

## Coleridge's Christian Romanticism

Dr. Anthony G. Cirilla, Instructor

### Course Description

This course will explore Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poetry through the lens of his philosophical and theological prose. Students will consider the shift of his intellectual project later in his life toward a Christian Romanticism, as Coleridge attempted to place reason, poetry, and imagination in right relationship with one another in the Christian's pursuit for truth.

Coleridge today is mostly known as a poet, author of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* and the conversation poems. But arguably later in life Coleridge thought of his intellectual project as a philosophical attempt to place poetry and the imagination into its proper place in the Christian's pursuit for truth. Rejecting his former Socinianism, Coleridge wrote in his *Confessio fidei*, "The same difference, that exists between God and man, between giving and the declaration of a gift, exists between the Trinitarian and the Unitarian." His chief undertaking, laid out in his *Biographia Literaria*, was to show "that the Scheme of Christianity, as taught in the Liturgy and Homilies of our Church, though not discoverable by human Reason, is yet in accordance with it." This, he asserted, "has been my object.... With this my personal as well as my LITERARY LIFE" (capitals in the original).

This course will examine Coleridge's poetry from the point of view of his philosophical and theological prose, to better understand how he believed works of the imagination could help "the eye of Reason" when "it has reached its own Horizon" to "preserve the Soul steady and collected in its pure Act of inward adoration to the great I AM."

### Course Objectives

Objectives for this course include: (1) understand Coleridge's literary methods, (2) understand the theological, historical, and literary background to Coleridge's poetry, (3) articulate the literary value Coleridge's poetry has, especially in a Protestant and specifically Anglican context, and (4) consider and develop answers to major questions surrounding the texts in question.

### Course Format

The format of the course will be predominantly one of mini-lectures followed by guided discussion. The instructor will often be doing most of the talking, but generally to illuminate and draw out themes from the text for discussion, rather than in pure lectures. Thus, students will be expected to come having read and engaged with the text selection for the week, and with thoughts prepared to contribute.

Classes will meet via Zoom for two hours each week and will be recorded for later viewing by students who cannot participate. Additional student participation and instructor interaction can take place on our private discussion board.

### Course Requirements

1. Weekly readings (due before our meeting each week).
2. Weekly interaction with fellow participants and the instructor in live class sessions.
3. Weekly participation in the online discussion forum.
4. For those taking the course for-credit: Composition of a 3k-5k argumentative essay that presents a thesis statement-driven position about Coleridge's work or its influence. The paper should be 12-point Times New Romans font, with regular margins and standard citations (I will accept either MLA or Chicago Style).

### Assessment and Weighting

**Class Participation 25%**

**Discussion Forum Participation 25%**

**Essay 50%**

### Course Texts

Required: Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Major Works, Oxford World Classics.

### Course Schedule

Week	Dates	Discussion Topics/Themes	Reading
1	7/4-10	Introduction	"Essay on Faith" <a href="http://www.gutenberg.org/files/44795/44795-h/44795-h.htm#Page_341">http://www.gutenberg.org/files/44795/44795-h/44795-h.htm#Page_341</a> "Confessio Fidei" <a href="http://www.gutenberg.org/files/8488/8488-h/8488-h.htm#section157">http://www.gutenberg.org/files/8488/8488-h/8488-h.htm#section157</a> Religious Musings 13 Apologia Pro Vita Sua 113
2	7/11-17	From Developing Political and Theological Thought to Mature Reflections	"A Moral and Political Lecture" 604-613 & "Lay Sermons" 660-665 "Aids to Reflection" 666 & "On the Constitution of the Church and State" 686
3	7/18-24	<i>The Reader's Autobiography</i> , 1: Aesthetic Development	<i>Biographia Literaria</i> Chapters 1 & 2 157-181, Chapter 4 194-206
4	7/25-31	<i>Reader's Autobiography</i> , 2: Poetic Theology	<i>Biographia Literaria</i> Chs 12-14 280-320, Ch. 24 473-482

5	8/1-7	Conversation Poems, 1	The Eolian Harp 27, Reflections on Having Left a Place of Retirement 29, This Lime Tree Bower My Prison 38, Frost at Midnight 87
6	8/8-14	Conversation Poems, 2	Fears in Solitude 92, The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem 99, Dejection: An Ode 114, To William Wordsworth 125, The Pains of Sleep 121
7	8/15-21	Fragments	Kubla Kahn 102, Christabel 68
8	8/22-26	The Masterpiece	<i>Rime of the Ancient Mariner</i> 48