

Nature and Technology in the 19th Century

UHON 302-001 | W | 1:00-3:30 | SHC 9 | 37697

Fulfills A&S Group VII: Fine Arts

Dr. Renee Faubion

During the nineteenth century, two great ideals clashed in British and American culture: Nature as the gateway to a more authentic, even more spiritual, existence and Progress, the grand myth that powered the Industrial Revolution. British and American Romantics increasingly found themselves at war with a culture that was determined to move into the future on feet of steel. There were stunning technological achievements, such as locomotives and factories; but these achievements came with a price to both humans and the environment. In this course, we will explore the complex relationship between nature and technological progress in the nineteenth century, paying particular attention to how this contest played out in the creative products of British and American artists and writers. We will walk through natural environments with the Transcendentalists and Wordsworth, take a virtual trip to the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, and study the iconography of landscape painting and of urban photography. In addition to traditional analytic papers, assignments will include several opportunities for students to engage relevant historical ideas and movements using non-traditional creative strategies, such as writing, painting, photography, and redesigning a common object to reflect the Arts and Crafts standards of usefulness and beauty.



Readings

Readings will include poetry by Wordsworth, Whitman, and Dickinson; fiction by Bierce, Melville, Poe, and Dickens; essays by Emerson, Dorothy Wordsworth, Thoreau, Ruskin, Morris, and Pater; and selections from prose by Darwin, Dickens, and Jacob Riis

Requirements

Good attendance and participation; two shorter papers; facilitation of one class discussion; a research project leading to either a traditional paper or a non-traditional creative project; an array of smaller-scale non-traditional projects which will ask students to use different media to document their interactions with nature and technology.



About the Instructor

After receiving undergraduate and graduate degrees in Russian from Trinity University and the University of Kansas, Renee Faubion earned a second M.A. and a Ph.D. in English from UNM. Her fields include gothic literature, postmodern theory, and magic realism. She has won three awards for excellence in teaching.

About the Student Teacher

Jared Trujillo wishes (and is working towards) a happy life for himself full of intellectual challenges and artistic creativity. He enjoys literature and a broad range of music.