

LIT 3400 | Spring 2021 | 3 credits
Sections M186 and 41HF | Numbers 30681 and 20870
Professor: Roger Maioli (rogermaioli@gmail.com)
Class meetings: T 4 and R 4–5
Office hours: Wednesdays (2–4 PM), and by appointment.

1. Welcome

Course description

The eighteenth century is sometimes described as the age when philosophy was made popular. Major thinkers like Fontenelle and Voltaire endeavored to introduce to the common reader the growing store of knowledge made available by the Enlightenment. In doing so, these authors avoided the use of Latin as the standard philosophical language as well as traditional expository genres such as the philosophical treatise; instead, they resorted to more accessible genres including short essays, encyclopedia entries, drama, and above all prose fiction. Voltaire, in particular, is responsible for consolidating the most characteristic Enlightenment genre: the philosophical tale. These were entertaining fictional narratives that engaged with the important ideas of the day: Copernican astronomy, the meaning of life, the possibility of happiness, the achievements and crimes of European civilization, the promise and the perils of science. Voltaire's *Candide*, the story of a young man seeking happiness in a world beset by carnage and injustice, is the most famous example of the eighteenth-century philosophical tale.

In this course we will consider the opportunities and problems inherent in using prose fiction as a vehicle for philosophical ideas. We will read Voltaire alongside other Enlightenment figures, including Fontenelle, Samuel Johnson, and Françoise de Graffigny, and close by looking at a slightly later narrative that dramatizes the Enlightenment's ambitions and dangers: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. All readings will be done in English.

Course learning goals

By the end of this semester students should be able to:

- ▶ Identify the philosophical tale as a literary genre.
- ▶ Recognize and explain how philosophical tales respond to intellectual and material history.
- ▶ Communicate clearly within the conventions of expository writing.

2. Communication Basics

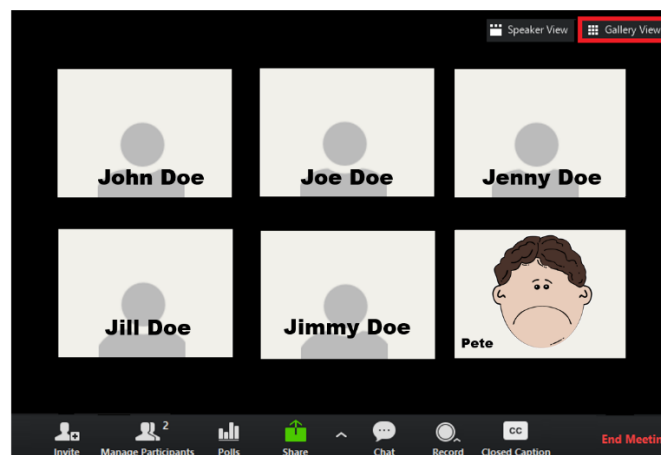
Welcome to this course. My name is Roger Maioli (pronounced "my olly") and I will be your instructor this semester. If we already know each other from previous courses, nice to see you again; otherwise, pleased to meet you! You can learn more about me and my interests by checking my UF page [here](#) and my personal blog [here](#).

How to communicate with me

For a faster response, please write to rogermaioli@gmail.com. You can also use the Canvas messaging feature or my UF email (rmaiolidossantos@ufl.edu), but I may take longer to respond. My **Office Hours** are on **Wednesdays** from 2–4 PM, as well as by appointment. If you decide to attend my office hours, let me know in advance when you may be coming, to avoid overlap with other students.

How to communicate with each other

You will be interacting with most of your classmates via the internet, even if you are enrolled for face-to-face classes. If you are attending class through Zoom, I encourage you to **enable your video** during meetings, unless you lack the equipment/internet speed or have strong reasons not to (and I will respect your reasons without asking what they are). Being on video makes things more accessible to hearing-impaired students and reduces the disconnect inherent in distant learning. Speaking to a faceless crowd is no fun. Just look at Pete:



3. Readings

Watch this!

