

IDS 2935: Romanticism: The Storm of Feeling

Quest I: Identities

I. General Information

Class Meetings

- Fall 2024
- 100% In-Person, No GTAs, 35 Residential
- MWF | Period 8 (3:00 PM–3:50 PM)
- ARCH 213

Instructor

- Prof. David Lloyd Dusenbury
- david.dusenbury@ufl.edu
- CSE E566
- *Office Hours*: Wednesday afternoon (after class) & by appointment

Course Description

What is the place of feeling in modern life? What is the value of desiring things we can never have, or mourning things we have already lost? Can even positive experiences of love, longing, and awe create a “storm”? And can negative emotions like fear, dread, and confusion have a positive meaning? These are questions raised by the Romantic movement, which this Quest course will survey in literature, philosophy, and the arts. Though the course will focus on the rise of Romanticism in Europe from the 1760s to the 1880s, it will end by looking at 20th-century Romanticism in East Asia and North America. We will listen to music by Franz Schubert, Robert Schumann, and Gustav Mahler; we will discuss paintings by Henry Fuselli, Caspar David Friedrich, and J. M. W. Turner; and we will read texts by Novalis, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, and Joris-Karl Huysmans. If Romanticism mobilizes powerful feelings about life in modern society – and life itself – what can it say to us today?

- “Feeling’s surely all.” (*Gefühl ist alles.*)
- J. W. von Goethe, *Faust/Part One*, trans. P. Wayne (1949), 152–53

Quest and General Education Credit

- *Quest I*
- *Humanities*
- *Writing Requirement (WR) 2000 words*

This course accomplishes the [Quest](#) and [General Education](#) objectives of the subject areas listed above. A minimum grade of C is required for Quest and General Education credit. Courses intended to satisfy Quest and General Education requirements cannot be taken S-U.

The Writing Requirement (WR) ensures students both maintain their fluency in writing and use writing as a tool to facilitate learning.

Course grades have two components. To receive writing requirement credit, a student must receive a grade of C or higher and a satisfactory completion of the writing component of the course.

Required Readings and Works

- Required readings will be available as PDFs on Canvas.
- Copies of paintings and recordings of music will be made available on Canvas.
- The writing manual for this course is: *The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition* (2003). ISBN: 0-226-10403-6.
- Materials and Supplies Fees: N/A

II. Graded Work

Description of Graded Work

- Attendance (20 percent). On-time class attendance is highly valued in this course because music will be listened to, and paintings will be viewed, in class. Class attendance will be recorded at the start of every class. Students may have two unexcused absences without any penalty. Starting with the third class missed, however, the attendance grade will be negatively affected. Ten or more unexcused absences will result in failure of the course.
- Participation (10 percent). Students are expected to demonstrate their familiarity with required readings by asking relevant questions and discussing important themes during class.
- Short “Reflection” Paper (5 percent). The Short “Reflection” Paper will be due on **Friday, September 20**. In an essay of 500 words, students will reflect on one or more of their required readings in the first month of the course. The style can be informal, but this essay should demonstrate familiarity with the course’s basic themes and a willingness and ability to reflect on the readings which are assigned.
- Experiential Learning Assignment (10 percent). On **Wednesday, November 13**, we will visit the historic Evergreen Cemetery (401 SE 21st Ave, Gainesville, FL 32641), which was established in the 1850s, a decade in which Romantic literature was still being written (and the University of Florida was founded). By this point in the semester, we will have read two poems about cemeteries: Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (in Week 3), and Percy Bysshe Shelley’s “A Summer Evening Churchyard, Lechlade, Gloucestershire” (in Week 8). It is with these poems in mind that we will visit the Evergreen Cemetery.
- Experiential Learning Paper (10 percent). The Experiential Learning Paper will be due on **Friday, November 15**. In an essay of 500, students will reflect on their experience in the Evergreen Cemetery and offer their thoughts on how – or whether – these experiences compare to those in Romantic poetry about cemeteries.

- Midterm Exam (15 percent). There will be a midterm exam on **Friday, October 11**. It will consist of one short essay and several multiple-choice questions, all of which will be completed in class.
- Final Exam (30 percent). The final exam will be held on **Friday, December 13**, and will consist of three essays and multiple-choice questions, to be completed in class.

