

# The Sources of Western Civilization II

## Journey to Italy: Travel Writing, Romanticism, and the Evolution of the Novel Across the Long 1800s

Fall 2021

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**Course Description:** In this course, we will consider *Journeys to Italy*, across the long Romantic period, through the Victorian Era and into Modernism. We will try to understand how poetry and prose set in Italy is utilized to develop the status of various types of individuals in relation to others and to the world. During the course, we will read travel literature, proto-Romantic and Romantic literature, as well as Gothic, Victorian, Modern and Postmodern novels. The course will investigate this literature from the point of the historical, political, aesthetic, and individual. Themes that we will explore throughout the course will include the relationship between travel literature and early forms of the novel; the discursive nature of gender, nation and landscape in the 19<sup>th</sup> century; the relationship between 18<sup>th</sup>-century aesthetics (the beautiful, sublime, and picturesque) and expectations of travel in Italy from then until today; the relationship between travel, escape, and exile; the impact of technology on travel and aesthetics; the shaping of the modern European woman through travel, travel literature, and travel novels; the relationship between tourism and colonialism in the modern and postmodern periods. Central to this course will be the changing role of the 'traveler' who is also sometimes the 'narrator' and other times the 'protagonist'. We will consider Northern European male subjectivity as it develops during the Romantic period, female British subjectivity as it imagines itself, specifically, in Gothic novels and Romantic poetry, new British and American individual identities as they emerges in Victorian, Decadent, and Modernist writing, and, finally, how all of these attempts at asserting individual agency force into an objectified, exoticized, and reified stasis both the people and the landscape of the destination itself, Italy.

**Course Objectives:** This seminar will challenge its participants to gain the following competencies

- Learn about and be able to discuss, if only broadly, the complex political landscape of 19<sup>th</sup>-century Europe
- Begin to comprehend 18<sup>th</sup>-century aesthetic theories and discuss them in the context of their influence of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>-century literature
- Learn about and be able to discuss the complex relationship between travel and travel literature, as well as the aesthetics that is related to them
- Better understand, through literature, European and American women's journeys towards greater agency/ rights across the 19<sup>th</sup> century and until today
- Learn about and be able to think critically about the relationship between travel narratives and the birth of the novel and fiction as we understand it today
- Learn about and begin to think critically about how the history of travel in Europe across the past 200 years relates, in many ways, to the Age of Empire and, thus, to postcolonial theory
- Begin to think critically about what it means to be a tourist/traveler today and what kind you want to be

**Readings:** All readings will be provided as PDFs on the course website. Students may use their own editions of texts but should be prepared to follow along in class when page numbers differ. Reading assignments add up to ~25-40 pages each week, with variations mainly according to the density of the texts. Students are expected to read each text thoroughly—more than once if needed—and arrive in class prepared to participate actively in discussions of the texts in the broader theoretical framework of the course.

**Evaluation:** Students will be evaluated according to the following criteria, weighted by percentage:

Writing: 70%

- Response Papers (10 total) – 40% (4% each)
- Final Essay – 30%

Presentation: 15%

Participation: 15%

Attendance: Students are allowed to miss one class without a written note of excuse from their doctor. After one absence, further absences will begin to affect any student's grade by a half-letter per absence.

**Written Assignments:** Written assignments will be double spaced with standard margins. You will hand in your written assignments as Word Documents via email before class begins on the day the essay is due. Any late written assignments will be marked down accordingly. Please note that you should never schedule delivery of an email that includes an assignment. When you have completed an assignment, email it immediately. I will not accept glitches with your email-scheduling tool as an excuse for tardy assignments.

Throughout the semester, written assignments will include:

- Ten response papers of 300-350 words (you choose which 10 from 14 possible class meetings)
- One 1500-1600 word essay due at the end of the semester

**Response Papers:** The response papers for this course (300-350 words) should not summarize the work or works that are discussed. Rather, they should present your reaction. Some weeks you will be assigned more than one text to read. For those weeks, you may choose to write about one work in particular, or to compare or contrast more than one work. You may also compare/contrast the week's reading with a previous week's reading. As space is limited, you should not try to include too many works, or else your response will risk becoming superficial. Response papers should be copy-edited (punctuation, grammar, etc.) as carefully as longer papers.

You may focus on any of the following questions (or your own), as space is limited, you should focus on only one:

- How is the assigned reading related to ideas/concerns/themes discussed in the course?
- Did the work help you to better understand a particular issue from the course? Did it alter your perspective?
- How is the work in conversation with the Discussion Questions provided for this or another week?
- If you are treating more than one assigned reading, how are the readings related or different and why might that relation/difference be important in terms of this course?
- How is the work related to issues in our present-day world?

