Course Description
This course investigates the emergence of the modern discourse of aesthetics in philosophical and literary texts in 18th century Europe, with particular attention to the developments and debates surrounding the beautiful and the sublime due to their crucial significance from the 18th to the present. The questions of aesthetics and, especially, of the sublime are implicated in, and often shape, European thought of the past two centuries on truth, ethics, transcendence, beauty, Nature, sensibility, education, politics, literature, the role of art and of the artist. The course selection of theoretical texts attempts to balance the coherence of a dialogic unity of recurrent preoccupations with the diversity of emphases and interpretations given to issues in aesthetics as well as the category of the aesthetic as such, which was contested in some postmodern accounts. The selected literary texts that feature in the course either had or continue to have an enormous impact and influence on the understanding of the above issues; their authors purposefully set out to investigate the interrelation between literature and philosophy in the problematic yet enduring discourse of aesthetics. Conversely, their work has given rise to a great deal of philosophical or other theoretical commentary. The initial period of the course (Weeks 1-4) will focus on philosophical and theoretical writing; thereafter, literary texts will be studied alongside further philosophical writing on aesthetics. This latter period will begin with the reading of Germaine Necker’s (Madame de Staël) Romantic Künstlerinroman (female artist novel), Corinne or Italy. This novel, published in 1807, together with her popularisation of German literature and philosophy in Of Germany (1810), significantly advocated the convergence of various national Romantic discourses into a European Romantic movement in the early 19th century.

Primary Literary Texts & Recommended Editions
Sartre, Jean-Paul. Nausea
Shelley, Mary. Frankenstein; The 1818 Text. Penguin, 2018 (kindle edition available from January; other editions of the 1818 text are acceptable).

Primary Theoretical Texts
Course Reader, Aesthetics and Literature (available at Antoniou Bookshop, Kallipoleos Street).
Handouts & e-texts (if available)
Programme of Sessions

Week 1: Introduction
Thursday 18/01/18: Introductory Session I
Welcome Session, Course Design and Objectives

Week 2:
Thursday 25/01/18: No Class (Absence due to conference abroad)

Week 3:
Thursday 01/02/18: Introductory Session II
Edmund Burke, *Enquiry into the Origin of Our Feelings of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, in Reader

Week 4:
Thursday 08/02/18: The Sublime and the Beautiful: Ancient and Modern I
Pseudo-Longinus, *On the Sublime* (Sections I-II, V-XV, XXXV-XXXVI, XLIV) in Reader
Samuel Johnson, ‘Sublime’, from *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1755), in Reader

Week 5:
Thursday 15/02/18: The Sublime and the Beautiful: Ancient and Modern II
Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, in Reader
Friedrich Schiller ‘On the Sublime’, in Reader

Week 6:
Thursday 22/02/18: Romantic Themes in Aesthetics & Philosophy
Friedrich Schlegel, *Atheneaum Fragments*, Reader
Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Literary Absolute* Reader

Week 7: TWO SESSIONS
Monday 26/02/18 (3-5:30pm): Gender and Genius
Madame de Stael, *Corinne or Italy* Primary Text
Kant, *The Critique of Judgment*, in Reader

Recommended Supplementary Reading:
A.A. Cooper, 3rd Earl of Shaftesbury, from *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (1711) & F. Hutcheson, from *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue* (1726) (handout)

Thursday 01/03/18: Romantic Aesthetics & Aesthetic Education
Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* Primary Text
Friedrich Schiller, *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man*, in Reader
J.J. Rousseau, from *Reveries of a Solitary Walker* (1776-1778) (Handout)

Week 8:
Thursday 08/03/18: Aestheticism
Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Week 9: Thursday 15/03/18: Thomas Mann, Nietzsche & Modernism
Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice* Primary Text
Recommended Supplementary Reading:
Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music* & Plato, *Symposium, Phaedrus*

Week 10: Proust and Romantic Modernism
**Thursday 22/03/18**
Marcel Proust, *In Search of Lost Time*, vol 1, Part 1, ‘Combray’ **Primary Text**

Week 11: Modernism: Kafka, Benjamin and Blanchot
**Thursday 29/03/18**
Franz Kafka, *The Hunger Artist* (Four Stories) **Primary Text**
W. Benjamin & M. Blanchot on Kafka (Handout)

Easter Break (2-15 April)

Week 12: The Writer & the Role of Art in Post-WWII Europe:
**Thursday 19/04/18**
Jean-Paul Sartre, *Nausea* **Primary Text**
Jean-Paul Sartre, *What is Literature? ‘Why Write?’*, in *Reader*

Week 13: Truth & The Origin of the Work of Art:
**Thursday 26/04/18**
M. Heidegger, ‘The Origin of the Work of Art’, *Reader*

Week 14: Aesthetics, Politics, Ethics: Contemporary Perspectives
**Thursday 03/05/18**
J.M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello* **Primary Text**
Jean-François Lyotard, ‘Answering the Question: What is the Postmodern?’, Appendix, in *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*

Recommended Supplementary Reading (an extra session to discuss these texts may be arranged – optional attendance)
Jean-François Lyotard, ‘The Sublime and the Avant-Garde’
Jean-François Lyotard, ‘After the Sublime, the State of Aesthetics’
J. Rancière, ‘Are Some Things Unrepresentable?’ (Handout)

**Assessment**
The course will be assessed through the following three (3) components:

1. (1) Critical Analysis of a Theoretical Text (2000 words). Weighting 30%. Due Thursday, Week 12

2. (2) 20 minute Presentation on a Literary Text followed by Co-ordination of Seminar Discussion (20 minutes) on the basis of the presentation. Weighting 20% **Weeks 7-14** (date of earliest presentation to be arranged by Week 6)

3. (3) Critical Essay (4,000 words). Weighting: 50%. The student will choose the topic and formulate the question in collaboration with the course leader (by Thursday of Week 12). The essay must not coincide or have any significant overlap with either of the previous two assessments (content of analysis or presentation).
Recommended Further Reading


Selected Further Reading (In UCY library)


Behler, Ernst, *German Romantic Literary Theory* (Cambridge UP, 1993)


Bronfen, Elizabeth, *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic* (Manchester University Press, 1992)


Del Caro, Adrian, *Dionysian Aesthetics: The Role of Destruction in Creation as Reflected in the Life and Works of Friedrich Nietzsche* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1981)


Lyotard, Jean-François, *Postmodern Fables*, translated by Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press, 1997)


Recommended Bibliography on Mary Godwin Shelley and on British Romanticism

#Farrett, Mary A., & Nicola J. Watson (eds), *At the Limits of Romanticism: Essays in Cultural, Feminist, and Materialist Criticism* (Indiana UP, 1994)
Jones, Chris, *Radical Sensibility: Literature and Ideas in the 1790s* (Routledge, 1993)
Mellor, Anne K., *Mary Shelley: her Life, Her Fiction, her Monsters* (Routledge, 1990)
Rajan, Tilottama, *Dark Interpreter: The Discourse of Romanticism* (Cornell UP, 1986)