Grading Scale

For information on UF's grading policies for assigning grade points, see [here](#).

A	94 – 100%		C	74 – 76%
A–	90 – 93%		C–	70 – 73%
B+	87 – 89%		D+	67 – 69%
B	84 – 86%		D	64 – 66%
B–	80 – 83%		D–	60 – 63%
C+	77 – 79%		E	<60

Grading Rubrics

Participation Rubric

A	Typically comes to class with pre-prepared questions about the readings. Engages others about ideas, respects the opinions of others and consistently elevates the level of discussion.
B	Does not always come to class with pre-prepared questions about the reading. Waits passively for others to raise interesting issues. Some in this category, while courteous and articulate, do not adequately listen to other participants or relate their comments to the direction of the conversation.
C	Attends regularly but typically is an infrequent or unwilling participant in discussion. Is only adequately prepared for discussion.
D	Fails to attend class regularly and is inadequately prepared for discussion. Is an unwilling participant in discussion.
E	Attends class infrequently and is wholly unprepared for discussion. Refuses to participate in discussion.

Writing Rubric

	A	B	C	D	E
Thesis and Argumentation	Thesis is clear, specific, and presents a thoughtful, critical, engaging, and creative interpretation. Argument fully supports the thesis both logically and thoroughly.	Thesis is clear and specific, but not as critical or original. Shows insight and attention to the text under consideration. May have gaps in argument's logic.	Thesis is present but not clear or specific, demonstrating a lack of critical engagement to the text. Argument is weak, missing important details or making logical leaps with little support.	Thesis is vague and/or confused. Demonstrates a failure to understand the text. Argument lacks any logical flow and does not utilize any source material.	There is neither a thesis nor any argument.
Use of Sources	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are well incorporated, utilized, and contextualized throughout.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are incorporated but not contextualized significantly.	Primary (and secondary texts, if required) are mostly incorporated but are not properly contextualized.	Primary and/or secondary texts are almost wholly absent.	Primary and/or secondary texts are wholly absent.
Organization	Clear organization. Introduction provides adequate background information and ends with a thesis. Details are in logical order. Conclusion is strong and states the point of the paper.	Clear organization. Introduction clearly states thesis, but does not provide as much background information. Details are in logical order, but may be more difficult to follow. Conclusion is recognizable and ties up almost all loose ends.	Significant lapses in organization. Introduction states thesis but does not adequately provide background information. Some details not in logical or expected order that results in a distracting read. Conclusion is recognizable but does not tie up all loose ends.	Poor, hard-to-follow organization. There is no clear introduction of the main topic or thesis. There is no clear conclusion, and the paper just ends. Little or no employment of logical body paragraphs.	The paper is wholly disorganized, lacking an introduction, conclusion or any logical coherence.
Grammar, mechanics and style	No errors.	A few errors.	Some errors.	Many errors.	Scores of errors.

Examination Rubric: Essays and Short Answers

	A	B	C	D	E
Completeness	Shows a thorough understanding of the question. Addresses all aspects of the question completely.	Presents a general understanding of the question. Completely addresses most aspects of the question or address all aspects incompletely.	Shows a limited understanding of the question. Does not address most aspects of the question.	Fails fully to answer the specific central question.	Does not answer the specific central question.
Analysis	Analyses, evaluates, compares and/or contrasts issues and events with depth.	Analyses or evaluates issues and events, but not in any depth.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating accurate, relevant facts.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events beyond stating vague, irrelevant, and/or inaccurate facts.	Lacks analysis or evaluation of the issues and events.
Evidence	Incorporates pertinent and detailed information from both class discussions and assigned readings.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details but does not support all aspects of the task evenly.	Includes relevant facts, examples and details, but omits concrete examples, includes inaccurate information and/or does not support all aspects of the task.	Does not incorporate information from pertinent class discussion and/or assigned readings.	Does not adduce any evidence.
Writing	Presents all information clearly and concisely, in an organized manner.	Presents information fairly and evenly and may have minor organization problems.	Lacks focus, somewhat interfering with comprehension.	Organizational problems prevent comprehension.	Incomprehensible organization and prose.

