On the Technological Sublime
Honors First Year Seminar
Mondays and Wednesdays 3-4:15 pm
UNH 4442

Dr. Sue Scheibler
Office Hours: M, T, W, Thursday 1:30-2:30, other times by appointment
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Contact information: if you need a quick response, text me; if you don’t mind a delayed response, use the LMU email

Writing Instructor: Mike Petitti
Office: UNH 3217; Office hours: Wednesday 11:30 am – 2:30 pm; 4:30 -5:30 pm; other times by appointment
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Course Description: The sublime is one of the most persistent concepts in theories of art and literature. In this course, students will study a variety of literary, visual, musical, philosophical, and cinematic texts that either formulate philosophical, aesthetic, theoretical, and/or theological arguments about the sublime or engage it aesthetically. While the course will encourage students to read secondary sources in preparation for the final research project, the emphasis will be on primary texts, including philosophical treatises, novels, poetry, photography, paintings, music, movies, television shows and video games. As we engage these texts throughout the semester, we will pay close attention to our own status as readers, spectators and/or players especially as regards the ways in which we are encouraged to experience intense emotion, sensation, and imagery in our encounter with them.

The course is also designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of college writing, including structure, syntax and style as well as the basic principles of information literacy, including how to find and evaluate sources. Students will have the opportunity to put this theory into practice through a broad range of activities, from weekly response papers to a research paper and from participation in the class discussions to a formal presentation of their work.

Learning Outcomes: Our primary aim in this course is to explore, by means of the concept of the sublime, the power and possibility of the life of the mind and, through that exploration, establish a foundation for understanding and appreciating the intellectual rigor and academic excellence that defines an LMU education. This is a textually driven course, organized in such a way as to help students develop critical reading, writing and thinking skills. Students are required to read literary and visual texts closely and carefully, actively discuss these texts in class and in written work, and apply their knowledge in a substantial research paper and a presentation of their research and argument. In all of these activities, we will hold each other accountable for evidence of intellectual rigor in our thinking, articulation of our ideas, formulation of our arguments, and evaluation of the scholarly sources informing and framing our thinking.

The shared task of the seminar will be for us to critically and graciously engage the texts and one another so that they are interpreted primarily on the author's or speakers terms informed by an eye and ear to evaluating scholarly as well as aesthetic arguments.
More specifically, in this course students will
- Understand the ways in which the sublime have been understood and utilized by philosophers, artists, and scholars over the centuries
- Understand the different ways that philosophers, novelists, poets, painters, musicians, photographers, filmmakers, and video game developers use their specific media to articulate ideas and evoke emotional responses and apply this understanding in their oral and written work
- Develop a shared vocabulary for analyzing and interpreting literary, philosophical and visual texts and apply this in their oral and written work.
- Engage critically and reflectively in scholarly discourse
- Learn to read critically and carefully
- Learn the fundamentals of writing college level essays
- Exercise critical thinking in oral discussion and writing.
- Be able to evaluate sources for quality (e.g., by learning to differentiate between scholarly and popular sources).
- Acquire research skills including use of library catalog and electronic databases to retrieve books or articles, whether in print or online
- Value a wide variety of stylistic and thematic approaches to the subject at hand.
- Value the various perspectives and interpretations of texts articulated by the authors they read, the instructor, and their fellow classmates.

Organization of the course: The course is organized as a seminar, which means that our focus will be on discussion of the texts at hand rather than a more formal lecture on the course material. To this end, the success of the course depends on each one of us coming to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading and/or viewing. As we take up a new text, a portion of the class will be devoted to providing you with a context for your own study and thinking. In addition, a portion of the second class meeting in each week of the first few weeks will be devoted to learning about writing. Your guide to understanding and developing the skills of critical writing will be our writing instructor.

Expectations for classroom behavior: A successful seminar depends on an environment in which each person is encouraged to voice his or her thoughts, arguments, counter-arguments and opinions with the expectation that he or she will be listened to respectfully and engaged in a manner associated with civil discourse. With luck, our discussions will be lively and impassioned, ranging across a variety of texts and perspectives. I also expect your comments to be informed by the reading and the course material. Since the aim of this course is to encourage critical thinking, be sure to support your arguments with evidence. I expect the environment in the class to be one of mindfulness. To achieve this, please do not text, check your emails, and/or surf the web during class.

