ENG 4301 Special Topics, Pursuit of the Invisible: Romanticism in Visual Art & Literature

Instructor Contact Information

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News Forum: This is where we will post general announcements on a weekly basis. You are responsible for knowing the information posted there, whether by checking the Forum itself, or by receiving its messages via email.

Course Description

ENG 4301 Topics Course in Literature
This course introduces students to the study of a topic in literature chosen by the instructor. It requires the close examination and exploration of the chosen topic through reading, discussing, and composing critical responses to key texts. Prerequisite: English 1317

Course Objectives:

Upon completing this course the learner will be able to:
- Articulate, in writing, how visual art and literature serve as both a product of culture and as a producer of culture
- Recall the history of Romanticism
- Demonstrate a basic knowledge of 2D art media and processes
- Develop, in writing, well-reasoned conclusions and solutions regarding the subject matter
- Interpret and incorporate information effectively

Books / Supplies:

All readings/viewings for this course are available online:
Course Requirements

Attendance & Participation:

Due to the virtual, asynchronous nature of this course, you will be expected to log on to the website and actively participate at least twice per week on two separate days in order to successfully complete the class. For example: during a week of class, you might log on to the website on Monday and Saturday. If you access the website twice only on Monday, you would be counted absent for that week. The reason for this attendance policy is as follows:

1) So that you will “work ahead” and not be late on assignments. This online course requires a significant amount of reading and writing. If you wait until the last minute to complete an assignment, you will not do well in the course.

2) To ensure participation in the discussion boards. Although Discussion Posts are due on Thursdays, and Responses on Saturday, you should not wait until that day to post and reply. This would not allow you to receive good feedback, and you would not have the chance to interact with your classmates if you wait until the due date.

3) By active participation, we mean that you post and respond substantive material. The discussion board in this class is graded, so make it a priority.

Reading:

As this will be a literature-based and visual arts experience, there will be substantial reading, listening, and viewing assignments nearly every week. Do them, and do them well. If you don’t, it will be very difficult to take part in the discussion forum, which is unequivocally important to
our class’ goals and your participation grade. Also, take note that it will be impossible to succeed on the weekly mini-quizzes without having completed the reading closely and thoughtfully.

**Mini-Quizzes:**

Some weeks will end with a quiz over the material learned in preceding week(s). There is no ability to retake these quizzes, so you’ll want to make sure you go into it prepared. If you have truly engaged with the reading, video lectures and/or podcasts, you should have no problem succeeding. Quizzes are due on **Sundays by 11:55pm central time.**

**Discussions:**

**Discussion Forum Posts:**

Due each **Thursday at noon (12:00pm) central time,** and posted to the discussion forum, is a typed, well-thought and *proofread* document of 200-300 words in response to each of **TWO** questions posed by the professor at the beginning of the week; as a clarification, that is **TWO** writings of 200-300 words, posted separately in response to two different questions. These questions will range from asking for thoughts on the recent reading to throwing out ideas for the next big paper so read the questions closely and be ready to respond thoughtfully. Due to the brevity of each writing, concision is of utmost importance—you want to say as much as you can, as clearly as possible, in as few words as you can manage.

**Discussion Forum Responses:**

Also, for a discussion forum to work, there must actually be a discussion. That means that by **Saturday at noon (12:00pm) central time** it will be your job to write at least **four** 100-150 word responses to the posts of your classmates. Strive to be thoughtful and to help clarify or debate the thoughts of the initial post, and feel free to ask questions and further the conversation. These responses will be subject to the same expectations of proofreading and thoughtfulness as your forum posts.

*Note:* **Late Discussion Forum assignments and Mini-Quizzes will not be accepted;** lateness on other assignments will be subject to a 20% per day grade reduction. In other words, turn in your assignments on time.