III. Annotated Weekly Schedule

Friday, August 23:

Introduction to the themes of the course.

Week 1. “Irregular Pearls”: Before Romanticism, Part I

Description of Week 1: What is the place of feeling in modern life? We will begin by looking at the feelings of “melancholy” and “vanity” in Baroque music, literature, and drama. One of the differences between the treatment of negative emotions in the Baroque period is that artists and philosophers tried to find a *way out* of them. We will see this in our readings of Thomas Browne, and Calderón de la Barca. This desire for a *way out* will later change, in some of the main currents of Romanticism.

Monday, August 26: What is the place of sadness in modern life? We will listen to one or two Baroque musical themes on “melancholy” from the recent *Harmonia Mundi* record titled, “...pour passer la mélancolie.” Brief compositions by Johann Jacob Froberger (d. 1667), Louis Couperin (d. 1661), and others are performed by harpsichordist Andreas Staier.

Wednesday, August 28: Is there some connection between melancholy and “genius,” even in modern society? We will read brief excerpts from Sir Thomas Browne (d. 1682), *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (New York, 2001). Special attention will be given to the ancient link between melancholy and “genius” – which becomes a prominent theme in Romanticism.

Friday, August 30: Final introduction to the themes of the course. Question: What is the difference between dream and reality, especially in modern society? We will read several scenes from Pedro Calderón de la Barca (d. 1681), *Life Is a Dream* (London, 2006). Special attention will be given to its philosophically interesting conclusion, in which a *life of virtue* should be chosen – *even if* “life is a dream.” This is a distinctly Baroque *way out* of a modern problem, and it is one that many Romantics will reject.

Week 2. “Eternal Sunshine”: Before Romanticism, Part II

Description of Week 2: Is emotional calm the human ideal? In this second week on the period “Before Romanticism,” we will look at ideals of clarity, balance, and reason in Classical music, literature, and drama. Negative emotions seem to be less prominent in Classical culture than in the earlier Baroque period. The dominant Classical idea seems to be that cultural production rightly belongs to those who have *risen above* feelings of “melancholy” and “vanity.” Art in this tradition does not *end* with a way out of negative feelings; rather, that is how art is meant to *begin*. The figures of the artist and philosopher, in Classicism, are therefore quite different than in the Baroque *and* Romantic periods – since the connection between melancholy and “genius” is denied, or downplayed, by Classicists.

Monday, September 2:

Holiday. No class.

Wednesday, September 4: We will listen to parts of a stately and sunny Classical composition by Joseph Haydn (d. 1809), *Symphony No. 22: "Philosopher"* (conducted by Sir Neville Marriner, and recorded at Academy of St. Martin in the Fields). This will prepare a contrast with Haydn's later "Storm and Stress" symphony, "The Passion," which we will listen to in Week 4.

Friday, September 6: We will read excerpts (30 pages total) from Francois Voltaire (d. 1778), *Candide, or Optimism* (translated by Theo Cuffe; London, 2005). This text is of interest to us for several reasons. First, it unmistakably places *feeling* at the center of modern philosophy. Second, it fiercely criticizes philosophical optimism. (We will look further at philosophical pessimism in Weeks 12 and 15.) And third, even though intensely negative experiences lie at the heart of Voltaire's novella – and his philosophy – nevertheless, a *way out* is still found. Voltaire's protagonist seems to become a clear-headed, balanced, and reasonable figure – like Haydn's "Philosopher" – *without* having found a *rational* way out of his pessimism. In this, Voltaire's Classical thinker differs – if nothing else, in *mood* – from the later Romantic figure of the "genius."

Week 3. "Night Thoughts": Before Romanticism, Part III

Description of Week 3: Is it important for us to think about the sorrows of life, just like it is natural for night to follow day? In Week 3, we will see how the "Storm and Stress" movement starts to assert the cultural rights of negativity in the 1760s. Long before John Field creates the modern genre of night-music in the early 1800s (and we will listen to some of Field's lovely "Nocturnes" in Week 8), European musicians and poets were dwelling on themes of unrest, darkness, and death.