Course requirements:
Attendance, reading and participation: This class is a seminar. As such, attendance and participation in the class discussion is crucial to success in the course. An A student will not miss more than two classes, will come to class prepared to discuss the assigned reading/viewing (i.e. having read and/or watched and with ideas about the texts, including questions for the discussion), and will participate fully in the discussion through active listening and through thoughtful discussion. A B student might miss three classes and/or come to class unprepared on one or two occasions. A C student might miss four classes and/or come to class unprepared on more than a couple of occasions. Assigned readings must be
completed by the date noted below in the course outline. Please note that some weeks you will be required to read and other weeks you will be required to watch films outside of class.

**Note about workload:** The course has been organized according to University policy that requires 2 hours of work outside class for every unit. In other words, the expectation is that you put in 6 hours of work outside class each week. This work load is somewhat flexible, in that some weeks it may be somewhat light and in other weeks, especially when papers are due, it may be a bit heavier.

**Required Text:** Most of the readings will be provided to you via our course mylmuconnect page and via email. Course announcements will come to you from the course mylmuconnect page so please check your lion email accounts regularly. Please be sure to bring the day’s assigned reading to class.

You will be required to purchase/download two texts:  
*Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen, 1803.  
*Frankenstein*, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, 1818.

I have not ordered these through the book store as it tends to be more expensive. Both of these are available as free downloads via Free Books. There also Kindle editions, some of which are free. You may also order paperback versions through Amazon and they are readily available through local book stores.

**Required films/TV shows:** These will be made available through media reserve in the library. There are several viewing rooms in the library that can accommodate small groups. I encourage you to form groups and watch/discuss the films/TV shows together. Most of the media texts are also available via on-line streaming, either through Netflix, Amazon, or Hulu.

**Weekly response papers:** each week you will write a short (1-2 pages) paper. The papers will be due each Monday, emailed to both Dr. Scheibler and Mike by 3 pm. The first paper will be an intellectual autobiography; the next four will provide you with the opportunity to apply what you’re learning about writing; and the rest will be encourage you to engage with an idea that you found interesting in the week’s assigned work and/or discussions.

**Short essays:** you will be required to write two short (5-6 page) essays on assigned topics (due dates noted below). These papers will require you to grapple with the ideas and texts explored in class by applying them to primary texts in a manner that utilizes what you’re learning about writing critically thoughtful scholarly essays. One paper will be graded by the writing instructor and one by the course instructor.

**Research paper and presentation:** you will be required to write one substantial research paper (12-15 pages) on a topic of your choice and to share your research with the class in a formal presentation. You will work closely with the writing instructor as you develop your topic, conduct your research and shape your argument. As an aid in your research and writing, you will be required to turn in an outline and a rough draft.

**Information literacy tutorials:** you will be required to complete four information literacy tutorials during the semester. These have been prepared by the University research librarians are designed to provide
you with knowledge and skills to help you conduct college-level research while helping you avoid plagiarism. The tutorials are on-line and must be completed by the date indicated in the course outline below. You will need to download Firefox in order to complete the tutorials. You must also have the latest version of Adobe Flash player.  

Writing tutorials: You will be expected to meet with the writing instructor in tutorial sessions at several times during the semester. These sessions are designed to give you an opportunity to discuss your writing with the instructor.

**Grading breakdown and guidelines:** The grading breakdown is as follows:

- Weekly response papers: 10% or 10 points of final grade
- Two short essays engaging the material presented in class: 30% or 30 points of final grade (15% each)
- Final research paper (original and independent research): 30% or 30 points of final grade (20% on content, 10% on evidence of information literacy and research)
- Participation in class discussion: 10% or 10 points of final grade
- Oral presentation of final research project: 10% or 10 points of final grade
- Information Literacy tutorials: 10% or 10 points of final grade

The weekly response papers (1-2 pages, worth 10% of the grade) will require you to do the assigned work in an engaged and thoughtful manner, that is, in a way that elicits questions and/or ideas from you. The understanding is that, as we progress through the semester, your ability to think critically as well as to synthetically (that is, to make connections across texts) will deepen and broaden. As such you will be graded on improvement in terms of your thinking as well as your writing as the semester unfolds. Thinking through ideas by means of the response papers will also help you prepare for your formal essays and research paper.