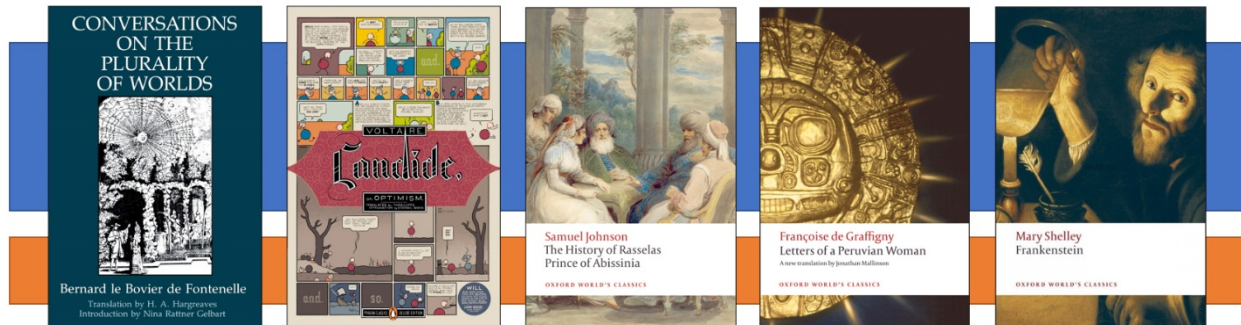
Before I say anything about the readings, here is a heads-up: students and general readers have been facing increasing difficulty telling **the difference between good and bad editions** of texts. Most editions available on sites like Amazon are almost unusable, and students who purchase them end up having a harder time doing the readings and writing their assignments. I decided to address this common issue [in a video](#) where I explain why this is happening, why editions vary, and why that matters for you. Watch the video through the link on the right before you make any decisions about which editions to purchase.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQNi59Wo9p4>

I'll sit here and wait until you're back!

Okay, now that you know what makes a good edition, here is our policy. If you already have a good edition of any of the texts below, you are welcome to use that edition. For the sake of affordability, I also allow students to work with free online editions should they be available and reliable. But if you do not have a copy and intend to buy one, please buy the edition listed below, especially in the case of 1, 3, and 4, which are translations. The easiest way to find them is to use the ISBN:



Book 1: Bernard le Bovier de Fontenelle, *Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds*, trans. H.A. Hargreaves (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990)
ISBN: 978-0520071711

Book 2: Voltaire, *Candide*, trans. Theo Cuffe (New York: Penguin Books, 2005)
ISBN: 978-0143039426

Book 3: Samuel Johnson, *The History of Rasselas Prince of Abissinia*, ed. Thomas Keymer (Oxford: OUP, 2009)
ISBN: 978-0199229970

Book 4: Françoise de Graffigny, *Letters of a Peruvian Woman*, trans. Jonathan Mallinson (Oxford: OUP, 2009)

ISBN: 978-0199208173

Book 5: Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*, ed. M.K. Joseph (Oxford: OUP, 2008)

ISBN: 978-0199537167

4. Coursework

In addition to reading these texts, you will be doing **five kinds of graded work** for this course:

1. Attending and participating in Zoom sessions.
2. Taking quizzes to demonstrate that you have done the readings.
3. Writing weekly responses to the readings.
4. Taking a midterm examination.
5. Writing a final paper.

Here are details about each of these components:

1. Attendance and participation.

I will be taking attendance and keeping track of your participation at our class meetings. We are meeting as one group each Tuesday for a 50-minute session. We are also meeting as one group the first Thursday of this semester (January 14), but starting the second week we will split on Thursdays into two separate groups. Group 1 will meet during Period 4 and Group 2 during Period 5. I will let you know which group you are in after the first week of class.

2. Quizzes

There will be a total of five multiple-choice quizzes, one on each of the texts we are reading. You will be taking the quizzes on Canvas on specific dates and times, as listed in the Course Schedule (see below). Each quiz will include five multiple choice questions and will be available for a total of five minutes at the end of a class meeting. Because they are designed to test for reading, they will be easy if you have done the readings but difficult otherwise.

3. Weekly responses.

Over the course of the semester you will write twelve short responses to the readings (150-200 words). You will post them to discussion threads on Canvas starting the second week of class. I will create the threads, give you instructions, and suggest possible topics for you to write about.

4. Midterm examination.

You will have more than a week to work on the Midterm, which includes a short quiz followed by three interpretive questions. The Midterm will focus only on the first two texts we are reading. I will circulate the questions together with instructions through Canvas on February 16, and your answers will be due on Canvas on **February 26 at 11:59 PM.**

5. Final paper.

This will be a 1400-1600 words essay in which you will respond to one of several prompts I will provide you with on April 9. **The essay will be due on April 21 at 11:59 PM.** Late essays will lose a third of a letter grade per day that they are late.

5. Grading Policy

Here is how your grades will be calculated. Pay special attention to the first one:

- Your grade for **Attendance and Participation** will take both attendance and participation into account. You begin the semester with 85 points (the equivalent of a B). You then get extra points for participating in class discussion and you lose points for disruptive behavior in class or anything beyond three unexcused absences. Each additional unexcused absence will reduce your A&P score by a third of a letter — for instance, from 88 (B+) to 85 (B).

- When calculating your final grade for the **Quizzes**, I will drop your lowest score. In other words, only your top 4 scores will count towards your final Quiz grade.

- Each **Weekly Response** is worth 10 points, as long as it meets certain basic requirements you will learn about on Week 2. You will write twelve of them and I will drop the lowest two.