Monday, September 9: We will listen to one of most turbulent compositions by the "London" Bach, Johann Christian Bach (d. 1782), *Symphony in G minor* (Op. 6, no. 6; recording to be determined). This symphony is rightly seen as one of the first in which a stormy new European aesthetic begins to be heard. We will discuss the significance of J. C. Bach's 'Classical' career in London (the epicenter of a new industrial and imperial economy), and his 'Romantic' death in poverty.

Wednesday, September 11: We will read a famous poem by Thomas Gray (d. 1771), "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" (edition to be determined). Gray's poem is a "lonely contemplation" that anticipates many themes in Romantic poetry and painting. It is for this reason that Percy Bysshe Shelley's later poem, "A Summer Evening Churchyard" – which we will read in Week 8 – is a sort of reply to Gray's churchyard elegy. Still, a number of elements – which we will discuss – tie Gray's gloomy poem to the Christian faith that inspired Baroque poets' earlier meditations on death.

Friday, September 13: We will read excerpts from Edward Young (d. 1765), *Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (edition to be determined) – a set of philosophical

poems on loss, and death, that were long admired and later illustrated in the 1790s by a visionary poet, William Blake.

Week 4. “Storm and Stress”: Toward Romanticism, Part I

Description of Week 4: Can “storms” – in nature, or in life – teach us things we need to know? In this week we will begin to look at a youth-movement in Germany, in the mid-1700s, which held up “Storm and Stress” as a cultural ideal. Rejecting aspects of Classical drama and literature (especially as practiced in neighboring France), these young Germans are rightly seen as forerunners of the later, Europe-wide movement known as Romanticism.

Monday, September 16: We will listen to parts of a somber composition by Joseph Haydn (d. 1809), *Symphony No. 49: “The Passion”* (conducted by John Lubbock, and recorded at St. John’s, Smith Square, London). This symphony is commonly thought to belong to Haydn’s “Storm and Stress” period.

Wednesday, September 18: We will read several short passages from Johann Georg Hamann (d. 1788), in *Writings on Philosophy and Language* (ed. K. Haynes, Cambridge, 2007). Hamann is a critical figure in what some have called the “Counter-Enlightenment,” and one of the originators of the “Storm and Stress” style in Germany. An important figure in the history of existentialist philosophy (as we will see in Week 15), we will be looking in Hamann’s dense writings for a few clues to this question: Why does Hamann give a positive value to what is irrational, obscure, and unfinished?

Friday, September 20: We will read several scenes from Friedrich Schiller (d. 1805), *The Robbers* (London, 1980). Special attention will be given to Schiller’s treatments of crime, freedom, and evil – all of which are central to later Romanticism. *The Short “Reflection” Paper will be due on Friday, September 20. In an essay of 400 to 500 words, students will reflect on one or more of their required readings in the first month of the course.*

Week 5. “Storm and Stress”: Toward Romanticism, Part II

Description of Week 5: Limits are essential in human life – and yet, we are surrounded by ‘limitless’ things like the sea, and the sky. What is the place of ‘limitless’ feelings in life? And how do we feel – or how *should* we feel – when we are faced by ‘limitless’ things? This week we will begin to think about one of the most important concepts in Romantic movements, the *sublime*. One of the most interesting things about this concept is that it is not entirely positive or negative. The feeling of the sublime seems to blend positive emotions (such as wonder and awe) and negative emotions (such as fear and confusion). Why this might be, and what it might mean? This is something we will begin to think about in Week 5.

Monday, September 23: We will listen to parts of a tempestuous composition by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (d. 1791), *Symphony No. 25* (conducted by Herbert von Karajan, and recorded by Deutsche Grammophon in Vienna). Incredibly, Mozart wrote this symphony when he was only seventeen years old. Set in a minor key (and Mozart only wrote

two minor-key symphonies: both are in G minor), it is seen as a “Storm and Stress” piece, influenced by Joseph Haydn (whom we listened to in Weeks 2 and 4).

Wednesday, September 25: We will read excerpts (no more than 30 pages) from Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (translated by Patrick Frierson; Cambridge, 2011).

