CONTENTS: This course will focus on British prose and poetry of the Nineteenth Century, which for our purposes can be divided into two major periods—the Romantic and the Victorian. The Romantic Movement itself—in all of the arts—was a broad one, dramatically affecting most of Europe in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; the English Romantic poets in particular reacted against the legacy of the Enlightenment and determined to a great extent the specific directions of Twentieth Century American poetry, as well as the direction of American literature in general. The Victorian movement was in some key ways a reaction against Romanticism and in others an extension of it. Most of the great Victorian poets were, in certain essential respects, failures at divesting themselves of the Romantic spirit. Our main focus will be on the central themes and concerns of the Romantics and Victorians. Through representative poems you will become familiar with the two periods' most influential poets: Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Keats for the Romantics; Tennyson, Browning, Arnold, and Hopkins for the Victorians. In addition, we will read two novelists, Brontë and Dickens, the former a Romantic, the latter a Victorian.

APPROACH: This class will combine informal lecture, discussion, and group work. I like to do collaborative work in my classes and will put you into one or more discussion groups soon. I also take what some people call a reader-response approach to the class, or at least something approaching that kind of pedagogy. Basically, that means that I stress your personal connections to the reading and discussion rather than some so-called "Objective" way of treating a literary text. We will talk more about this soon.

COURSE GOALS: Our primary goal this term will be, through the reading, writing, and class activities, to become demonstrably familiar with the intellectual and artistic issues of the Romantic and Victorian periods, to develop some broader context of literary history, and to develop your own ability to make sense of literary texts.

READING ASSIGNMENTS: I am providing no specific calendar of reading assignments; instead, I will make assignments in class as we go from day to day. You need to complete this reading prior to class, and with some degree of aesthetic attention. The Brontë novel you should have completed by about the fourth week; the Dickens novel by the end of the sixth week. Start them now if at all possible. If you miss a class session, you are responsible for finding out what the next day's reading assignment is. Get to know others in the class who can give you a reliable summary of what went on in class during the day you missed.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS: A series of Response Papers (at least 1 single-spaced page) due every other week, the last of which will be a Retrospective Response; a formal essay of about 5-6 typed pages on Brontë and/or Dickens (due somewhere around Week 13; and a presentation (either individual or group; we'll decide later) during the second half of the semester.

RESPONSE PAPERS: These papers will employ writing for learning. I will give you a separate handout in the next class period or two so that you will have a better idea of what is involved. These papers are important, and you should regard them as such. They should offer a relatively relaxed format for talking on paper about your responses to the reading, your questions, your explorations.

FINAL GRADE: There will be no grades on individual assignments. At the end of the term you will be asked to submit a self-assessment of your work and a portfolio. We will arrive at a grade through discussion and negotiation based on the overall quality of the portfolio and your participation in class.

ATTENDANCE: I expect you to be in class with your personal copy of the texts and well-prepared all of the time. This looks as if it will be a very small class, so your presence or absence (as well as your silence) will be easy enough to keep track of. Anything beyond two absences (unless they are officially University-excused) will cost you half of a grade for each additional miss. You are always responsible for missed work and assignments.

NOTE: MTU's Affirmative Action Officer has asked that all faculty include the following statement on each course syllabus:
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students, (2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action Office (3310).