

A silhouette of a dandelion seed head is positioned on the left side of the frame. The background is a clear blue sky. A horizontal white band runs across the middle of the image, containing the text. A dotted line is located below the word 'CONCLUSIONS'.

# CONCLUSIONS

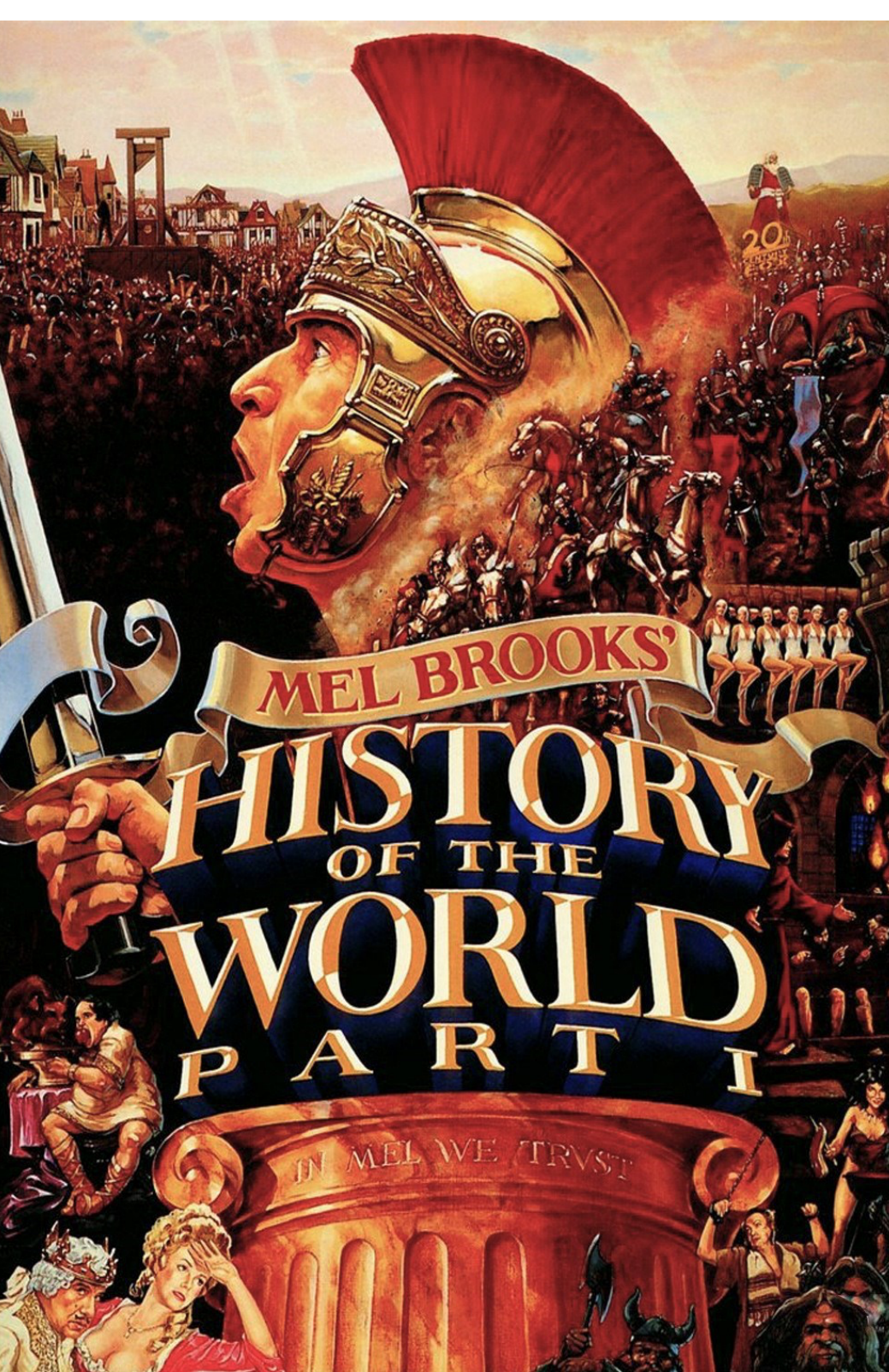
*1640–2019*



## TASKS FOR TODAY

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- review 400+ years of literary and cultural history in a series of cringe-inducing stereotypes, generalizations and banalities
- review the grading rubric for the final exam: what are we looking for, and what kinds of answers will get the most points?



# THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD

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- ▶ As we go back in time, our conceptual categories get larger and larger. For the recent past, we say things like “the 1990s” and “early 80s music”; father back, we say “the 19th century” or “the Enlightenment”
- ▶ We parse modernity century by century, getting more and more vague (do you have a sense of what “the 1600s” were like?)
- ▶ Even so, 3 large categories emerge: Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity
- ▶ This class is concerned solely with Modernity



# Modernity

## MODERNITY

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- Core beliefs seen in opposition to older norms: individuality, progress, novelty instead of tradition
- Shift from feudalism to capitalism (also reflects movement away from hierarchy towards theoretical equality)
- nation-states seen as norm; urbanization and industrialization (now post-industrial)
- Four large cultural periods within modernity “proper” (I’m excluding the Renaissance): the Enlightenment, Romanticism, Realism-Modernism, and “post-modernism” (where we are now)



## THE ENLIGHTENMENT

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- the 1700s
- optimistic, even utopian
- social harmony
- rational
- materialist
- cosmopolitan, elite, even cynical



# ROMANTICISM

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- The 1800s
- The heroic individual
- The suffering artist
- the sublime and the beautiful
- Transgressive
- reason alone is not enough



# REALISM

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- 1850–still going on?
- objectivity
- middle class
- material, economic base
- organism in its environment
- the effect of the real (moo!)



# MODERNISM

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- 1880?–1960?
- alienation
- shock
- consciousness
- the ambiguous  
“symbol”; total art
- art at the margins,  
culture industry at  
center





## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE AND ZOMBIES

BY JANE AUSTEN AND SETH GRAHAME-SMITH

## WHERE WE ARE NOW

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- 1960–
- realism is not enough; magical realism better captures our strange, irrational lives
- self-conscious (Borges, Calvino)
- citational (*Fight Club*, Calvino, but also modern versions of Frankenstein, Austen)
- re-mediation, re-booting, re-mixing, re-cycling — a time of repetitions

# FINAL EXAM, MON. 5/6/19, 7:00–10:00 PM

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- In this classroom!
- A few finish in just over an hour, many finish between 1½-2 hours, a handful stay to the very end. This exam is 2 pages shorter, however
- Four sections:
  - (1) short (4 sentences) answers to big questions: 4 questions, 6 points each; answer all (24 points).
  - (2) short answers to small questions (did you come to lectures?): 10 questions, 5 points each; answer all (50 pts).
  - (3) identifications (identify and comment): 8 questions, 5 points each; answer 5 out of the 8 (25 pts).
  - ~~(4) long (1½ pages) essay on a “big topic” that covers much of the class (15 pts)~~
  - (4) A random 1 pt. extra-credit question about something not intellectual



## WHAT TO STUDY

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- your lecture notes; the PDFs
- the sublime and the beautiful
- Calvino, Borges, Márquez
- Baudelaire
- Diderot
- everything else
- IDs are mostly on different authors than the “short answers”



## HOW TO TAKE A TEST

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- show what you know
- use your time judiciously
- use (or at least address) the terms of the question
  - Why X? *Because Y*. How does X? *By Y-ing*. Does X do Y? Yes, *X does do Y*.
- give examples all the time: “the Enlightenment focused on rationality (Descartes, Diderot) and the utopian (Jefferson)”

# “BIG” QUESTIONS (DID YOU DO THE READING?)

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Answer with ~4 sentences (refer to several important ideas, authors and texts). Answer all 4 questions (6 pts. each; 24 pts. total).

