

Spring 2018

Arch **248**

Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the Creation of Modernity

The development of Modernity through the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries



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In what seemed like ubiquitous fragmentation – Nietzsche and Marx agreed in calling it decadence – European high culture (in the 19th century) entered into a whirl of infinite innovation, with each field proclaiming independence of the whole, each part in turn falling into parts. Into the ruthless centrifuge of change were drawn the very concepts by which cultural phenomena might be fixed in thought. Not only the producers of culture, but also its analysts and critics fell victim to fragmentation. ... Every search for a plausible equivalent to heuristically indispensable categories as the “Enlightenment” seemed doomed to founder on the heterogeneity of the cultural substance it was supposed to cover. ...

What the historian must now abjure ... is the positing in advance of an abstract common denominator – what Hegel called the “Zeitgeist” and Mill “the characteristic of the age.” Where such an intuitive discernment of unities once served, we must now be willing to undertake the empirical pursuit of pluralities as a precondition to finding unitary patterns in culture. Yet if we reconstruct the course of change in the separate branches of cultural production according to their own modes, we can acquire a firmer basis for determining the similarities and differences among them. These in turn can bring us to shared concerns, the shared ways of confronting experience, that bind men together as culture-makers in a common social and temporal space.

***Carl Schorske,
Fin-de-Siecle Vienna***

When asked what he thought of the historical impact of the French Revolution on its 200th anniversary, by French art historian and philosopher Andre Malraux, Chou En Lai, the Chinese leader at the time, responded that “it was too early to tell.”

Chou En Lai, apocryphal news account

The Course

The course description for Arch 248 in the UW calendar offers the student a description of our modern Western culture as **“one in which the notion of environmental order as the fulfilling of natural law is replaced by a notion of order as the historical creation of autonomous wills”**. Contemporary historian Carl Schorske describes that replacement as a disorganized one, but nonetheless it is still the beginning of the shaping of a new ‘Zeitgeist’ or ‘spirit of the times’. For Schorske, this creation of the 19th century spirit, which begins in the Enlightenment of the 17th century is undertaken by a fragmented multiplicity of efforts by artists, architects, politicians, and thinkers spanning European, American, and global nations all with different origins and outlooks. In the considerations of the 19th century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, such a ‘Zeitgeist’ for the age is to be distilled in the works of a culture’s philosophy, literature, art and architecture, that hopeful synthesis of Schorske’s more scattered ‘pluralities’.

The seismic shift towards the mind and culture of our Modern era noted by Schorske, and the societies that were created by that transition, was a profound change in the human outlook from that of our deeper past, including the more recent past of the last thousand years following the fall of Rome. We as inheritors of that shift of mind and culture today remain relatively unaware of its absolutely novel nature being so embedded in its outcomes, in its philosophical, social and political conceptualizations, and especially in its institutions and organizations. Much of the modern world that we live in today is still trying to work out what was begun, first in the rationalism of the 17th and 18th century Enlightenment, then in the Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment’s optimistic view of mankind’s future (and the place of the individual in that future), and finally in the late 19th century’s first synthesis of a global society.

The terrorism of today’s daily news is matched by the birth of the word itself in the newspapers of the French Revolution, the “Terror” of which further rocked the optimism of the political philosophers of the late 18th century, who themselves had barely digested the meaning of the American Revolution. This terror did not cease but grew and transformed with the shifting transformations of the century to become the terrorist assassination of the Austrian heir to the throne that ignited the First World War in 1914. Terror also jumped to global settings like the Congo, Mesopotamia (now Iraq), Afghanistan, and India, presaging the cruel global exploitations of today by more than a century. Our global shock at the September 11th World Trade Centre terror attacks in 2001, and the recent ISIS attacks in Paris, Brussels, San Bernadino, Mali and other places, is the never ending continuation of imperial wars and politics in the Middle East, Africa, Iraq, and Afghanistan - to name only a few societies disrupted by the West’s imperial expansion. Man-made and natural disasters like the South-East Asian tsunami, the New Orleans’ flood, and the crash of the stock markets in late 2008, and the expansion of ISIS are all prefigured and mirrored in past events.

In the middle of the start of this period of transition, there was wide felt horror at the mid-18th century total devastation of one of the most beautiful and wealthy of the European capitals by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. The tsunami that followed it devastated much of the Portuguese and Spanish coastlines and was also felt in France and England. The destruction of a powerful and devout centre of Christian faith seemingly at random made no sense. Despite the claims of philosophers, we were not in the best of all possible worlds.

