

Spring 2021

Arch **248**

Enlightenment, Romanticism, and the Global Creation of Modernity



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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-Siècle Vienna**

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

Zhou En Lai, apocryphal news account

Abstract of land in Niagara

IX Showing the lands granted to the
 Six Nations situated on each side of the
 River or Onle, commencing on **LAKE ERIE**,
 and about 874,910 Acres —

Scale, four Miles to an Inch.

LAKE ONTARIO

LAKE ERIE

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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”**. Late 20th century historian Carl Schorske described that replacement as a disorganized one, but, in his mind, 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 ambitions. Their thinking and creative work is, however, deeply embedded in older global systems of order. These older economic, political and social systems in turn, are given new scope and meaning by the new intellectual and artistic ferment, sometimes offering liberty and sometimes offering a deeper version of an existing exploitation of a people. On a mixed note, and placing an ambitious positive outlook on it, 19th century German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, believed that such a ‘Zeitgeist’ for the age was to be distilled out of the works of a culture’s philosophy, literature, art and architecture, a hopeful synthesis of those more scattered ‘pluralities’ described by Schorske.

The seismic shift towards the mind and culture of our Modern era, and the societies that were created by that transition, was a profound change in the human outlook from that of our deeper past, especially the last thousand years following the fall of Rome. As inheritors of that shift of mind and culture, and being so embedded in its outcomes, we remain today relatively unaware of its absolutely novel nature. 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 17th and 18th century Enlightenment, and continued in the Romantic reaction to the Enlightenment’s overly optimistic view. This view was complete, however, and encompassed mankind’s future and the place of societies and the individual in that future. It culminated finally in the hegemonic apotheosis of the Western world in the late 19th century as its control shaped the first synthesis of a global society, as dark as that exploitive colonialist society’s flaws may have been and still are. This is still our world.

The terrorism in 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 confidence of the Enlightenment’s political philosophers of the late 18th century, who themselves had barely digested the optimistic but contradictory meaning of the American and French Revolutions, freedom and independence built on a foundation of chattel slavery in near and far plantations. This terror did not cease but grew and changed with the shifting transformations of the century to become the 1914 terrorist assassination of the Austrian Imperial heir that ignited the First World War in 1914. Long before the expansion of ISIS, terror also jumped to global settings like the Middle East and Mesopotamia (now Syria, Kurdistan and Iraq), Afghanistan, the Congo 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 ISIS attacks in Paris, Brussels, San Bernardino, Mali and other places, the right wing neo-fascist attacks in the US and European countries on non-white populations and the institutions of government, and 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 continuing imperial and colonial 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, the expansion of ISIS and its cruelty and cultural destructions, and the depth of dying in the global COVID pandemic are all prefigured and mirrored in past events. Climate change also began with the industrialization of this pre-20th century period, but it is truly today’s problem. Remember that today’s COVID-19 pandemic is the product of globalization and the

reach of global travel, an economic, political and social framework that we cannot give up to save ourselves. Remember also, the rapidity of the vaccine development is a product of science and its Enlightenment ideals in their respect for empirical data and evidence. Despite the success of science, the unevenness of the vaccines distribution is also a product of the lingering effects of colonial frameworks of the past.

At the start of this period of transition in the 1700s, there was the singular but widely felt horror at the middle of the 18th century at the total devastation of one of the most beautiful and wealthy of the European capitals by the Lisbon earthquake of 1755. The tsunami that followed 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 by a pitiless God simply made no sense both for the faithful and the skeptics. Despite the claims of Enlightenment 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 since the fall of Rome, through the Middle Ages, the 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 in both England and France, and been executed. Continuing, 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. Western societies dragged the globe into this family dispute. History is persistent and unforgiving.

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 1960s. In 1755 Lisbon, 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. They all still lived in it and it had not gone away. 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 with Enlightenment philosophies and especially in science and the birth of the Newtonian clockwork 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 of life that for those long centuries had been seen unequivocally as God's work. It was 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 on LEARN once the term starts. You will have to purchase Shields and Cao Xueqin books online, I recommend a digital version available on sites like Amazon.ca. They are both very low cost. There are no preferred editions in this course in order not to stress budgets. You may find all the books online in free sources. Some books will not be read in their entirety. The works by Voltaire, Goethe, Mary Shelley, Balzac, Marx, and Thoreau, however, need to be read completely. There's no need to read Thoreau's “Civil Disobedience” if it's part of your text. If you read past the schedule in your spare time, you should focus on those authors.

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

- Erin Shield, Paradise Lost, based on Paradise Lost by John Milton
- Goethe, Johannes Wolfgang, Sorrows of Young Werther
- Shelley, Mary, Frankenstein
- Cao Xueqin, Dream of the Red House or Story of the Stone, selections
- Emma, Austen, Jane, selections
- Balzac, Honoré de, Pere Goriot
- Darwin, Charles, Origin of the Species, selections
- Marx, Karl and Engels, Friedrich, Communist Manifesto
- Thoreau, Henry, Walden Pond
- Baudelaire poems, selections

Included in the lecture PowerPoints or in course PDFs found on LEARN there will be short pieces from authors like JJ Rousseau 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.

Required Course Work

Mid term reading assignment	30
End of term reading assignment	30
Creative Work, be part of a Zoom play, a Paper, any other Project <i>your choice, see the note below</i>	40
Total	100

Reading Assignments

There will be two reading assignments each with multiple questions, each worth 30 points. The material covered will be the readings, lectures and films. The assignments will be submitted online on LEARN.