Friday, September 27: We will read further excerpts (no more than 30 pages) in Kant’s *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*.

Week 6. “Endless Night”: Early Romanticism, Part I

Description of Week 6: What is the significance of death in life? This is connected to the question of the sublime (in Week 5), since death is – or seems to be – ‘limitless.’ Much like night is a part of the day that does not belong to it – so, too, death is a part of life that does not belong to it. How do we feel about these great ‘negatives’ of light, and life? Or how should we feel about them? For reasons we will look into, the early Romantics seem to view night, and death, not so much as ‘negatives’ but as clues to the secret meaning of both light and life. Positive feelings toward certain ‘negatives’ in life is not just a theme in early Romanticism, but in most later Romantic movements. Why?

Monday, September 30: We will view and discuss paintings by Caspar David Friedrich (d. 1840) with themes of solitude, gloom, and night. Friedrich is one of the most popular Romantic painters today, and one of the most important German painters of his time.

Wednesday, October 2: We will read excerpts (no more than 30 pages) from Novalis (d. 1801), from Novalis, *Hymns to the Night* (translated by Dirk Higgins; Albany, New York, 1997).

Friday, October 4:

No class. Instructor out of town for a conference. If students would like to discuss further our readings of Novalis, or any other required readings in the first six weeks of the course, they are encouraged to contact the instructor.

Week 7. “Christianity or Europe”: Early Romanticism, Part II

Description of Week 7: What is the place of religion – and specifically, Christianity – in modern life in the West? How should we feel about it? And what does it offer us emotionally? These are questions that concerned most of the early Romantic writers and artists. Their answers are interesting. *Some* Romantics conclude that the Christian legacy still has something essential to offer us – yet their reason for concluding this is not that of traditional Christians. More broadly, the Romantic fascination with Christianity has to do with their own stance toward Europe’s cultural past. Which could lead us to ask: How do we feel, and how should we feel, about American culture’s religious past? Is it something to overcome, and forget – or rather, should it be a key element in our experience of the world?

Monday, October 7: We will view and discuss paintings by Caspar David Friedrich (as in Week 6), but now with the themes of Christianity, solitude, and decline.

Wednesday, October 9: We will read a text (no more than 30 pages) by Novalis (as in Week 6), “Christianity or Europe: A Fragment” (translated by Frederick Beiser; Cambridge, 2012).

Friday, October 11:

Midterm Exam in Week 7, during class.

Week 8. “Beauty, like the Night”: English Romanticism, Part I

Description of Week 8: Is night just the end or absence of day, or is it, rather, a positive form and element of our experience of the world? In other words, does darkness have its own beauty, its own ‘light’? These questions point to the *meaning* of negativity, and our *experiences* of negativity, in Romantic culture. In Week 8, we will see that the Romantic attention to the ‘negative’ gave rise to new artistic styles and forms – especially in English painting and music – and to new advances in English poetry.

Monday, October 14: We will view and discuss paintings by J. M. W. Turner (d. 1851) with the themes of storm, half-light, and night. Turner is still one of the most admired Romantic painters, and he is rightly regarded as one of the most influential English painters in history.

Wednesday, October 16: “Night thoughts” have been a theme of the course (since Week 3), but it is only in the early 1800s that the genre of night music – or ‘nocturne’ – is created. We will listen to some of the compositions written by the creator of the genre, John Field (d. 1837), “Nocturnes” (performed by John O’Conor).

Friday, October 18: We will read several night-themed poems by Romantic poets such as Percy Bysshe Shelley (d. 1822), “A Summer Evening Churchyard, Lechlade, Gloucestershire” (a sort of Romantic reply to Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard,” which we read in Week 3); and George Gordon, Lord Byron (d. 1824), “She Walks in Beauty.”

Week 9. “Modern Prometheus”: English Romanticism, Part II

Description of Week 9: The Romantic attraction to the ‘negative’ may give rise to artistic innovation (in Week 8), but it also gives rise to horror. Our question in Week 9, is: What is the place of the unnatural in modern life? Or more pointedly: Is modern life, in some ways, intrinsically horrifying? We will see that, in both painting and literature, experiences of terror, dread, and revulsion are more prominent in Romantic culture than in earlier European cultural forms. This is so, even though these Romantic motifs and experiences are often given a ‘medieval’ name – *Gothic*.