Over the next century and a half, the religious, political and social order that had sustained Europe and its expanding former colonies since the fall of Rome, and through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and even the Reformation, was dismantled and replaced by a scientific, technologically driven, global society. The change was a quick one. Already by 1800 the old order lay in tatters, kings had fallen and been executed, and God was declared dead, or at least irrelevant, sometime in the latter part of the 19th century. By the end of 1914 the old order completely self-destructed in the agony of the four long years of World War One which in turn set the conditions of the Second World War, the Cold War which followed, and today’s fractured global society

The image following below is of the destruction wrought on Lisbon by the 1755 earthquake. It could just as easily be an image of London, Berlin, or any city bombed in the 20th century. Ironically, it could also easily stand in as an image of the destructive urban renewal of Paris by Baron Haussmann, or for that matter, any Modern city undergoing urban renewal in the 1950s and 60s. In 1755, however, the mechanized destruction of French and German armies in Verdun was still over a century and a half away. Instead, after the senseless destruction of the Lisbon earthquake, the minds of poets, artists, architects, scientists and philosophers were rocked by a loss of faith and were left with an enormous task of reconstructing the fallen “big picture” of the world that they all still lived in. This loss of faith in God and his institutions, and a new skepticism, had already begun to develop earlier in the 17th and 18th century of Enlightenment philosophers and the birth of science and the Newtonian universe. There would be no return to old values

once the Lisbon earthquake finished the work of tipping over the old order and its centuries' old structure of Christian faith, a structure that for those long centuries had been seen unequivocally as God's work, and a structure which had itself been a continuity of the earlier Classical world of Rome and Greece. As well as loss of faith, the socio/political order that it upheld was shaken to its foundations, and the life it organized was loosened to transform itself.



This course will examine the period of what could be called the Enlightenment and the Romantic cultural reconstruction, that period from the 17th to the 19th centuries that saw Western European societies moved to becoming industrial economies driven by reason and science. The Romantic mind was born in the Enlightenment as the world of the 17th century first reacted to the erosion and collapse of history's universal truths, and then, sensing that loss, it reacted to the perceived lack of deeply felt spiritual values in science. Despite the anxiety of purposelessness, that mind went on take the new science wrought by the Enlightenment in hand, give it purpose and passion, and then shape the modern art, industry, science and philosophy of the late 19th century. And then, that Romanticism went on to do the same for the entire 20th century as it transformed into what we now understand as Modernism.

In that period beginning in the 17th century, and despite years of war and political and social upheaval culminating in the fall of Napoleon in 1814, European nations and their North American progeny built on the new ideals and promises of that revolutionary social and political change that had begun at the end of the 18th century in both the New World and Old.

Moving into that new century of promise, Europeans began the 19th century still part of agrarian or mercantile societies, but with the unleashing of new energy sources, like coal, transformed themselves within decades into a new type of industrial society not yet seen in history. The political and social upheavals of the late 18th century continued throughout the 19th century but the direction of change was unstoppable, and, when examined by the new breed of philosophers, politicians, scientists, engineers and poets of the mid-19th century, the new world being created promised great global power for Europe and America.

The result of this century and a half transition is a situation where European nations went into the autumn of 1914 as seemingly sophisticated, stable, industrial societies, their national lives centred on enormous metropolitan cities built and improved over the previous century by technological expansion and dreams of progress. In the midst of the brave new modern worlds that they had created, however, the European societies met their own tragic "twilight of the gods" in World War One, unlike Lisbon, a convulsive act of their own making.

List of Readings and Other Course Sources

Reading

Any version of the following readings will be fine. I will provide free open source PDF files of all the books in LEARN once the term starts. Some books will not be read in their entirety. The works by Milton, Rousseau, Goethe, Mary Shelley, Austen, Balzac, Marx, and Huysmans, however, need to be read completely. If you read past the schedule in your spare time, you should focus on those authors.

The main texts in the approximate order they will be covered:

Milton, John, Paradise Lost

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, brief selections from lecture PowerPoint

Voltaire, Candide

Goethe, Johannes Wolfgang, Sorrows of Young Werther

Shelley, Mary, Frankenstein

Austen, Jane, Emma

De Balzac, Honore, Pere Goriot

Selections from German and English Philosophers (in course lecture PowerPoint)

Darwin, Charles, Origin of the Species, selections TBA

Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich, Communist Manifesto

Thoreau, Henry, Walden Pond, selections TBA

Huysmans, Joris-Karl, Against Nature

Included in the lecture Powerpoints or PDFs to accompany the readings there will be short pieces from authors like John Ruskin and William Morris, excerpts from various philosophers like Descartes, Voltaire, Hegel, and Kant, some scientific excerpts from Isaac Newton, and Charles Darwin's contemporaries such as Charles Lyell and Alfred Wallace, political writing from early US and French Revolutions, and early feminist Mary Wollstonecraft, selected poetry from the English Romantics and Walt Whitman, and a large selection of images of paintings and sculpture of the period covered in the course.

For those who wish to undertake a play, there will be a choice of short dramas or you may write your own play. Students who undertake other research projects will also be required find the appropriate background reading as part of their research.