The two short essays (6-8 pages, worth 30% of the grade, 15% each) will require you to more fully and thoughtfully engage with the texts presented in class in a manner that demonstrates mastery of the texts and concepts as well as the ability to make connections across texts. For each paper, you will be graded on content (the quality of your argument, original thinking, use of evidence to support your argument, and sophistication of thinking) and syntax/style (grammar, style, organization, clarity and coherence).

The final research paper (12-15 pages of original scholarship informed by substantial research and framed by an understanding of scholarly discourse, worth 30% of your grade) will require you to apply what you’ve learned in class to a text of your own choosing. 20% of the grade will be determined by the quality of your argument, the sophistication of your thinking, and style/syntax. 10% of your grade will be determined by your application of what you’ve learned through the information literacy tutorials, namely your ability to identify and use sources thoughtfully, intelligently, and critically.

The oral presentation will require you to present your research and to clarify and defend your arguments and will be worth 10% of your grade. You will be graded on how well you can organize your thoughts, articulate the main points of your research and field questions/comments from your classmates. Since the presentations are short (5 minutes), they will require you to focus on your key points and articulate your ideas succinctly.
Final grades will be determined as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
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<tr>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>A</td>
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<tr>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>A-</td>
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<tr>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>B+</td>
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<tr>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>B</td>
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<tr>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>B-</td>
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<tr>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>C+</td>
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<tr>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>C</td>
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<tr>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>C-</td>
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The short essays and research paper will be graded according to the following guidelines:

An “A” paper exhibits a cogent and insightful argument that offers a new approach and original thinking in a sophisticated manner. The paper explores the issues in a way that allows for complexity and ambiguity with a manner that is consistently forceful, thoughtful and thought provoking. Everything works to advance the argument in an organized, coherent, clear and logical fashion. The argument is supported with concrete and specific examples and sources are integrated in a way that furthers the argument while allowing the writer’s voice to come through. There is little or no room for improvement in form and content. The paper reveals an understanding of the material presented in class with a dose of originality and depth.

A “B” paper will exhibit an understanding of the argument and texts that is on target but does not go far enough in analysis, expression and/or development. There is a level of skill and knowledge, evident in organizational clarity, coherency, logical force, proper syntax and style yet there is room for improvement as these elements are not exploited to their fullest. The argument is clear and well supported with specific and concrete examples; however, there are still some areas that could be more fully realized and/or examined. The paper reveals an understanding of the material presented in class and makes an attempt to apply this knowledge to the subject at hand.

A “C” paper will exhibit a competent but limited argument. Examples are appropriate but not completely subordinated to the writer’s purpose. While the issues are addressed, they are not fully explored. The paper may have occasional organizational or analytical weaknesses. It will make an attempt to apply knowledge gained in class but may fail at making connections.

A “D” paper has a limited, implausible, unclear, incomplete or inconsistent argument that is discussed in a manner that lacks cogency, purpose and force. Support is inadequate, unconvincing, irrelevant or derivative and is not integrated into the argument. Reasoning is weak or inappropriate. The paper lacks structural fluency and coherency. It is predictable and stilted, with flaws in syntax, grammar, usage and spelling. The paper shows a simplistic approach, revealing gaps in understanding the material presented in class.

