I. Introduction: Wuthering Heights, a story of can be appreciated on several levels, though it is really all these novels, and defies a simple approach:

- **SOCIAL NOVEL** treating class: the educated and cultured professional middle class, the rough yet propertied farming class, and the workers (maids, farmhands, etc.). Elements of religious influence, ranging from humane Christianity to hellfire evangelism are present as well as the suspicion accorded the “outsider” in an enclosed society.
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL NOVEL** tracing the development of consciousness, the sense of self and others, through experience and dreams (hence the placement of Lockwood).
- **SYMBOLIC NOVEL**, in which the extraordinary Romantic/Gothic forces of Nature oppose the day-to-day, tangible forces of Culture, yet connect through the cycles of life.

II. Historical and Aesthetic Context:

A. **Romanticism**: Romanticism designates a literary and philosophical theory that tends to see the individual at the center of all life, and it places the individual, therefore, at the center of art, making literature valuable as an expression of unique feelings and particular attitudes and valuing its fidelity in portraying experiences, however fragmentary and incomplete, more than it values adherence to completeness, unity, or the demands of genre. Although romanticism tends at times to regard nature as alien, it more often sees in nature a revelation of Truth, the “living garment of God,” and a more suitable subject for art than those aspects of the world sullied by artifice. Romanticism seeks to find the Absolute, the Ideal, transcending the actual, whereas, REALISM finds in values in the actual and NATURALISM in the scientific laws that undergird the actual.

**Romanticism In Art**: [http://www.nga.gov/collection/srchexpd.htm](http://www.nga.gov/collection/srchexpd.htm)

(1) **Style** select “Romantic” (2) **Medium** select “Painting” (3) **Subject** select “Landscape”

**Romantic Characteristics**
- Reaction against Neoclassical formalism
- Individualism
- Love of nature
- Revival of Medievalism: Gothic
- Sensibility
- Primitivism (“noble savage”; sexual liberation)
- Idealization of rural life
- Use of folk and experimental forms
- Emphasis on lyric expression
- Sentimental melancholy
- Narcissism

**Romantic Themes**
- Revolutionary political ideas
- The artist as genius, prophet, outlaw
- Wildness in nature
- Distrust of industrialism
- Imagination vs. reason
- The “noble savage”
- The common man
- Childhood: “tabula rasa” (clean slate)
- Woman as Other: siren, muse, faery
- Forbidden love: demonic, incest, etc.
- Lover as “mirror” of self

B. **Gothicism**: The word “gothic” originally referred to the Goths, one of the Germanic tribes that helped destroy Rome. It later came to signify “Germanic,” then “medieval,” especially in reference to the medieval architecture and art used in Western Europe between 1100 and 1500 CE. “Literary Gothicism” is a type of imitation medievalism.

Early Gothicism featured accounts of terrifying experiences in ancient castles -- experiences connected with subterranean dungeons, secret passageways, flickering lamps, screams, moans, bloody hands, ghosts, graveyards, and the rest. By extension, it came to designate the macabre, mysterious, fantastic, supernatural, and, again, the terrifying, especially the pleasurably terrifying, in literature more generally.

The Gothic novel departs from the Enlightenment (18th C. Neoclassical Period a/k/a Age of Reason) in its rejection of reason and decorum. The Gothic explores an Unreasonable universe, the seedy underbelly of the Enlightenment. The Gothic differs from the Sentimental, which champions right feeling, prizes suffering, and values pity, sympathy, and benevolence. The Gothic explores the malevolent, the wicked, and the dark desires of the perverse. Additionally, the Gothic may be seen as a reaction to industrialization and the scientific revolution. The primacy of the machine (Deistic notions of clockmaker God) somehow needs to be undermined by exposing the fundamental glue of human existence (passion or at least emotion).

