus and come to class prepared to discuss it, and to ask and answer questions about it.

**Evaluation**:--45% of your overall grade will be determined by the final paper.

--20% of your grade will be determined by the first paper.

--20 % of your grade will be determined by your presentation.

--15% of your grade will be determined by my evaluation of your participation in and contribution to the seminar. In determining this portion of your grade, I will consider the quality of your attention to and interventions in class discussion, and of your preparations for class. Further, this portion of the grade **will be forfeited by any student with more than two unexcused absences from class.** If medical or other circumstances affect your participation in the seminar, please discuss them with me. As circumstances warrant, I will excuse you from class and make whatever arrangements are possible to help you keep up with our work, without penalty to your grade.

As required by the University, I remind you that students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offense (see Scholastic Offense Policy in the Western Academic Calendar).

The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking.

In my own voice, let me observe that we become scholars and critics by modeling ourselves on others. I urge you to read widely this term and to use your reading to find your own style and mode of theoretical argument. If when preparing an essay or presentation for this class you become in any way concerned about the question of plagiarism, please come and discuss the matter with me.

**Topics for paper 1:**

**Please choose one of the following:**a) What is a “spot of time”? In *Prelude* 12. 250, Wordsworth writes of these as episodes that retain a “renovating virtue” for the mind. What characteristics give them this virtue? Support your argument with detailed analysis of at least one of the spots of time.

b) Discuss the figure of *address* in *The Prelude*, giving extended analysis of at least one specific example.

c) In Book 1 of *The Prelude*, Wordsworth narrates his failure to write either a chivalric romance or an epic on an historical theme (1. 166-220). Write an essay on the relation between these unwritten poems and *The Prelude* itself as the poem that Wordsworth represents himself as having written in their place.

**Suggested Further Reading:**

From the Norton: “Composition and Texts” pp. 510-515.

M. H. Abrams, “The Design of *The Prelude”* pp. 585-598.

Geoffrey Hartman, from *Wordsworth’s Poetry 1787-1814*. “Thesis: The Halted Traveller” pp. 3-31; “The Prelude,” pp. 208-59.

Paul de Man, “Autobiography as De-facement,” *The Rhetoric of Romanticism*, pp. 67-81.

Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* pp. 362-452.