To identify ourselves as “modern” is utterly common, yet what do we mean when we do so? While our claim to modernity may seem like an uncomplicated effort to differentiate ourselves from those who came before us, this effort has a history to which we must attend. In this seminar, we will embark on a broad tour through five centuries of modernity, reading an array of literary, philosophical, and scientific texts that take up this question of what it means to be modern. Topics will include empiricism, the Enlightenment (as well as reactions against it), the waxing and waning of religious belief, colonization, and the rise of capitalism. While there will be occasional lectures, we will spend the majority of our time closely engaging with primary texts: one of our most important goals for the semester will be to strengthen our skills as readers and writers who engage deeply with the past in an effort to understand the present it produced.

This course fulfills the following: Humanities Exploration

Course Objectives:
• To broaden your historical awareness, particularly in relation to philosophical and literary modes of Western thought after 1600.
• To improve your skills as readers, discussants, and writers.
• To begin to prepare you for the type of work that will be required in upper-level courses and, especially, in writing the Honors thesis.

Required Texts:
William Shakespeare – The Merchant of Venice (Pelican – 9780140714623)
Aphra Behn – Oroonoko, and Other Writings (Oxford – 9780199538768)
Voltaire – Candide: Or Optimism (Penguin – 0140440046)
Chinua Achebe – Things Fall Apart (Anchor – 9780385474542)
Toni Morrison – Beloved (Vintage – 9781400033416)
A course reader available on Canvas

You must buy these specific editions, all of which are available at the Campus Store. Needless to say, these texts can also be purchased online; if you search by ISBN, you can rest assured that you are buying the correct edition.

Course requirements:
Diligent attendance and thoughtful participation – 15%
(Please come see me if you have difficulties speaking in class—I can help)
Quizzes – 20%
Exploratory writing assignments – 10%
“Keywords” assignment (3-4 pages) – 15%
“Translation” assignment (3-4 pages) – 15%
Essay (5-6 pages) – 25%

**Quizzes:** Over the course of the semester, there will be a series of short unscheduled (i.e., “pop”) quizzes based on the day’s assigned reading and previous course content. Each quiz will be given at the beginning of class and cannot be made up if you are absent or late.

**Exploratory writing assignments:** These short writing exercises will be assigned on a rolling basis and will help you reflect on the assigned reading and prepare for upcoming assignments.

We will discuss the following assignments in greater depth closer to their respective due dates:

**“Keywords” assignment:** In this close reading assignment, you will trace the contours of a particularly crucial or difficult word usage in one of our assigned readings. Giving an account of how the word operates throughout the text and paying particular attention to changes, contradictions, and subtleties in its employment, you will draw your reader’s attention to the ways your chosen word confirms, resists, destabilizes, or distorts what you take to be the text’s central “message.”

**“Translation” assignment:** This assignment invites you to envision one of our readings as a contemporary text. After identifying the characteristic features and requirements of your chosen text’s genre (i.e., letter, manifesto, encyclopedia entry, etc.), you will update and transform the work to reflect twenty-first century culture and concerns.

**Essay:** In this synthetic essay, you will take up a number of the semester’s texts. We will work to develop your ideas over several weeks.

**Schedule:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading or viewing due</th>
<th>Major Assignment (due at the beginning of class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 23</td>
<td>John Henry Newman – from “The Idea of a University”</td>
<td>Exploratory Writing Experiments are not listed and will be assigned on a rolling basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 25</td>
<td>Raymond Williams – from <em>Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society</em> – “Intellectual,” “Tradition”</td>
<td>Exploratory Writing Experiments are not listed and will be assigned on a rolling basis.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Early Modernity**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Reading or viewing due</th>
<th>Major Assignment (due at the beginning of class)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 30</td>
<td>Michel De Montaigne – from <em>Les Essais (The Essays)</em> – “Of custom, and not easily changing an accepted law,” “Of the custom of wearing clothes,” “Of ancient customs”</td>
<td>Exploratory Writing Experiments are not listed and will be assigned on a rolling basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Author and Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 1</td>
<td>Francis Bacon – from <em>Novum Organum (The New Organon)</em> – “The Great Instauration,” from Book I (Preface + Aphorisms)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 6</td>
<td>William Shakespeare – <em>The Merchant of Venice</em> (Act 1)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 8</td>
<td><em>The Merchant of Venice</em> (Acts 2-3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 13</td>
<td><em>The Merchant of Venice</em> (Acts 4-5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>Gerrard Winstanley – “A Declaration from the Poor Oppressed People of England”</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>John Locke – from the <em>Second Treatise of Government</em> – Chapter 5: “Of Property”</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 22</td>
<td>Aphra Behn – <em>Oroonoko</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>September 27</td>
<td><em>Oroonoko</em></td>
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</table>