1. How was the Enlightenment optimistic?

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2. How did Romanticism promote the idea of the heroic individual?

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## SECTION I: BIG QUESTIONS

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- A 6-point answer has about 4 coherent sentences, and several important ideas, authors and texts (3-4 would be good); it convincingly shows you did some of the reading
- Optimistic Enlightenment: Jefferson, Descartes and Diderot's *Encyclopedia* are good; *Candide* and Diderot's *Rameau's Nephew* require some explanation, as does Austen
- Can you tie it all together?



## SECTION I: BIG QUESTIONS

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- Romantic heroism: Werther, Douglass, Frankenstein, Whitman all work well; Leopardi, Percy Shelley and Coleridge, too
- Dickinson requires some finesse
- Could be related to the suffering artist, transgression, the sublime
- If you mention 3 appropriate authors and explain how they're relevant, it's a 5-6 pt. answer; only 1-2 examples will earn less
- The more confusion you show (Austen is not a Romantic), the lower the grade
- Specific names and titles are good

## SMALL QUESTIONS (DID YOU COME TO LECTURE?)

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Answer all 10 questions, 3-5 sentences (5 pts. each; 50 total).

1. How might we see Henry James as an early modernist?

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2. Why would Chekhov not write a good action movie?

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3. According to Dostoevsky, what is the only way to show that you are free?

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## SECTION II: SMALL QUESTIONS

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- ▶ Here your answers are the same length, 3-5 sentences, but are focused on one author or one lecture.
- ▶ The more specific references to the lecture, the higher the score: the Chekhov action film could mention: preference for *internal* action, passive characters, poor communication between characters, and a reliance on gesture, silence and atmosphere
- ▶ A *really* good answer, however, might also mention why Chekhov would write a good action movie: Chekhov's gun, and the importance of increasing tension



## SECTION II: SMALL QUESTIONS

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- You *don't* need to summarize the lecture, but give several specifics that show you got some of the main points
- Henry James and modernism: difficult language that makes the reader work, ambiguous narrative (ghost story or psychosexual delusion?), emphasis on the consciousness of the perceiving subject (hence, so many narrators!)
- Dostoevsky: only way is to choose what's bad for you; can talk about *Good Will Hunting*, *Sophie's Choice*, the forced choice, the spiteful, sick narrator, Plato's "Meno," the existentialists, etc.

# IDENTIFICATIONS (DO YOU HAVE A SENSE OF STYLE?)

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Give author and title, and comment briefly on the passage's importance.  
Answer only *five* out of the eight questions (5 pts. each, 25 pts. total)

1. Ferocious birds perched on their feast were savagely  
Destroying the ripe corpse of a hanged man;  
Each plunged his filthy beak as though it were a tool  
Into every corner of that bloody putrescence.

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2. Travelers return from the city of Zirna with distinct memories: a blind black man shouting in the crowd, a lunatic teetering on a skyscraper's cornice, a girl walking with a puma on a leash. Actually in every skyscraper there is someone going mad; and there is no puma that some girl does not raise, as a whim. The city is redundant: it repeats itself so that something will stick in the mind.

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# SECTION III: IDS

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- 5 points: 1 for author, 1 for title, 1 for comment on passage, 2 for style and technique
- Many poems have no title: “untitled” or the first line of the poem is fine. (Hint: “untitled” is safer)
- I will always try to choose something typical of the author
- Comments: Baudelaire wants to shock (part of the shock of modernity); Calvino wants to show how every city is different for every observer, how we have to see it from at least two different perspectives
- Answer the five you are most sure of; only answer more if you have extra time



# Evaluations

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- ~~the first two questions~~
- ~~the other side~~
- I don't do course evaluations any more