Required Course Work

There will be three in class reading tests. All will be hand written with an open materials standard. Study Guides for each test will be provided for your reading assistance.

In class Reading Test 1 from Readings, one hour	15
In class Reading Test 2 from Readings, one and a half hours	20
Final Exam, given out in the first week of June, written in the digital classroom, 2 hours	25
Play, Written Paper, or Project, ... <i>your choice</i>	40

Total 100

Date	Lectures and Themes	Readings/Images/Poems	
Week 1 May 1 May 4	-Course Introduction (May) 1 -Baroque Architecture and City 1 -Brief discussion of Plays or Projects selection 1 -Film, Losey's <i>Don Giovanni</i> (May) 4	The Reformation and Free Will Rome of Pope Sixtus V <i>Losey's film is longer than three hours by 10-15 minutes so please stay for the end.</i>	
Week 2 May 8 May 11 and 12 (Sat.)	-Italian Gardens 8 -French and English Garden 8/11 -Plays or Projects, selection time 11 -Beethoven's 9th concert in <i>Kitchener, Centre in the Square</i> 12	Milton, Paradise Lost, Rome of Pope Sixtus V continued Bernini, Borromini, Tivoli, Vaux le Vicomte, Versailles, Chiswick House, Stowe, Le Notre, Capability Brown	
Week 3 May 15 May 18	-The Rights of Man 15 -World-making and Milton 18 -Discussion of Plays or Projects 18	Voltaire, Candide Rousseau, Social Contract, selections John Wilmot (Libertine clips), Jefferson, Paine, David, L'Enfant, Fragonard	
Week 4 May 22, no class May 25	-The Voice of Antiquity 25 -The Sleep of Reason 25 -Doubt and the Voice of Feeling 25	Goethe, Werther, Hawksmoor, Wren, Durand, Bouleee, Piranesi, Blake, Soane, Goya	
Week 5 May 29 June 1 Reading Test One	-The Sublime and the Artist 29 -Milton, the New Prometheus 29 -Discussion of Plays or Projects 1	Mary Shelley, Frankenstein Burke, Fuseli, Caspar Friedrich, Shelley, Beethoven	
Week 6 June 5 June 8	-Country Life and Adam's House 5 -The English Gentleman 5/8 -Society and the Individual Voice 8	Austen, Emma Lorrain, Poussin, Constable Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, John Nash, Beau Brummel	
Week 7 June 12 June 15	-Pure Reason, Liberty, and Duty 12 -Film, <i>Wagner opera, Ring Cycle</i> 15 -Discussion of Plays or Projects 15	The Philosophers, (in PowerPoints) Descartes and Newton, Locke, Hume, Kant and Hegel,	
Week 8 June 21 June 22	-Making of Nations 21 -The Bourgeoisie and Nationalism 21 -Discussion of Plays or Projects 22	Balzac, Old (Pere) Goriot Millet, Wagner, Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Napoleon, Ingres	
Week 9 June 26 June 29	-Industry and the City 26 -Science, and the Engineer 26 -Capital, Finance and Empire 29	The Philosophers, (in PowerPoints) Locke, Mill, Brunel, Paxton, Turner, Babbage	
Week 10 July 3 July 6	-The Worker's Revolution 3 -Discussion of Plays or Projects 6	Marx, Communist Manifesto	
Week 11 July 10 July 13 Reading Test Two	-Natural Selection 10 -Discussion of Plays or Projects 13	Darwin, The Origin of Species Wallace, Lyell	
Week 12 July 17 July 2	-Transcendent New Worlds 17 -Ken Burns, <i>Civil War</i> 2	Thoreau, Walden Pond Morris, Ruskin, Pre-Raphaelites. Whitman, FL Wright, W. Homer, Eakins, Muybridge and O'Sullivan photos, the Hudson School	
Week 13 July 24 Final Exam Weeks July 28 start of exams to Aug 11 end exams	-The Painter of Modern Life 24 - Gotterdammerung 24 Final Exam TBA, 2nd week of Aug. Projects due on last day of exams	Huysmanns, Against Nature Hausmann, Manet, Cassat, Cezanne, Redon, Beardsley, Beaudelaire, Satie Play(s) will be performed earlier so they can have an audience. The rest of the projects will be due on the last day of exams, 11th August.	

Please note that the large, bold, captions indicate the course readings required for that week, and the smaller captions indicate the architects, artists, poets and philosophers expected to be covered in the lectures that week.

University of Waterloo Policies on Academic Behavior

Academic Integrity:

In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Grievance:

A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please be certain to contact the department's administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.

Discipline:

A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/] to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about "rules" for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean.

For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm.

For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.

Appeals:

A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

Note for Students with Disabilities:

The Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD), located in Needles Hall, Room 1132, collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with the OPD at the beginning of each academic term.