Monday, October 21: We will view and discuss paintings by Henry Fuseli (d. 1825) with the themes of monstrosity, horror, and the supernatural. Though Fuseli was born in Switzerland, he later settled in Britain, where he lived for many years. Fuseli exerted a

marked influence on numerous British artists – notably, William Blake – and he is buried in St. Paul’s Cathedral in London.

Wednesday, October 23: We will read excerpts (30 pages total) from Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley (d. 1851), *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (edition to be determined). Remarkably, Shelley began to write this iconic novel when she was only eighteen years old. At the time, she was living in Switzerland with Percy Shelley and Lord Byron (both of whom we read in Week 8). This text is of interest to us for a variety of reasons. First, no other Romantic novel places *negative feeling* more convincingly at the center of the modern experience of the world. Second, *Frankenstein* revisits the theme of ‘optimism’ that we discussed in Week 2 (and that we will return to in Week 12). And third, unlike in Voltaire’s *Candide*, the horror of modern life is man-made in Shelley’s *Frankenstein*, and *no way out* is found. Shelley’s Romantic “genius” finds no rest, and the murderous creature (‘bio-tech’) that he vivifies is never brought under effective human control.

Friday, October 25: We will read more excerpts (30 pages total) from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*.

Week 10. “Ghosts Reign”: German Romanticism, Part I

Description of Week 10: The Romantic poet Novalis (from Weeks 6 and 7) once said: “Where there are no gods, ghosts reign.” In Week 10 of the course, we will ask: Is modern life ‘haunted’? And, if so, by what? Is it possible even for machines to ‘haunt’ us? To figure in our lives in a way that hovers between life and death, between human and divine (or demonic)? In other words, we will be asking whether modern life is thoroughly *disenchanted*, as we often hear – or rather, whether the feeling of *enchantment* is still a key part of our experience of the world. This is what most Romantic writers believed, and they tried to show it through their dramas, novels, and short stories – a few of which, we will read this week.

Monday, October 28: We will read excerpts (20 pages total) from J. W. von Goethe (d. 1832), *Faust: A Tragedy, Parts One and Two* (translated by Martin Greenberg; New Haven, Conn., 2014).

Wednesday, October 30: We will read excerpts (20 pages total) from Heinrich von Kleist (d. 1811), *The Marquise of O and Other Stories* (London, 1978).

Friday, November 1: We will read excerpts (20 pages total) from E. T. A. Hoffmann (d. 1822), *Tales of Hoffman* (London, 1982).

Week 11. “Terrifying Songs”: German Romanticism, Part II

Description of Week 11: Can we experience new beauty, even in times of intense sadness? Can we re-channel a sense of loneliness, say, into forms of expression that transcend the pain we are experiencing – and others may be experiencing, too? This is what countless Romantic artists believed. Many of them died in quite desperate circumstances.

Yet many of them, too, left works of exquisite beauty that they penned or painted soon before they died – often very young. In Week 11 of the course, we will listen to three compositions that can be dated to the very end of their composers' lives. We will ask why experiences of intense loneliness, alienation, and a fascination with both wild nature and 'spirits' are characteristic of German Romanticism – and why, in that tradition, they all give rise to great beauty.

Monday, November 4: Franz Schubert (d. 1828) wrote his *Winter Journey* in the year before he died, in Vienna, at the age of thirty-one. We will listen to a certain number of the songs in this famous song-cycle: Schubert himself called them “terrifying songs.” We will listen to Hans Hotter's and Gerald Moore's 1954 recording of *Winter Journey*.

Wednesday, November 6: We will listen to a certain number of the *Forest Scenes* written in 1848 and 1849, for solo piano, by the Romantic composer Robert Schumann (d. 1856). The composer's wife, Clara Schumann – a superlative pianist – believed that these *Forest Scenes* were “haunted music,” and tried to prevent them being performed. It is thought that one movement of the *Forest Scenes*, “Bird as Prophet” (Op. 82,7), is influenced by J. W. von Goethe's *Faust* (which we read from in Week 10). We will listen to Mitsuko Uchida's 2013 recording of *Forest Scenes*.