### Enlightenment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author and Work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 29</td>
<td>Jean-Jacques Rousseau – from <em>Emile, or On Education</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 4</td>
<td>Voltaire – <em>Candide</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 6</td>
<td><em>Candide</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 11</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 13</td>
<td>Fall Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 18</td>
<td>Immanuel Kant – “Was ist aufklärung?” (“What is Enlightenment?”)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Counter-Enlightenment and Romanticism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author and Work</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October 20</td>
<td>William Wordsworth – Preface to the <em>Lyrical Ballads</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 25</td>
<td>William Blake – <em>Songs of Innocence and Experience</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 27</td>
<td>Felicia Hemans – “Indian Woman's Death-Song”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nathaniel Hawthorne – “Young Goodman Brown”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Translation</td>
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</table>

### Industrialization and Capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author and Work</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>November 1</td>
<td>Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels – <em>The Communist Manifesto</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 3</td>
<td><em>The Communist Manifesto</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 8</td>
<td>Herman Melville – “Bartleby, the Scrivener”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 10</td>
<td>Rare Books Visit – Meet at Marriott Special Collections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 15</td>
<td>Chinua Achebe – <em>Things Fall Apart</em> – Part 1 (to p. 125)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 17</td>
<td><em>Things Fall Apart</em> – Part 2 (p. 126 - end)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 22</td>
<td>Frederic Jameson – from <em>Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 24</td>
<td>Thanksgiving Break</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 29</td>
<td>Toni Morrison – <em>Beloved</em> – Part 1 (p. 1 - 100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 1</td>
<td><em>Beloved</em> – Part 1 (p. 101 - 195)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
<td><em>Beloved</em> – Parts 2 &amp; 3 (p. 199 - 324)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Changes to syllabus:**
While I will make every effort to keep to this syllabus in all respects, I reserve the right to make changes to the course schedule, assignments, and due dates. You will be notified promptly of any changes.

**Participation and attendance:**
I expect you to come to class prepared to participate actively in the day’s discussion and activities. There will be many ways for you to participate in class over the course of the semester, including speaking up during discussion, doing group work inside and outside of class, attending office hours, and e-mailing me with thoughtful questions and comments. We’ll discuss all of these methods more thoroughly over the semester, and I may assign some of them specifically. For now, remember that the best way to prepare to participate is to come to class having completed the assigned reading and writing assignments.

Class attendance is mandatory, and I will take roll each class. You are permitted two absences for any reason; each additional absence will reduce your final participation score by a full letter grade. **A large number of unexcused absences will cause you to fail the course.** If you arrive to class late or leave class early, your attendance and participation score for that class will be reduced by 50%. The same reduction will apply if you show up to class without bringing a hard copy of the assigned reading.

As a member of this class, you have the responsibility to engage respectfully with your peers and help create a collegial atmosphere in which we engage thoughtfully and rigorously with one another’s ideas.

**Extensions and late assignments:**
For conflicts between this schedule and extra-curricular university activities such as varsity athletics, notify me in writing by the second week of the semester. To request an extension, you should have a truly substantive reason for doing so (i.e., a serious illness or a family emergency). Assignments handed in late will have their grades reduced by half a letter grade per day. Exploratory Writing Exercises must
be submitted on time in order to receive credit.

