

**Studies in 19-Century British Literature and Culture:  
Romantic Literature and Culture**



William Blake, *Ghost of a Flea* (1819-20)

Instructor: Dr. David L. Clark (dclark@mcmaster.ca)  
T.A.: Ms. Roshaya Rodness ( [rt.rodness@mcmaster.ca](mailto:rt.rodness@mcmaster.ca) )

**MID-TERM EXAMINATION STUDY TIPS**

The mid-term examination for this course will be written in class Wednesday 24 October 2012, 7:00-7:50 pm. The exam will be 50 minutes in duration. There will be one essay question. You are responsible for all of the assigned course materials taken up in class, up to and including class on 17 October 2012. There will be no class after the mid-term examination.

It is perfectly understandable to feel a bit of apprehension about a midterm. But try your level best *not* to think of the midterm negatively as something fearful, but positively as an opportunity to demonstrate how much good work you've already done in the course, and how closely you've engaged the course materials and guiding questions. And don't forget, by consolidating the course materials you lay the groundwork for succeeding in other assignments in this course. We are in the course together for the long-haul, so each assignment should be treated as a step in a learning process about Romanticism.

Here are a few suggestions regarding your preparations for the exam:

- \* Read all the assigned course materials with care.
- \* Attend all classes and prepare for each class.
- \* Bring the assigned texts to class when those texts are taken up in class.

- \* Take detailed notes in class.
- \* Connect what was said in class to the specific arguments of the assigned materials.
- \* If you miss a class, borrow good notes from others.
- \* Use the *Study Questions and Course Blog* document as a tool to help ensure a good comprehension of the course and lecture materials...keeping in mind that the *Study Questions and Course Blog* is not a summary of the lectures or the course materials and is not a replacement for the lectures or course materials.
- \* Carefully consider the course's major themes and lines of inquiry to date. What specific questions and problems connect the assigned materials? In what ways do different thinkers pose and investigate these questions and problems differently?

When writing the exam:

- \* Avoid making large generalizations and instead move quickly and repeatedly to specific details (of the sort that the *Study Questions and Course Blog* document nurtures in you). Consistently ground your claims in specific details and examples drawn from the assigned texts. The object here is to support your claims and to convey that you have read the assigned texts with care, and are therefore familiar with their arguments, terms, and examples. In other words, demonstrate that you have read the assigned texts by being able to refer to the particular arguments, illustrations, terms, and turns in the assigned texts.
- \* Start several of your sentences with the phrase, "For example." This way you turn your exam answer towards those specific details.
- \* Don't forget to answer the question! I.e., carefully consider the particular focus of the midterm examination question. Be careful not to put down on paper everything that you know about the Romantic writers or heard about in class. Instead, route what you know through the particular focus of the midterm examination question. Use the exam question to organize your thoughts and focus your response. Answer the question at hand.
- \* Remember to pace yourself: i.e., ensure that you devote as much time and effort to each of the thinkers you are discussing. Bring a watch.
- \* Begin by taking a deep breath. Compose yourself. You've attended classes, done the readings, taken good lecture notes, thought rigorously about the arguments at hand, and considered the ways in which the lectures spring from the readings and the readings inform the lectures. Now is an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to your own education and to grappling with the questions and problems that quicken the course.