As part of the reading, I will offer two reading guides on LEARN for your use. These will point out what to look for in each work and, hopefully, will guide you in the interpretation of the readings and films.

The Creative Work Project

The single biggest work and grading item for your term work will be your personal creative project. I offer a few options below for your consideration. You may make your own suggestions:

- A play on Zoom or a short digital film, a group work for approximately 15 to 20 students. Last year a group did a Zoom version of Erin Shield's **Paradise Lost** based on the poet John Milton's epic 17th century work. Two years ago a group did a self authored film called **WARM**.
- Digital models of historical buildings, cities, or landscapes of the period, these may be done in groups of no more than three students. The models will be accompanied by a minimum ten page historical background and modelling process report.
- Individual academic research or critical papers on a topic of your choice. These will be a minimum of 5000 words.
- Personal creative work in music, media, painting, poetry etc. that reflects on the period. Last term there were two interactive games developed by groups of three to four students.

I will place a selection of very good work of the last two terms on LEARN as examples for you. Over the next weeks the TAs and I will work with you to select your project work. Please have your selection in place and a one page description of the work and the process that you will follow by May 28th.

Date	Online Lecture	Readings/Images/Poems
Week 1 May 12 May 14	Course Introduction The Canon Capital, Industry and Empire	
Week 2 May 19 May 21	The Light Bringer Plan of Rome of Sixtus V Baroque Architecture	Erin Shields (Milton), Paradise Lost Aguirre, Wrath of God (film) Friday after film is class project organization discussions
Week 3 May 26 May 28	The Rights of Man Jefferson, Monticello and the University of Virginia The Americas	Goethe, Werther, Friday is a 1.5 hour lecture plus Project consultation
Week 4 June 02 June 04	The Sublime and the Artist Piranesi Soane and Gandy	Mary Shelley, Frankenstein Friday, Project consultation
Week 5 June 9 June 11	The Sleep of Reason Adam's House in Paradise Regents Park and Brighton Pavilion	Jane Austen, Emma, selections (TBA) Emma (film)
Week 6 June 16 Assig. 1 submission June 18	Court Society/ Good Manners Classical Italian and French Gardens Chinese and Persian Gardens English Gardens	Red House, selections (TBA) Belle (film) Friday lecture, gardens continued
Week 7 June 23 June 25	Self-made Society and the Bourgeoisie	Balzac, Old (Pere) Goriot Friday, Project consultation
Week 8 (Canada Day) June 30 July 02	The System of the World Reason, Science, History, Metaphysics	Scientists and Philosophers Tree of Life (film)
Week 9 July 07 July 9	Colonialism and Empire Crystal Palace St. Pancras and King's Cross	Marx, Communist Manifesto Friday, Project consultation
Week 10 July 14 July 16	Wonderous Things Most Beautiful	Darwin, The Origin of Species, selections (TBA) Friday, Project consultation
Week 11 July 21 July 23 Assig. 2 submission	The New World Morris/ Ruskin/ Wright	Thoreau, Walden Pond Ken Burns, Civil War (film) Friday, Final 70% draft project consultation
Week 12 July 28 August 05, no class	The Painter of Modern Life Gotterdammerung	Baudelaire, selections
Final Exam Weeks Aug 5 end of classes, Aug 16 end of exams	Hand-in for Projects on August 16th	Play(s) or films will be performed earlier so they can have an audience. The rest of the projects will be due on the last day of exams, 15th August.

Waterloo Architecture Academic Policies for this COVID-19 Term

Course Time Zone: All dates and times communicated in the document are expressed in Eastern Daylight Time (EDT, GMT-4).

Spring 2020 COVID-19 Special Statement: Given the continuously evolving situation around COVID-19, students are to refer to the University of Waterloo's developing information resource page (<https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/>) for up-to-date information on academic updates, health services, important dates, co-op, accommodation rules and other university level responses to COVID-19.

Late Work: Assignments that are handed in late will receive an initial penalty of 5% on the first calendar day late and a 5% penalty per calendar day thereafter. After 5 calendar days, the assignment will receive a 0%. Only in the case of a justified medical or personal reason will these penalties be waived, and only if these have been officially submitted to the Undergraduate Student Services Co-Ordinator and accepted by the Undergraduate Office. Students seeking accommodations due to COVID-19, are to follow Covid-19-related accommodations as outlined by the university here: (<https://uwaterloo.ca/coronavirus/academic-information#accommodations>).

Academic integrity, grievance, discipline, appeals and note for students with disabilities

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 [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) 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](#). 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 to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. [Check [the Office of Academic Integrity](#) for more information.] 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](#). For typical penalties, check [Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties](#).

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](#).

Note for students with disabilities: [AccessAbility Services](#), located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, 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 [AccessAbility Services](#) at the beginning of each academic term.

Turnitin.com: Text matching software (Turnitin®) may be used to screen assignments in this course. Turnitin® is used to verify that all materials and sources in assignments are documented. Students' submissions are stored on a U.S. server, therefore students must be given an alternative (e.g., scaffolded assignment or annotated bibliography), if they are concerned about their privacy and/or security. Students will be given due notice, in the first week of the term and/or at the time assignment details are provided, about arrangements and alternatives for the use of Turnitin in this course. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor if they, in the first week of term or at the time assignment details are provided, wish to submit the alternate assignment.