

Western Cultural Tradition  
HP033/34  
Stokes 286S  
M/W 11:00am  
M/W 1:00pm

Prof. Susan Michalczyk  
Office Hours: Stokes 285  
Tues: 3:00-8:30pm  
Wed: 3:00-4:00pm & by appt.  
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## SPRING SEMESTER 2014

### Reading List

Immanuel Kant, *Grounding for Metaphysics of Morals* (Hackett)  
*What is the Enlightenment?* (will scan and send this to you before classes begin)

Goethe, *Faust* (Norton)

Selected poetry of the Romantic Period— (Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats)

Giacomo Leopardi, *Operetti Morali: Essays and Dialogues*  
**(selections only, no need to purchase entire book)**

Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Peng USA/Signet)

Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and the Case of Wagner*  
(Vintage Books)

F.M. Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov* (Vintage, Pevear trans.)  
**(Selections only)**

Giovanni Verga, *Cavalleria Rusticana and Other Stories* (Penguin Classic)  
Trans: G.H. McWilliam

Gustave Flaubert, *Three Tales* (OXF)

Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* (Norton)

Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (HBJ/Harvest)

Italo Calvino, *If on a winter's night a traveler* (HBJ Trade), (plus additional Calvino handouts from *Why Read the Classics?*)

<b>Class:</b>	<b>Author:</b>
Jan. 13, 15	Kant, <i>What is Enlightenment?</i> <i>Grounding for Metaphysics of Morals</i>
Jan. 22, 27, 29	Goethe, <i>Faust</i> , background on Romanticism
Feb. 3, 5, 10	English Romantics— (Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats)
Feb. 12, 17	Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i>
	<b>Feb 24th-1<sup>st</sup> paper due</b>
Feb. 19, 24	Flaubert, <i>Three Tales</i> , Calvino essay on Flaubert (handout)
Feb. 26, Mar. 10, 12	Leopardi
Mar. 17, 19	Nietzsche, <i>The Birth of Tragedy</i>
Mar. 24, 26	Dostoevsky, <i>Brothers Karamazov</i>
	<b>Mar 31st-2<sup>nd</sup> paper due</b>
Mar. 31, Apr. 2	Verga, <i>Cavalleria Rusticana</i> (selections)
Apr. 7, 9	Freud, <i>Civilization and its Discontents</i>
Apr. 14, 16	Woolf, <i>A Room of One's Own</i>
Apr. 23, 28	Calvino, <i>If on a winter's night a traveler</i>
Apr. 30	End of year review
	<b>April 30th-3<sup>rd</sup> paper due</b>

### **Final Exam/Final Paper**

**MW 11am class: Thu, May 8, 9:00am**

**MW 1pm class: Wed, May 7, 12:30pm**

This semester, we will examine the intensity of thought and feeling that explodes in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and fuels the birth of “modernism” in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. As we explore these new texts, filled with dynamism and passion, we will continue to build upon some recurring themes from the texts of the fall semester: the ultimate paradox of human life, filled with conflicting desires: to transcend the limitations of our human condition and at the same time, to lose ourselves within its pleasures and pain.

The 19<sup>th</sup> Century texts (in both language and themes) express great tension and turmoil (as seen in the period of “Sturm und Drang”, Storm and Stress, the precursor to Romanticism) that will spill into the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century and lead us through an exploration of both humanity’s greatness and its perversion of such greatness, whether natural or unnatural. The texts for this semester will challenge and assist us in understanding the conflicts from within the human soul and from outside forces (nature, war, economics, societal pressures...), as we continue our search for purpose within a world oftentimes filled with existential Angst. A recurring motif throughout this year’s texts has been the struggle between the rational and irrational parts of humanity. Are we rational beings imprisoned in an irrational world or are *we* the chaotic element in a universe that offers an experience of the *sublime*?

### **Changes in Format:**

**Three (3) papers** (approx. 7- 8 pages in length), based upon the actual text, your personal reflections, and one additional text of literary criticism or comparative study (**one extension** permitted per student-choose carefully)

**Final exam** –a theme, drawn from the year that can be developed through two or three texts, that has particular meaning for you, **not a journal entry or random reflections, but a solid, critical essay that demonstrates depth of understanding and serious effort.** (more information provided before exam date)

**Each student will have an opportunity to lead one class discussion** - to provide **background** about the author and his/her time period and **highlight major themes of the work and connections to other texts we have been reading throughout the year**

**Class participation and attendance** – students are expected to come to class well-prepared, alert and ready to contribute to thoughtful and dynamic discussion. Complacency, relying on the most vocal students to come through or on last semester’s grades and achievements, diminishes all aspects of the course causing active learning to dissolve into passive indifference.

Here’s to all of you, and to the New Year and the new semester!



"I've seen better metaphors in my litter box."