

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**  
**BLHS 109: The Nineteenth Century**  
**Fall 2009**

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*Syllabus*



Carus, *The Goethe Monument*

*But the earlier fashion alike of rules and of theories has already been violently thrown aside in Germany – especially owing to the appearance of genuine living poetry – and the rights of genius, its works and their effects, have had their value asserted against the encroachment of such legalities...*

## *Hegel*

By 1800, the promise of the Enlightenment with its emphasis on reason and rationalism had begun to wear off. Contemporary assessments of the role of human reason took two general forms. In a practical and material sense, the rational application of knowledge to daily life fueled the rise of modern industrial economies and the corresponding political theories that supported them. However, the process of modernization also contributed to a growing “crisis of reason” particularly among artists and intellectuals.

This course thus begins with Romanticism, an intellectual and cultural movement that affected aesthetic and artistic trends in poetry, fiction, music, and painting and that emphasized the individual and the irrational as a source of creativity. Renaissance Humanism, the Scientific Revolution, and the Enlightenment all emphasized reason and the notion that objective knowledge leads to progress. The Romantic Movement was, in part, a reaction against the rigidity of Enlightenment thought. Romanticism also reflects changes in philosophy and history, the rise of nationalism, and the effects of industrialization and modernization on the European psyche. In contrast to the Romantic “reaction,” other intellectual and philosophical movements developed in positive response to modernization and industrialization such as Utilitarianism, and Liberalism. Opponents to theories of political economy associated with the latter promoted Marxism and Utopian Socialism. The core theme of the course will be the relationship between the individual and society in the context of modernization, urbanization and industrialization.

### **I. Course Objectives**

In this class we will explore the legacy of the French Revolution, Romanticism, modernization, industrialization, nationalism and the parallel developments in the arts, literature and philosophy that accompanied the dramatic shifts in socio-economic, political and cultural life that marked the long nineteenth-century.

Emphasis will be placed on writing skills, critical reading, and analysis. Course assignments will thus be designed to develop historical, art historical and literary critical thinking. Methods of assessment will combine in-class writing assignments with longer papers. In each instance, student work should emphasize the conceptual component necessary to assess assigned texts and thematic material. In-class writing assignments may include content quizzes or other short writing assignments intended to engender class discussion. Longer written assignments focused on critical analysis of the texts may be divided into distinct stages so that the professor and/or graduate teaching assistant could guide students in the writing process.

### **II. Format**

One evening lecture/discussion per week on Thursdays from 6:15-9:55 in Walsh 392.

### III. Discussion Readings

Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*

François-René de Chateaubriand, *Atala-René*

Hegel, *Reason in History*

Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*

Stendhal, *The Red and the Black*

John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty*

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto and Related Documents*

Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*

Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols; The Anti-Christ*

Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*

### IV. Requirements and Grading

#### Reading questions (combined with overall participation) 25%

Each student will be required to submit between 2-3 questions on the readings due that week. These questions should be posted on Blackboard by Monday evening. You will also be responsible for reading through the questions posed by other students before the class meets and be ready to respond to these questions during discussion.

#### Written Assignments

There will be two 4-page papers and a longer final research paper. Each of the shorter papers will be worth 20% of the semester grade. The essays are to be based on a close reading of one or more of the assigned texts or a work of art. You will receive a set of essay topics in advance from which you will choose one. The essays should be typed and original in conception, with a clearly argued thesis. They are not to be book reports. They should present your interpretation of a given issue based on evidence from the text and sound reasoning. The final paper assignment will be between 10-12 pages in length and will be worth 35% of your final grade. This essay will be on a topic of your own choosing with instructor permission. These papers should be done in typical research fashion using both primary and secondary sources and done according to either MLA or Chicago Manual of Style format.

#### **Georgetown Honor Code:**

##### ***Honor Pledge:***

In the pursuit of high ideals and rigorous standards of academic life, I commit myself to respect and uphold the Georgetown Honor System: To be honest in any academic endeavor, and to conduct myself honorably, as a responsible member of the Georgetown community, as we live and work together.

All students are expected to follow Georgetown's honor code unconditionally. Should you have questions, please speak with me and refer to the honor code material available at [www.georgetown.edu/honor](http://www.georgetown.edu/honor). Papers in this course will either all or at random be submitted to turnitin.com for verification.

## V. Lecture and Discussion topics

### **Week One 9/3**

**Introduction to the Course:** Syllabus, Writing Assignments; Major Themes

Lecture Topic: Foundations in Eighteenth-Century Thought

### **Week Two 9/10**

#### **Romanticism**

Introductory Lecture/ Discussion

Discussion: Isaiah Berlin, *The Roots of Romanticism*

### **Week Three 9/17**

#### **Romanticism**

#### **Romantic Art and Music**

Discussion: Selected poetry; Chateaubriand, *Atala and René*

### **Week Four 9/24**

#### **Romanticism**

Lecture Topic: The Philosophy of Romanticism

Discussion: Hegel, Reason in History

### **Week Five 10/1**

#### **The Industrial Revolution**

Lecture Topic: Technology and Society

Discussion: Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*

#### **Essay Due**

### **Week Six 10/8**

#### **The Industrial Revolution**

Lecture Topic: Social Impact of the Industrial Revolution

Discussion: Stendhal, *The Red and the Black*

### **Week Seven 10/15**

#### **Political Ideologies of the Nineteenth Century**

Liberalism and Utilitarianism

Discussion: Mill, *On Liberty*

### **Week Eight 10/22**

#### **Political Ideologies of the Nineteenth Century**

Marxism, Utopian Socialism

Discussion: Marx, *The Communist Manifesto and Related Documents*

**Week Nine 10/29**

**Private Life: Women and Family in the Nineteenth Century**

Discussion: Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*

**Essay Due**

**Week Ten 11/5**

**The Crisis of Reason?**

Discussion: Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols/The Anti-Christ*

**Week Eleven 11/12**

**The Reunification of Germany and Italy**

Discussion: TBA

**Week Twelve 11/19**

**Art in the Nineteenth Century**

Slide Lecture

Discussion; Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*

**Week Thirteen 12/3**

**The Victorian Age**

Discussion: TBA