

**Carleton University
Winter 2026 Preliminary Course Outline
Department of English**

**ENGL 4500A: *Studies in Romanticism*
Topic: *Revolutions in Romantic Literature***

Prerequisites: fourth-year standing or permission of the department

**Instructor: Paul Keen
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Course Description: This seminar will explore a series of wide-ranging and theoretically self-conscious debates about literature which flourished in the Romantic period. These debates posed fundamental questions about the very nature of literature as a cultural phenomenon, the extent and role of the reading public, literature's relation to the sciences and the aesthetic, the influence of contemporary commercial pressures, and the impact of perceived excesses in consumer fashion. In doing so they highlighted the ways that these questions about literature converged with broader social and political controversies such as the French Revolution, the struggle for women's rights, colonialism, and the anti-slave trade campaign. Reading a wide range of primary texts alongside recent critical essays about print culture will enable us to situate our understanding of these historical debates about literature in the context of a broader discussion of the theoretical strengths and weaknesses of book history as an interdisciplinary field of endeavour.

Learning Outcomes: In this course students will learn to engage with the historical nuances of a range of interconnected debates about the meaning of literature as a complex field of cultural production; to be able to engage with these complexities in terms of their connections with the other debates that we will explore in the course, and in terms of the larger historical context of their highly charged political era; and to produce original critical analysis.

Required Text: (available through the Carleton University Book Store)

Paul Keen, ed. *Revolutions in Romantic Literature: An Anthology of Romantic print Culture, 1780-1832*. Broadview, 2004. (New: \$55.50) ALL STUDENTS MUST HAVE A HARD COPY UNLESS YOU HAVE AN ACCAMMODATION THAT REQUIRES YOU TO READ AN ELECTRONIC VERSION.

Evaluation: (NOTE: Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.)

Participation (including weekly journal entries): 20%

In-Class Response Papers: 40%

First Essay Proposal: 10%

Second Essay proposal: 10%

Final Essay: 20%