

Pride and Prometheus

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

5 biweekly sessions: Tuesdays, March 26, April 9 and 23, May 7 and 21 | 6:00–7:45 p.m.

Led by Edward G. Pettit, Sunstein Manager of Public Programs at The Rosenbach



This course will explore perhaps the two most popular English language novels of the 19th Century: Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Published just five years apart these two novels reflect very different cultural milieus, yet both were trailblazing in their genres. We'll see how the ideas and cultural events of their shared era resonate throughout both novels and find some points of intersection in their views and perspectives.

Austen grew up in the late 18th Century in a family that had connections to the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars, as well as the British Empire's trading efforts in the East. Shelley's radical parents, Godwin and Wollstonecraft helped shape that revolutionary time and their daughter inherited not only their ideas, but was also a full participant in the Romantic cultural landscape.

Texts

- *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, any edition
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, the 1818 text only. There are several versions of this one available. Many early editions of *Frankenstein* use the revised 1831 edition of the novel. If your book does not explicitly say it is the 1818 edition, then it is probably the 1831.
- *Pride and Prometheus* by John Kessel, Saga Press, 2018
- I'll also supplement with pdfs of various essays or book chapters that provide both contextual and critical perspectives.
-

Schedule

March 26 and April 9

Pride and Prejudice. Please read the entire novel before our first meeting.

April 23 and May 7

Frankenstein. Please read the entire novel before our Apr 23 meeting.

May 21

We'll conclude by comparing the two works and also discussing a contemporary adaptation that combines them, John Kessel's *Pride and Prometheus*. Kessel's novel is not in the parodic literary/horror mash-up spawned by *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, but rather an exploration of characters forced to the margins of their society. What would happen if the most overlooked Bennett sister, Mary, met a mysterious and haunted scientist?

