

**UFWT 202: The Challenge of Modernity**  
**Professor Metres, Spring 2010**  
**Office Hours: TTh 10-11, MW 9-11, and by appointment**  
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**Required Texts: (\* texts are required of all sections)**

\*Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind*  
\* Shelley, *Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus*  
\* Marx and Engels, *Communist Manifesto*  
\* Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling*  
\* Nietzsche, *Nietzsche and the Death of God: Selected Writings* (ed. P. Fritzsche)  
\* Darwin, *On the Origin of Species*  
\* Woolf, *The Waves*  
Weil, *The Iliad, or the Poem of Force*  
Arendt, *The Portable Hannah Arendt*  
Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference*  
WIT 202 Selections posted on Blackboard

**Course Description:** The fourth in a four-semester sequence, this interdisciplinary seminar examines modernity's impact on the Western intellectual tradition. Through the works of Shelley, Marx, Darwin, Woolf, Nietzsche and others, students will explore how modernity has questioned the foundational assumptions of Western thought. Discussions in this course are intended to prepare students for their study of non-Western cultures in the junior and senior years.

**Course Objectives:**

- Develop critical reasoning skills through reading significant texts and evaluating different viewpoints and arguments.
- Develop the ability to investigate an issue and construct a well-reasoned and coherent viewpoint.
- Learn to communicate ideas and arguments clearly and persuasively through written and spoken means.
- Understand the world through multiple perspectives and different world views.
- Explore religious and moral dimensions of critical issues.
- Appreciate how different disciplines advance understanding of cultures and civilizations and recognize the interconnectedness of the disciplines.
- Become a part of a larger academic community.

**Course Requirements:** A journal of ideas, a mid-term, a final exam, one major writing assignment, and class participation.

*A journal of ideas:* This journal requires students to reflect on how their WIT education is preparing them to become more engaged and informed citizens. All WIT 202 students are required to read the opinion pages of the online editions of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*. At least twice a week, students must respond to an editorial by reflecting on how their study of the Western Intellectual Tradition helps them to understand more deeply the issues at play in the selected editorial. Students are not required to agree or disagree with the editorial in question; rather, they must respond to the editorial through the lens of the WIT sequence. Each entry should be typed, between 500-750 words, and should be emailed to the professor upon completion. Students should save all of their entries and combine them into a single journal to be submitted at the end of the semester.

*Mid-term examination:* This will be a take home exam based on the journal of ideas. The midterm will require students to write three substantial responses to three *New York Times* or *Washington Post* editorials published between March 1 and March 10. In these responses, each one between 1,000 and 1,500 words, students will

position themselves against the opinions of the selected editorials and use their knowledge of Western Intellectual History as the basis of their dissent.

*One major writing assignment* (10-12 pages): This course is called the Challenge of Modernity. For your major writing assignment, you must choose a figure from after the French Revolution (a figure from this course if you like) and argue how that person establishes or answers one of the challenges of modernity. You will, of course, need to define what that challenge is before you can make the argument (modernity offers many challenges, so be specific). If you choose someone we do not read in WIT 202, you must clear this selection with me first. Because this is not an exercise in biography, you must discuss in your essay a central, representative text by your figure. This essay will also include secondary sources to support your argument. In addition to the essay, you will construct a syllabus for an alternate WIT course in modernity, using your figure as a touchstone for this course. The syllabus should reflect this figure's influence and include primary and secondary works and an essay assignment. A good syllabus is a coherent, organized academic plan. Reading assignments, essays, and exams should reflect that coherence. Assigning students a thousand pages of reading over a weekend demonstrates an incoherent mind, incapable of discerning a purposeful academic assignment. You should consider that I might actually look at your assigned readings to determine what you intend by the assignment, and you may use the syllabus for this course as model for your own.

The *final exam*: We will have a final exam. However, the nature of that exam is still undecided. Together, we will decide upon the appropriate final exam for this course. We will make that decision by mid-April.

*Class participation*: There are two components to this semester's class participation grade. First, there's the usual Fellows participation requirement: come to class prepared to discuss the assigned works, and to share your ideas and have them challenged by others. In addition to this, each of you will be required to run a week's worth of class discussion. I will handle the first few weeks of the semester (up through Hegel), and there will be no class leaders for the final two weeks (when we discuss Sacks). The remaining weeks will be divided between and among Fellows. In teams of two, Fellows will be responsible for leading discussion for two class periods. These teams will not lecture (although teams may make brief presentations); instead, teams will decide how we will approach the readings for that week. Teams will consult with me beforehand on their ideas and strategies.

**Grade Distribution and Scale:** Journal of Ideas, 20%; Mid-Term, 10%; Final Exam, 10%; Research Paper, 30%; Class Participation, 30%. 93-100, A; 90-92, A-; 87-89, B+; 83-86, B; 80-82, B-; 77-79, C+; 73-76, C; 70-72, C-; 67-69, D+; 63-66, D; 60-62, D-; Below 59, F.

### **Course Policies:**

*Academic Integrity*: As stated in the Samford University 2007-2008 catalog, "students, upon enrollment, enter into voluntary association with Samford University. They must be willing to observe high standards of intellectual integrity; they must respect knowledge and practice academic honesty." Unless specified otherwise, students are expected to do their own independent work, and to refrain from cheating, copying or plagiarizing the work of others. When drawing from various resources for assignments, students must provide citations, footnotes and bibliographic information.

*Accommodation*: Samford University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act. Students with disabilities who seek accommodations must make their request by contacting Disability Support Services located in Counseling Services on the lower level of Pittman Hall, or call #726-4078. A faculty member will grant reasonable accommodations only upon written notification from Disability Support Services.