Any form of plagiarism will result in zero points on the paper; this includes copying from other sources including other students; failing to cite any sources that are quoted or referenced, explicitly or implicitly; using a paper from another class; or any other form of plagiarism noted in the University Bulletin and the LMU Honor Code.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8/26</td>
<td>Introduction to the course and to the idea of the Sublime</td>
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<td>8/28</td>
<td>Sublime rhetoric, Part I</td>
<td>Writing the Essay, Part I</td>
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<td>Reading: Longinus “On the Sublime,” Intro to pg. 22; Shaw, Introduction</td>
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<td>9/2</td>
<td>No class, Labor Day</td>
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<td>9/4</td>
<td>Sublime rhetoric, Part II</td>
<td>Writing the Essay, Part II</td>
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<td>Reading: Longinus, 23-58</td>
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<td>9/9</td>
<td>The Natural Sublime, Part I</td>
<td>Reading: Shaw, chp. 2</td>
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<td><strong>Paper Topic #1 distributed</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Complete Information Literacy Tutorial #1: Starting your assignment</strong></td>
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<td>9/11</td>
<td>The Natural Sublime, Part II</td>
<td>Writing the Essay, Part III</td>
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<td>Reading: Burke, in Ashfield and de Bolla, chps. 25, 46, 47</td>
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<td>9/16</td>
<td>The Kantian Sublime, Part I</td>
<td>Reading: Kant, sections 1 and 2</td>
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<td><strong>Rough draft, paper #1 due</strong></td>
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<td>9/18</td>
<td>The Kantian Sublime, Part II</td>
<td>Writing the Essay, Part IV</td>
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<td>Reading: Kant, sections 3 and 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>9/23</td>
<td>The Romantic Sublime, Part I</td>
<td>Reading: Shaw, chp. 5</td>
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<td>9/25</td>
<td>The Romantic Sublime, Part II</td>
<td>Reading: Ashfield, pgs. 294-306</td>
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<td><strong>Complete Information Literacy Tutorial #2: Types of information</strong></td>
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<td>9/30</td>
<td>The Romantic Sublime, Part III</td>
<td>Reading: Frankenstein, Volume I; Introduction to Frankenstein</td>
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<td><strong>Paper #1 due</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Topic #2 distributed</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>10/2</td>
<td>The Romantic Sublime, Part IV</td>
<td>Reading: Frankenstein, Volumes 2-3</td>
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<tr>
<td>10/7</td>
<td>The Sublimity of Jane Austen, Part I</td>
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Reading: *Northanger Abbey*, chps. 1-15

10/9  The Sublimity of Jane Austen, Part II  
Reading: *Northanger Abbey*, chps. 16-end  
*Complete Information Literacy Tutorial #3: Finding and Evaluating Information*

10/14  A Cinematic Meditation on the Natural Sublime  
Viewing: watch *Days of Heaven*, directed by Terence Malick, prior to class (available for streaming through Netflix; DVD on reserve in library)  
*Rough draft paper #2 due*

10/16  The Epic Gaze and the Sublime  
Viewing: watch *Lord of the Rings, part 1 (The Fellowship of the Ring)*, directed by Peter Jackson, prior to class (DVD on reserve in library)

10/21  The Technological Sublime  
Reading: Nye, chps. 1-3  
*Complete Information Literacy tutorial #4: Using Information Ethically*

10/23  The Technological Sublime that is Cinema  
No reading; we will view assorted shorts and clips in class

10/28  The Sublime Cyborg, Part I  
No reading, watch the pilot (miniseries) *Battlestar Galactica*, prior to class (available for streaming through Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, and others; DVD on reserve in library)  
*Paper #2 due*

10/30  The Sublime Cyborg, Part II  
Reading: Napier, chp. 6; Brown, chps. 5 and 6; watch *Ghost in the Shell* prior to class (DVD on reserve in library)

11/4  Sublime Terror  
Reading, Shaw, chp. 6 and Afterward

11/6  The Apocalypse and the Sublime  
No reading  
*Research paper outline due complete with annotated bibliography*

11/11  The Cinematic Sublime  
Reading: articles by Freeland and Gunning

11/13  Terence Malick and the Philosophical Gaze  
Viewing: watch *Thin Red Line* prior to class (DVD on reserve in library)

11/18  The Postmodern Natural Sublime  
Viewing: watch James Cameron’s *Avatar* prior to class (DVD on reserve in library)

11/20  Video Games and the Technological Sublime
Reading: to be distributed
Draft Research Paper due

11/25 The Sublime and the Sacred
Reading: assorted poems by Rumi, Hafiz, Kabir, and others, to be distributed
Viewing: watch Baraka prior to class (DVD on reserve in library)

11/27 No class, Thanksgiving break

12/2 Presentations

12/4 Presentations
Research Paper due

Special Accommodations: Students who need reasonable modifications, special assistance, or accommodations in this course should promptly direct their request to the Disability Support Services Office. Any student who currently has a documented disability (physical, learning, or psychological) needing academic accommodations should contact the Disability Services Office (Daum Hall Room 224, 310-338-4535) as early in the semester as possible. All discussions will remain confidential. Please visit http://www.lmu.edu/dss for additional information.

NOTE: If necessary, this syllabus and its contents may be revised. Any revisions to the syllabus, assignments and requirements will be distributed in class and posted on our mylmuconnect site. You will be responsible for any changes distributed in class or posted on the mylmuconnect site.