**Final Paper:** The final paper for this course (1500-1600 words) is a close-reading/position paper. It is not a research paper and no outside materials will be necessary to complete this assignment. However, students are required to include at least one of the further reading materials included in the course syllabus.

Two weeks before the final paper is due, students will have the option of handing in an outline or abstract of their idea for their paper and scheduling office hours to discuss it with me. I will not read drafts of papers at this point; it is an opportunity to discuss ideas not to evaluate work. Student who wish to take part in this process will turn in their outlines/abstracts before class on Tuesday, December 14 and then will meet me to discuss their work that week (December 15-17).

**Presentation of a Further Reading:** Each seminar student will present an Optional Further Reading for their fellow classmates. This presentation occurs near the beginning of class. The presenter will speak for eight to ten minutes, using presentation slides. The goals of this presentation for the speaker are to foster the ability to read critically, determine the core of an essay's argument, determine which part of the essay is most relevant to the course materials and themes, and present those parts of the reading coherently and in the time allotted. The goal of this presentation for the audience is to allow the class to gain knowledge of secondary literature related to the day's reading without the burden of extra weekly reading. Please note that you will be graded on:

1. Presentation Content
  - Do you explain the reading clearly?
  - Do you determine and highlight for your audience the core elements of the reading?
  - Do you relate this reading to the day's other readings and/or previous course readings/themes?
2. Presentation Form
  - Do you work off of notes rather than a complete script and have parts of your presentation memorized so that you can utilize a tone and body language that engages your audience?
  - Is your presentation within the allotted time, without going under or over time? (8-10 minutes)
  - Are your presentation slides well organized, useful, well edited (no spelling errors)? Do they include a bibliography for outside sources you may choose to reference, including online encyclopedias?
3. Plagiarism
  - Is your presentation entirely in your own words? (If you have questions about plagiarism, feel free to contact me and schedule office hours for a discussion.)

**Consultation:** Students are encouraged to contact the instructor with any questions about seminar material or assignments. One-on-one meetings may occur during the instructor's office hours, TBA.

**Intellectual Property:** Unless otherwise noted, the content of all lectures and supplementary materials (e.g. activity handout, synopses, agendas) provided by the instructor are his intellectual property.

**Course texts:** All texts, including optional further readings (not included in the list that follows) will be available in English on the course website.

#### POEMS

W.H. Auden "Et in Arcadia ego"

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Casa Guidi Windows*: I-III

Lord Byron, "Ode on Venice"; "Rome, Ruins of the Coliseum" from *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*

Emily Dickinson, Poem 80

Felicia Hemans, "The Image in Lava"

LEL (Letitia Elizabeth Landon), "Rome"

Giacomo Leopardi, "Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia"; "The Infinite"; "Wild Broom"

Petrarch, *Il canzoniere* (selections); "Italia mia"; "Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro"

Christina Rossetti, "Italia, io ti saluto"; "You who look on passed ages as a glass"

Percy Shelley, "Lines Written among the Euganean Hills"; "Go Thou to Rome"; "Thou Paradise of Exiles, Italy!"

#### PROSE

Joseph Brodsky, *Watermark* (selections)

François-René de Chateaubriand, "A Walk through Rome in the Moonlight"

E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View*

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Italian Journey* (selections)

Henry James, *Daisy Miller*

Jhumpa Lahiri, *In Other Words* (selections)

Ann Radcliffe, *Romance in Sicily, Vol. 1*

Percy Bysshe Shelley, "The Coliseum: A Fragment"

Stendhal, *Roman Journal* (selections)

Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (selections)

# Seminar Schedule

## Part I: The Grand Tour and the Romantic Period

September 14: INTRODUCTION: the Grand Tour, Travel Literature & Tour Guides

**September 26: FRAMING THE ROMANTICS IN ITALY**

Goethe, Selections from *Italian Journey, Part III*, selection (see PDF)  
François-René de Chateaubriand, "A Walk through Rome in the Moonlight"  
LEL (Letitia Elizabeth Landon), "Rome"  
Stendhal, *Roman Journal*, selection (see PDF)

*Optional further reading (presentation): Encyclopedia Entry for 'Aesthetics'*

*Optional further reading: Wordsworth, "After Leaving Italy"*

*Optional further reading: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Roman Elegies*

September 28: THE RISE OF THE MODERN NOVEL AND THE GOTHIC IN ITALY

Ann Radcliffe, *Romance in Sicily, Vol. 1* (pp. 3-45)

*Optional further reading (presentation): Mark Bennet, "Gothic Travels"*

October 5: THE FEMALE GOTHIC IN ITALY

Ann Radcliffe, *Romance in Sicily, Vol. 1* (pp. 46-88)