*Attendance Policy:* Students who miss more than 4 classes will receive an “FA” for the course. Make-up work may be negotiated for absences due to medical or emergency reasons. Students may not be late to class, and they must have the readings for the day (on the syllabus, see “Read for Class”).

### Course Schedule:

Jan	25	T	Course Introduction
	27	Th	Discussion: Assessing the French Revolution <u>View for Class: <i>The French Revolution</i> (100 minutes)</u> Read for Class: The National Assembly of France, “Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen” (1789); Burke, from <i>Reflections on the Revolution in France</i> (1790) (WIT 201 Reader)
Feb	1	T	Discussion: The Enlightenment Faith in Progress Read for Class: Condorcet, from <i>Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind</i> (1795) (Blackboard) Discussion: The Romantic Self Read for Class: Tarnas: “Romanticism and Its Fate” (pp. 366-78 only); Emerson, “Self-Reliance” (1841) (Blackboard).
	3	Th	Discussion: The Challenge of Romanticism Read for Class: Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818): Volume I
	8	T	Discussion: The Challenge of Romanticism Read for Class: Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818): Volume II
	10	Th	Discussion: The Challenge of Romanticism Read for Class: Shelley, <i>Frankenstein</i> (1818): Volume III
	15	T	Discussion: Hegel and the Design of History Read for Class: Hegel, Selections TBA (1830s)
	17	Th	Discussion: Marx and the Design of History Read of for Class: Marx & Engels, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> (1848): Books I, II, and IV
	22	T	Discussion: Marx and the Design of History Read for Class: Marx & Engels, <i>Communist Manifesto</i> (1848): Intro (pp. 1-6, 22-38) <u>View before Monday 3/1: <i>Charles Darwin: Evolution’s Voice</i> [film, 2005: 50 minutes]</u>
	24	Th	Discussion: Darwin and Evolution <u>View for Class: <i>Charles Darwin: Evolution’s Voice</i></u> Read for class: Darwin, from <i>On the Origin of Species</i> (1859): “Recapitulation and Conclusion”; Dennett, from <i>Darwin’s Dangerous Idea</i> , Chapter 1 (Blackboard) <u>View before Monday 3/6: <i>Darwin’s Dangerous Idea</i> [film, 2002: 120 minutes]</u>
Mar	1	T	Discussion: Darwin’s Dangerous Idea <u>View for Class: <i>Darwin’s Dangerous Idea</i></u> Read for Class: Dennett, from <i>Darwin’s Dangerous Idea</i> , Chapter 2 (Blackboard)
	3	Th	Discussion: The Existential Crisis Read for Class: Tarnas, “Romanticism and Its Fate” (pp. 388-394) Read for Class: Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> (1843): Introduction, Preface, Attunement, and Speech in Praise of Abraham
	8	T	Discussion: The Existential Crisis Read for Class: Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> (1843): Problemata (Problema I & II)
	10	Th	Discussion: The Existential Crisis

		Read for Class: Kierkegaard, <i>Fear and Trembling</i> (1843): Problema III and Epilogue Discussion: The Death of God Read for Class: Nietzsche: from <i>Nietzsche and the Death of God</i> : Introduction	
11	F	<b>Mid-term take home due</b>	
15-17		<b>Spring Break</b>	
22	T	Discussion: The Death of God Read for Class: Tarnas, "The Postmodern Mind" (pp. 395-410) and "At the Millennium" (pp. 411-413) ; Nietzsche: from <i>NDG</i> : from "On Truths and Lies in an Extramoral Sense" (1873); from "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (1874), from "The Gay Science" (1884); from <i>Thus Spake Zarathustra</i> : Prologue, On the Three Metamorphoses, On the Blessed Islands, On Redemption, On Old and New Tablets (1884)	
24	Th	Discussion: The Death of God Read for Class: Nietzsche: from <i>NDG</i> : from <i>Beyond Good and Evil</i> (1886); from <i>On the Genealogy of Morals</i> (1887)	
29	T	Discussion: The Modernist Wasteland Read for Class: Eliot, "The Wasteland" (1922) (Blackboard)	
31	Th	Discussion: The Modernist Wasteland Read for Class: Eliot, "The Wasteland" (1922) (Blackboard)	
Apr	5	T	Discussion: Modernist Perspectives Read for Class Woolf, <i>The Waves</i> (1931)
	7	Th	Discussion: Modernist Perspectives Read for Class: Woolf, <i>The Waves</i> (1931)
	12	T	Discussion: Modernity and Freedom Read for Class: "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (1948) (Blackboard); Arendt, "Total Domination" and "The Perplexities of the Rights of Man" (1951)
	14	Th	Discussion: Modernity and Freedom Read for Class: Weil, " <i>The Iliad, or the Poem of Force</i> " (1940) and Sartre, "Existentialism is a Humanism" (1946) (Blackboard)
	19	T	Discussion: Modernity and Freedom Read For Class: Arendt, "What is Authority?" (1959)
	21	Th	Discussion: The Postmodern Turn Read for Class: Lyotard, from <i>The Postmodern Condition</i> (1979) (Blackboard); Foucault, "What is Enlightenment" (1984) (Blackboard)
	26	T	Discussion: The Challenge of Globalization Read for Class: Sacks, <i>The Dignity of Difference</i> (2002)
	28	Th	Discussion: The Challenge of Globalization Read for Class: Sacks, <i>The Dignity of Difference</i> (2002)
May	3	T	Discussion: The Challenge of Globalization Read for Class: Sacks, <i>The Dignity of Difference</i> (2002)
	5	Th	Discussion: The Challenge of Globalization Read for Class: Sacks, <i>The Dignity of Difference</i> (2002)
	12	M	<b>8:00: Final Exam</b>