**“Embrace the Sublime” Assignment:**

After the mid-point of the semester, every individual will undertake an attempt to “Embrace the Sublime”—what exactly this means will be up for debate. For this assignment you will need to write about what you did and why you chose this particular experience, as well as define why exactly it’s an example of “embracing the sublime.” In addition to presenting your findings in the Discussion Forum, other components of the assignment will be due at the end of week five on **Sunday at 11:55pm central time.**
**Semester Essay:**

Near the end of the semester you will turn in a substantial writing project of roughly 1000-1500 words. For this essay, you will imagine you are a journalist. You are tasked with interviewing one writer and one painter from the Romantic era discussed in this course. Using an interview format (question and answer), facilitate a discussion between the three of you, demonstrating your knowledge of the interviewees, their possible opinions of each other, their art and time in which they live.

Your semester essay will be due **Friday at 11:55pm central time** at the end of week eight, to allow sufficient time for grading.

*Note:* See the Rubric documents for explanations of what differentiates successful Discussion Forum posts/responses and Mid-Term and Semester Essays from unsuccessful ones.

**Final Exam:**

An exam on concepts and materials will be administered at the end of the course (week 8). The exam will be comprised of multiple choice questions.

**Enthusiasm, Positivity, and Effort:**

Many classes, both online and in a live classroom, suffer because of lethargy, apathy, rudeness, grumpiness, belittling of others, laziness, contrarianism, unprofessionalism, and many other forms of not conducting yourself in an adult manner. Seek to be fired up about learning, tackle the class with gusto and ambition, and be a positive force in making sure everyone in the class succeeds. We’ll be covering a lot of really fascinating and famous stuff, and we’ll need all hands on deck to make the most of it!

**A Note on Style…**

All writings for this class, including in the Discussion Forum and in personal correspondence with the professor, are to be professional in tone and content; no emoticons, no “textspeak,” no undue slang. The larger essays for this class are to be typed in Times New Roman size-twelve font with one-inch margins, double-spaced, meticulously edited, in MLA form, and thought-provoking.

**A Typical Week:**

**Monday:** Familiarize yourself with the homework and expectations for the week. Begin the reading.

**Tuesday:** Continue reading. Consider making your Discussion Forum Posts.

**Wednesday:** Finish the reading. Listen to podcasts or view the Video Lectures (whatever is required for the week). Consider making your Discussion Forum Posts. Consider writing Discussion Forum Responses to those who have made posts.
**Thursday:** *Deadline for Discussion Forum Posts; none will be accepted after noon this day.* Consider writing Discussion Forum Responses to those who have made posts.

**Friday:** Consider writing Discussion Forum Responses to those who have made posts. Consider taking the Mini-Quiz (if applicable) for the week.

**Saturday:** *Deadline for Discussion Forum Responses; none will be accepted after noon this day.* Consider taking the Mini-Quiz for the week.

**Sunday:** *Deadline for the Mini-Quiz; none will be accepted after 11:55pm this day.* Consider looking ahead to the following week.

**Note:** The weeks the “Embrace the Sublime” Assignment and Semester Essay are due are not “typical” weeks. Make sure to pay special attention to deadlines, and stay on schedule during these weeks.

**Grading Policy:**

We are going to use a variety of grading methods in here, and we believe it is just as important for students to be actively engaged in their progress as it is for teachers to provide feedback. With that in mind, our notes on your assignments will focus only on the most pressing issues, and we will always be willing to discuss with students via email, phone, or teleconference their strengths and weaknesses in greater detail. Ultimately, your effort and self-awareness is essential for this class to be as rewarding as possible for you.

We have high standards, but with effort every student in this class can receive a good grade. Your grade will be determined using the following distribution:

- **160** Mini-Quizzes (4 total; 40 points per quiz)
- **320** Discussion Forum Posts (8 weeks; 40 points per week)
- **150** Embrace the Sublime Assignment
- **210** Semester Essay
- **150** Final Exam
- **10** Enthusiasm, Positivity, and Effort

**1000** Total Points

Grade Scale:  
- A = 900 – 1000 points  
- B = 800 – 899 points  
- C = 700 – 799 points  
- D = 600 – 699 points  
- F = 599 points and below

Note: All papers plus the final exam must be completed to pass the class. Do not hesitate to approach us about your performance.
Course Policies

**Students with Special Needs and Challenges:**

Concordia University Texas follows federal guidelines to provide reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities. In order for students to receive accommodations in CTX courses they must register with the Student Success Center and document their disability. For more information on the registration process, please go to [www.concordia.edu/accommodations](http://www.concordia.edu/accommodations) or contact Ruth Cooper at 512-313-5031.