Friday, November 8: We will listen to *Ghost Variations*, Robert Schumann's last composition before he was committed to a mental hospital in 1854. Schumann died not long afterward, in the same institution, at the age of forty-six. Apparently, he believed that the theme of his *Ghost Variations* had been communicated to him by angelic beings of some sort. We will listen to Kun-Woo Paik's 2020 recording of *Ghost Variations*.

Week 12. “The True Aim of Life”: Romantic Pessimism

Description of Week 12: What is the point of life? Though we might find this idea shocking, one of the Romantic movement's most sophisticated philosophers concluded that the “purpose of our life is *suffering*.” He therefore decided to call his own philosophy of life ‘pessimism’ (in German, *Pessimismus*). Intriguingly, he argued that great religious traditions of both East and West – Buddhism and Christianity – were ‘pessimistic.’ “Christianity carries in its innermost heart,” he wrote, “the truth that suffering (the Cross) is the true aim of life.” Whatever we make of this claim, it is worth looking at one of modern philosophy's most rigorous attempts to identify the deep meaning of human suffering – and, with it, of human life. That is what we will do in Week 12 of the course.

Monday, November 11:

Holiday. No class.

Wednesday, November 13: In advance of this class, we will read excerpts (30 pages total) from Arthur Schopenhauer (d. 1860), *Essays and Aphorisms* (London, 1970). And during this class period, we will visit the historic Evergreen Cemetery (401 SE 21st Ave, Gainesville, FL 32641), which was established in the 1850s, a decade in which Romantic literature was still being written (and the University of Florida was founded). Before our

visit, we will have read and discussed two Romantic poems about cemeteries: Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and Percy Bysshe Shelley's "A Summer Evening Churchyard, Lechlade, Gloucestershire." It is with these poems in mind that we will experience the historic Evergreen Cemetery.

Friday, November 15:

Experiential learning paper due.

Week 13. "Beyond Time": Late Romanticism

Description of Week 13: Is life in modern society more beautiful than before? Many of us believe it must be, and there are, of course, good reasons to believe that. Yet many Romantic artists are suspicious of what is 'modern' and seek to stage a return – if only in thought – to some prior state of the world, or life. A return to the past, or some other type of *flight from the present*, is characteristic of a Romantic desire to live "beyond time." In Week 13 of the course, we will look at two radical attempts to live, artistically, "beyond time." They will help us to ask: What is, and what should be, our experience of the present? For the present is not simply 'there' for us. Rather, we choose – or we are *free* to choose – how we will think about, and feel about, the present.

Monday, November 18: We will read excerpts (30 pages total) from a novel by Joris-Karl Huysmans (d. 1907), *Against Nature* (translated by Brendan King; London, 2008). This is perhaps the clearest case of a *flight from modernity* in modern literature. Pessimism, solitude, medievalism, and other Romantic themes are taken to great extremes in this "dream" of a wealthy, decadent Parisian cutting himself off from society to live "beyond time" – or, at least, beyond his own time.

Wednesday, November 20: We will read more excerpts (30 pages total) from Huysmans's *Against Nature*.

Friday, November 22: Earth is humankind's only place in the universe. In the early twentieth century, a late Romantic composer, Gustav Mahler (d. 1911), wrote *The Song of the Earth*. We will listen to the last of the songs that make up Mahler's gorgeous song-cycle. It is titled "The Farewell." This song is a farewell to life and the earth – and in fact, Mahler died a couple of years after writing it. Intriguingly, "The Farewell" is built around verses written by two medieval Chinese poets. We will listen to Christa Ludwig's 1966 performance, conducted by Otto Klemperer.

Week 14. "Love of Things Irreconcilable": Asian and American Romanticism

Description of Week 14: As we have seen in Weeks 1 to 14, Romanticism originates in Europe and peaks in the 1800s. But Romanticism is still a strong artistic movement in the early 1900s, as we saw in Week 13; and as we will see in Week 14, Romanticism finds its adherents in both Asia and the Americas. The global legacies of Romanticism help us to raise a question which will concern us during the last two weeks of the course: What can

Romanticism say to us today? We can begin by looking at the work of one American, and one Japanese Romantic in the twentieth century.