These five requirements will be weighted as follows:

Attendance and participation:	20%
Quizzes:	20%
Weekly responses:	20%
Midterm:	20%
Final paper:	20%

Final grades, in turn, will be based on the following scale:

	A	93-100	A-	90-92.9
B+	B	83-86.9	B-	80-82.9
C+	C	73-76.9	C-	70-72.9
D+	D	63-66.9	D-	60-62.9
E				

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
1	Jan 12	Jan 13	Jan 14
	10:40–11:30: First class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow.	<i>Readings:</i> “The Enlightenment Reader” (on Canvas) 10:40–12:35: Class meeting
2	Jan 19	Jan 20	Jan 21
	<i>Readings:</i> Fontenelle, 1–22 (beginning and First Evening) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Fontenelle, 23–36 (Second Evening) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
3	Jan 26	Jan 27	Jan 28
	<i>Readings:</i> Fontenelle, 37–47 (Third Evening) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Fontenelle, 48–73 (Fourth and Fifth Evenings) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
4	Feb 2	Feb 3	Feb 4
	<i>Readings:</i> Voltaire, 1–16 (Chapters 1–6) 10:40–11:25: Class meeting 11:25–11:30: Quiz 1 , on Fontenelle	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Voltaire, 17–33 (Chapters 7–13) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
5	Feb 9	Feb 10	Feb 11
	<i>Readings:</i> Voltaire, 34–50 (Chapters 14–18) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Voltaire, 51–68 (Chapters 19–22) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2

6	Feb 16	Feb 17	Feb 18
	<i>Readings:</i> Voltaire, 69–85 (Chapters 23–27) The Midterm guidelines (available on Canvas) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Voltaire, 86–94 (Chapters 28–30) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
7	Feb 23	Feb 24	Feb 25
	No class meeting. Work on your Midterm (due on Friday at 11:59 PM).	<i>Assignments:</i> - Midterm	Recharge Day: no class meeting.
8	Mar 2	Mar 3	Mar 4
	<i>Readings:</i> Johnson, 1–20 (Chapters 1–6) 10:40–11:25: Class meeting 11:25–11:30: Quiz 2 , on Voltaire	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Johnson, 20–43 (Chapters 7–17) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
9	Mar 9	Mar 10	Mar 11
	<i>Readings:</i> Johnson, 43–72 (Chapters 17–33) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Johnson, 73–109 (Chapters 34–49) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
10	Mar 16	Mar 17	Mar 18
	<i>Readings:</i> Graffigny, 1–31 (“Foreword” to Letter 7) 10:40–11:25: Class meeting 11:25–11:30: Quiz 3 , on Johnson	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Graffigny, 31–61 (Letters 8–21) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
11	Mar 23	Mar 24	Mar 25
	<i>Readings:</i> Graffigny, 61–90 (Letters 22–30) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Graffigny, 90–118 (Letters 31–41) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2

12	Mar 30	Mar 31	Apr 1
	<i>Readings:</i> Shelley, 1–42 (Shelley’s Introduction to Chapter 2) 10:40–11:25: Class meeting 11:25–11:30: Quiz 4 , on Graffigny	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Shelley, 43–71 (Chapters 3–6) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
13	Apr 6	Apr 7	Apr 8
	<i>Readings:</i> Shelley, 71–102 (Chapters 7–10) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Shelley, 102–149 (Chapters 11–17) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
14	Apr 13	Apr 14	Apr 15
	<i>Readings:</i> Shelley, 149–194 (Chapters 18–22) 10:40–11:30: Class meeting	<i>Assignments:</i> - Readings for tomorrow. - Responses due at 2 PM.	<i>Readings:</i> Shelley, 194–223 (Chapters 23–24) 10:40–11:30: Meeting Group 1 11:45–12:35: Meeting Group 2
15	Apr 20	Apr 21	
	10:40–11:25: Last class meeting 11:25–11:30: Quiz 5 , on Shelley	<i>Assignments:</i> 11:59 PM: Final paper due	

7. Additional Resources

Plagiarism: All written assignments should be your own work. Plagiarizing the work of others (by copying printed or online sources without acknowledgement) is illegal, and you may fail the course if you plagiarize. If you have questions about how to document your sources, or if you want to make sure you are not committing plagiarism without realizing it, please ask me.

Special accommodations: Students with disabilities are encouraged to register with the Office of Student Service in order to determine appropriate accommodation. I will be pleased to provide accommodation, but students are responsible for notifying me at the beginning of the semester.

Counseling and Mental Health Resources: Students facing difficulties completing the course or who are in need of counseling or urgent help should call the on-campus Counseling and Wellness Center.

Sexual Assault and Harassment: Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are civil rights offenses 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, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:

http://www.ufsa.ufl.edu/faculty_staff/fees_resources_policies/addressing_sexual_misconduct/reporting_sexual_misconduct/