**Academic Honesty:**

Plagiarism = failure, and all assignments will be subject to testing for plagiarism. Cases of plagiarism (using someone else’s language or ideas without acknowledging the source) or other questionable academic integrity will be reported in accordance with the standards outlined by Concordia University, and will result in failure of the class and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. In short, don’t cheat or steal words.

**Technical Assistance:**

For help logging into Moodle, email helpdesk@concordia.edu, or call 512-313-4357. Also, you can go to the Concordia Austin Main Campus, Building D, Room 112. For help using Moodle, email help@tlhsupport.com (please mention you are a CTX student and provide your contact information), or call the 24/7 Technical Support Hotline at 800-985-9781. All of these methods are better routes than contacting the professor.

**Course Calendar**

The following calendar is subject to change.

**Week One – The Art of the Sublime: Introduction to Romanticism & the Sublime**

**Objectives**

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to...

- Describe to others what Romanticism means
- Describe to others what the sublime means and how it relates to the work of London Tate

**Reading**

Week Two – The Art of Sublime: Blake, Keats, & Shelley

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to...

- Discuss foundational Romantic texts by Blake, Keats, and Shelley.
- Interpret ambiguous text for multiple meanings.
- Examine sublime themes via close reading.

Reading


Assessments

- Discussion Forum
- Quiz

Week Three – The Imagination: JMW Turner, Wordsworth & Byron

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to...

- Explain Romantic writers and artists arguments about the relationship between time and memory
- Analyze poetic texts for complex ideas.
- Recognize the value of close reading and rereading.

Reading

- JMW Turner: Visit the Met NYC’s website, JMW Turner. Refer to both visual and philosophical implications. http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/trnr/hd_trnr.htm

**Assessments**

• Discussion Forum
• Quiz

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**Week Four – Crossing Boundaries: Whitman & Bierstadt**

**Objectives**

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to…

• Define Manifest Destiny and discuss its manifestation in Bierstadt’s work
• Analyze texts for complex ideas about connectedness and society.
• Recognize the importance of Whitman in the American ideal.
• Describe the key concepts presented by the readings.
• Discuss the evolution of Romantic thought into the mid-19th century.

**Reading**

• Visit the Albert Bierstadt image website: [http://www.albertbierstadt.org/](http://www.albertbierstadt.org/)

**Assessments**

• Discussion Forum
• Quiz

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**Week Five – Turning Inward: Embrace the Sublime**

**Objectives**

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to…

• Design a personal experiment for embracing the sublime in the world today.
• Apply Romantic lessons to a real-life experience.
• Defend your ideas of how Romanticism applies to the real world.
• Illustrate your experience of embracing the sublime for others.
Reading

- None

Assessments

- Discussion Forum
- Complete the “Embrace the Sublime” assignment

**Week Six – Thin Spaces: Moran & Longfellow**

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to…

- Analyze texts for complex ideas about connectedness and society
- Compare and contrast painting and poetry.

Reading


Assessments

- Discussion Forum

**Week Seven – Thin Spaces: Thoreau & Emerson**

Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to…

- Recognize the importance of Emerson and Thoreau in the American ideal.
- Discuss the evolution of Romantic thought into the mid-19th century
- Discuss the complex ideas of nature espoused by Emerson.
- Compare and contrast Emerson’s ideas of nature compared to earlier readings.

Reading

• Ralph Waldo Emerson’s *Nature*: Introduction, I Nature through VIII Prospects

**Assessments**

• Discussion Forum
• Quiz

### Week Eight – Consolidating Knowledge: Semester Exam and Essay

**Objectives**

Upon completion of this lesson, students should be able to…

• Complete a final draft of an essay
• Complete a final exam assessing the entirety of knowledge gained during the course
• Complete a course questionnaire

**Reading**

• None

**Assessments**

• Discussion Forum
• Semester Essay Due
• Final Exam