*Optional further reading (presentation): Agorni, "Women and Representations of Foreignness"*

*Optional further reading: Heiland, "Rethinking the Sublime in Radcliffe"*

October 12: THE PICTURESQUE, BEAUTIFUL, and SUBLIME

*Revisit:* Goethe on 'learning to see': *Italian Journey, Part III*: pp. 341-345

*Read:* Petrarch, 269. "Rotta è l'alta colonna e 'l verde lauro", a sonnet  
Lord Byron, "Rome, Ruins of the Coliseum" from *Childe Harold*  
Shelley, "The Coliseum: A Fragment"  
Giacomo Leopardi, "The Infinite", a sonnet  
Goethe, *Italian Journey, Part II*, selection (see PDF)  
Felicia Hemans, "The Image in Lava"

*Look at:* Claude Lorrain, *View of Tivoli at Sunset* (1644), *The Roman Countryside* (1639)  
Salvator Rosa, *A Coastal Landscape with Shipwreck and Ruins* (by 1673)  
Michael Wutky, *The Summit of Vesuvius Erupting* (~1739)  
Piranesi, *Vedute di Roma* (~1750s)  
Angelica Kauffman, *Pliny the Younger and His Mother at Misenum, 79. A.D.* (1785)

*In class:* Watch "Sublime: The Aesthetics and Origins of Romanticism"

*Optional further reading (presentation): Andrews, "Evolution of Picturesque Taste"*

*Optional further reading: Giacomoni, "Mountain Landscapes and the Aesthetic of the Sublime"*

October 19: NATIONHOOD and FREEDOM

Petrarch, "Italia mia"  
Byron, "Ode on Venice"  
Percy Bysshe Shelley, "Lines Written among the Euganean Hills"  
Leopardi, "Wild Broom, or Desert Flower"  
Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Casa Guidi Windows: I-III*

*Optional further reading (presentation): Johns, "Representing Vesuvius"*

*Optional further reading: Breuilly, "On the Principle of Nationality"*



- October 26: PARADISE and EXILE  
*Read:* Petrarch, 5 sonnets and 1 sestina from *Il canzoniere* (see PDF)  
 Goethe, Title Pages of *Travels in Italy*  
 Shelley, "Go Thou to Rome" from *Adonais* 49-52  
 Shelley, "Thou Paradise of Exiles, Italy!", from *Julian and Maddalo*  
 Leopardi, "Night Song of a Wandering Shepherd in Asia"  
 Christina Rossetti, "Italia, io ti saluto"; "You who look on passed ages as a glass"  
*Look at:* Nicolas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego*  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Stabler, "The experience of exile & the flight to Italy"

## Part II: Mass Tourism, the Victorian Age, and the Modern Novel

- November 2: Henry James, *Daisy Miller, Part I* [1879]  
 Mark Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, Preface (1p.) and pp. 19-27  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Meyers, "Daisy Miller and the Romantic Poets"
- November 9: James, *Daisy Miller, Part II*  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Hom, "Consuming the View"  
*Optional further reading:* Simmel, "The Ruin"
- November 16: E.M. Forster, *A Room with a View* [1908] (Chapters 1-4)  
 Emily Dickinson, *Poem 80*  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Hobson, "The Guidebook in Modernist Writing"
- November 23: Forster, *A Room with a View* (Chapters 5-7)  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Chard, "Introduction" to Pleasure and Guilt on the Grand Tour
- November 30: Forster, *A Room with a View* (Chapters 8-11)  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Roszak, "Forster's Italy"
- December 7: Forster, *A Room with a View* (Chapters 12-16)  
*Look at:* Giorgio de Chirico, *various Piazza d'Italia paintings*  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Marston, "The World is Her Oyster"

\*\*\*Optional Final Paper Outline Due and Office Hours Scheduled for this weekend and early next week\*\*\*

- December 14: Forster, *A Room with a View* (Chapters 17-End)  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Agorni, "Travel Writing & Constructing Images of the Other"

## Conclusion: Postmodernism, Exile & Travel Identity in a Globalized Context

- December 21: W.H. Auden, "Et in Arcadia ego"  
 Joseph Brodsky, *Watermark: An Essay to Venice*, selections (see PDF)  
 Jhumpa Lahiri, *In Other Words*, selections (see PDF)  
*Optional further reading (presentation):* Barthes, "The Blue Guide"

**FINAL PAPER DUE BY JANUARY 1 (midnight, Beijing time):**

- Send final papers to both of my email addresses ([vanwagen@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn](mailto:vanwagen@mail.tsinghua.edu.cn) / [vanwagen@umich.edu](mailto:vanwagen@umich.edu)).
- Papers that are more than an hour later will be marked down by half a letter grade for each 24 hours they are late.