**Technology in the classroom:**
To avoid distraction and disruption, no electronics are permitted in the classroom, except for the accommodation of disability. Make sure your phones, laptops, and other electronics are turned off and put away before class begins. If I have to ask you to put a device away, you will receive a zero for that day’s attendance/participation grade.

**Canvas:**
I have created a Canvas page where you will be able to access copies of materials from class, resources that will be of use to you when writing your papers, the course reader, and this syllabus.

**Contacting me:**
If possible, bring questions to my office hours or catch me after class. Otherwise, the best way to reach me is by email. Do not assume that I can read and respond to your message immediately; allow a reasonable amount of time (24 hours) before you need an answer. That said, I will always do my best to respond to you promptly. Two days before a major assignment is due, I will stop answering emailed questions.

For a number of reasons, I do not give substantive feedback on written work via email. If you would like to discuss a draft of a paper, a possible thesis, or other written work, I am always happy to meet with you in person, either in office hours or by appointment.

I will not respond to emails asking questions whose answers are contained in this syllabus.

**Honors grading rubric:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Outstanding achievement. Student performance demonstrates full command of the course material and evinces exceptional levels of originality and sophistication that far surpass course expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>Excellent achievement. Student performance demonstrates thorough knowledge of the course material and exceeds course expectations by completing all requirements in a superior manner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>Very good work. Student performance demonstrates above-average comprehension of the course material and exceeds course expectations on all tasks as defined in the course syllabus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Student performance meets designated course expectations and demonstrates understanding of the course materials at an acceptable level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>Marginal work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete understanding of course materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Unsatisfactory work. Student performance demonstrates incomplete and inadequate understanding of course materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Unacceptable work. Coursework performed at this level will not count toward the honors bachelor’s degree. For the course to count toward the degree, the student must repeat the...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
course with a passing grade.

F  Failing

**Important University of Utah policies that apply to this course:**

**Disability accommodations:**
“The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Union Building, 801-581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations.”

If you have emergency medical information you wish to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please inform me as soon as possible by seeing me after class or making an appointment to visit during office hours.

**Sexual misconduct:**
“Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender (which includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression) is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, color, religion, age, status as a person with a disability, veteran’s status or genetic information. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action, 135 Park Building, 801-581-8365, or the Office of the Dean of Students, 270 Union Building, 801-581-7066. For support and confidential consultation, contact the Center for Student Wellness, 426 SSB, 801-581-7776. To report to the police, contact the Department of Public Safety, 801-585-2677.”

**Academic misconduct:**
It is both my hope and my expectation that your experience as a student at the University of Utah will be fueled by your passion for learning. I know that being a student can be stressful. There may be times when you feel tempted to engage in some kind of cheating in order to improve your grade or advance your career. This behavior could be as blatant as having someone else sit for you in an exam, or submitting a written assignment that has been copied from another source. It could also be as subtle as glancing at another student’s quiz when you are unsure about an answer. It is possible that you might do any of these things and not get caught. However, if you cheat, no matter how much you may have otherwise learned in this class, you have failed to learn what is perhaps the most important lesson of all.

In accordance with University of Utah policy, any instances of cheating or plagiarism will result in failure of the course, along with other possible sanctions. For more information and a number of important definitions, including that of plagiarism, see the University of Utah’s Student Code of Conduct.

To help promote academic integrity, your written work in this course may be checked for originality using Turnitin, a web appliance that compares submitted assignments to a database of books, journal articles, websites, and other student papers.
Content accommodation policy:
“Students are expected to take courses that will challenge them intellectually and personally. Students must understand and be able to articulate the ideas and theories that are important to the discourse within and among academic disciplines. Personal disagreement with these ideas and theories or their implications is not sufficient grounds for requesting an accommodation. Accommodations requested on such grounds will not be granted. The University recognizes that students’ sincerely-held core beliefs may make it difficult for students to fulfill some requirements of some courses or majors. The University assumes no obligation to ensure that all students are able to complete any major.” No content accommodations will be made for this course.