Monday, December 2: We will read excerpts (10 pages total) from the work of Hart Crane (d. 1932), in *The Complete Poems of Hart Crane* (edited by Marc Simon; New York, 2001). And we will view and discuss paintings by Fujishima Takeji (d. 1943) with themes of dusk, night, solitude, sacred architecture, and melancholy sitters who appear to be “lost in thought.”

Wednesday, December 4: *Conclusion of the course.*

Final Exam, Friday, December 13.

The final exam will be held from 12:30 to 2:30 pm on Friday, December 13.

IV. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

At the end of this course, students will be expected to have achieved the [Quest](#) the [General Education student learning outcomes](#) for Humanities (H).

[Humanities \(H\)](#) Humanities courses must afford students the ability to think critically through the mastering of subjects concerned with human culture, especially literature, history, art, music, and philosophy, and must include selections from the Western canon.

Humanities courses provide instruction in the history, key themes, principles, terminology, and theory or methodologies used within a humanities discipline or the humanities in general. Students will learn to identify and to analyze the key elements, biases and influences that shape thought. These courses emphasize clear and effective analysis and approach issues and problems from multiple perspectives.

Content: *Students demonstrate competence in the terminology, concepts, theories and methodologies used within the discipline(s).*

Identify, describe, and explain the themes used across Romantic genres to examine essential the place of feeling in modern life (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** midterm exam, final exam.

Identify, describe, and explain key themes, questions, and tendencies in different Romantic movements (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** midterm exam, final exam.

Critical Thinking: *Students carefully and logically analyse information from multiple perspectives and develop reasoned solutions to problems within the discipline(s).*

Analyze the place of feeling as it relates to the question(s) of truth in Romantic art and literature (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** midterm exam, final exam

Analyze the significance of the past as a source of feeling in Romantic art and literature – and its relevance to the project(s) of modernity (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** midterm exam, final exam (Quest 1, H)

Communication: *Students communicate knowledge, ideas and reasoning clearly and effectively in written and oral forms appropriate to the discipline(s).*

Develop thoughts in conversation, and in writing, which demonstrate careful and critical engagement with course texts (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** midterm exam, final exam

Articulate in conversation, and in writing, students' experiences and reflections on Romantic art, literature, and settings (Quest 1, H). **Assessment:** active class participation, experiential learning component

Connection: *Students connect course content with meaningful critical reflection on their intellectual, personal, and professional development at UF and beyond*

Connect course themes with students' intellectual and personal development at the University of Florida and beyond (Quest 1). **Assessment:** active class participation, experiential learning component

Reflect on students' own and others' experience of Romantic art and literature, in conversation and in written work (Quest 1). **Assessment:** active class participation, experiential learning component

V. Quest Learning Experiences

1. Details of Experiential Learning Component

During this semester, the class will visit the historic Evergreen Cemetery (401 SE 21st Ave, Gainesville, FL 32641), which was established in the 1850s, a decade in which Romantic literature was still being written (and the University of Florida was founded). Before this visit, the class will have read and discussed two Romantic poems about cemeteries: Thomas Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and Percy Bysshe Shelley's "A Summer Evening Churchyard, Lechlade, Gloucestershire." It is with these poems in mind that the class will experience the historic Evergreen Cemetery.

2. Details of Self-Reflection Component

Self-reflection is a theme of the course: Romanticism is a movement in which self-reflection is held to be a decisive human experience. Students will reflect on their own experiences and those of Romantic poets, artists, and philosophers, throughout the course. In the Experiential Learning Component, they will be asked to reflect on their experience of a historic Florida cemetery, comparing it to the experiences of two Romantic poets (Thomas Gray and Percy Bysshe Shelley), and formulating their reflections in a take-home essay.

VI. Required Policies

Attendance Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found [here](#).

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the [Disability Resource Center](#). It is important for students to share their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available [here](#). Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via [this link](#). Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at [GatorEvals Public Data](#).