**Gothic Conventions**:
- Unbridled space: think of Gothic cathedrals and their incredible heights (setting in wastelands)
- Ruins: decay, mutability, mortality
- Doppelgangers: twins, foils; doubles
- Dream experience: often initiates story (unconscious realm)
- Moldy manuscript: often story begins with discovery of half-rotten text (gives sense of fragmentation to the genre), also disclaimer for quality of writing
- Cloister: hidden away, rites and liturgies of Catholicism, fear of change, agoraphobia, claustrophobia, “taking the veil” (voyeurism, the power of the gaze, altered perspectives)
- Castle/cathedral/catacomb: seat of power and its seedy underside (attics can function like catacombs)
Fictitious will: line of inheritance disrupted, power shifts (notice double meaning of term “will”)
Mob violence: playing on fear of revolution by masses in order to strike “terror” in audience
Mood: manic-depressive, again like a cathedral, top reaches to God, bottom sunk in the earth
Structure: frame narrative (story within story within story) produces fragmented, asymmetrical structure (gothic energy can’t be contained; it spills out of its structures)

Gothic Themes:
- Cosmic struggle: polar opposites slug it out in the Gothic work (God and Satan, the natural and the supernatural, darkness and light)
- Over-reacher: sin of pride (unpardonable sin), concern with the fall (not only from grace but also from heights), and delusions of grandeur
- Guilt: hero-villain often haunted by guilt of secret act of the past (Byronic hero)
- Sex: gender stereotyping (courtly love tradition), misogyny prevalent (sinner/saint image), beauty/beast fairy tale overturned (unholy transformation triggered by sexual response), crimes of passion, incest and other unpardonable sins (primal taboos)
- Violence: against innocent figures (women and children), vampirism (a warped way to assimilate goodness), excessive thought put into torture so it will be very aesthetic
- Death: often linked with love (death makes beauty precious), necrophilia and vampirism are the extremes, disease that causes death occurs due to sexual passion (VD, Syphilis), Catholic church doctrine stated that every time you had sex it shortened your life--so it’s like suicide (existential crisis, self-destructive)

Gothicism in Art & Architecture: http://hercules.gesu.edu/~rviau/galleriesA.html
http://www.faculty.de.gesu.edu/~rviau/gothic.art.html

C. Emily Bronte (1818-1848, Pseudonym Ellis Bell):
http://www.bronte-country.com/welcome.html
(Visit the Emily Bronte’s Yorkshire moors)

Emily Brontë was born in Thornton, Yorkshire, in the north of England. Her father, the Rev. Patrick Brontë, had moved from Ireland to Weatherfield, in Essex, where he taught in Sunday school. Eventually, he settled in Yorkshire, the centre of his life’s work. In 1812 he married Maria Branwell. In 1820 he moved to Haworth, a poverty-stricken little town at the edge of a large tract of moorland, where he served as a rector and chair of the parish committee.

The lonely purple moors became one of the most important shaping forces in the life of the Brontë sisters. Their parsonage home, a small house, was of grey stone, two stories high. The front door opened almost directly on to the churchyard. In the upstairs was two bedrooms and a third room, scarcely bigger than a closet, in which the sisters played their games. After their mother died in 1821, the children spent most of their time in reading and composition. To escape their unhappy childhood, Anne, Emily, Charlotte and their brother Branwell created imaginary worlds - perhaps inspired by Jonathan Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels* (1726). Emily and Anne created their own Gondal saga, and Branwell and Charlotte recorded their stories about the kingdom of Angria in minute notebooks. Between the years 1824 and 1825 Emily attended the school at Cowan Bridge with Charlotte, and then was largely educated at home. Her father’s bookshelf offered a variety of reading: the Bible, Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Milton, Byron, Scott and many others. The children also read enthusiastically articles on current affairs and intellectual disputes in *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine, Fraser’s Magazine*, and *Edinburgh Review*.

In 1835 Emily Brontë was at Roe Head, but suffered from homesickness and returned after a few months to the moorland scenery of home. In 1837 she became a governess at Law Hill, near Halifax, where she spent six months. Emily worked at Miss Patchet’s school - according to Charlotte - “from six in the morning until near eleven at night, with only one half-hour of exercise between” and called it slavery. To facilitate their plan to keep school for girls, Emily and Charlotte Brontë went in 1842 to Brussels to learn foreign languages and school management. Emily returned on the same year to Haworth. In 1842 Aunt Branwell died. When she was no longer taking care of the house and her brother-in-law, Emily agreed to stay with her father.

Unlike Charlotte, Emily had no close friends. She wrote a few letters and was interested in mysticism. Her first novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847), a story-within-a-story, did not gain immediate success as Charlotte’s *Jane Eyre*, but it has acquitted later fame as one of the most intense novels written in the English language. In contrast to Charlotte and Anne, whose novels take the form of autobiographies written by authoritative and reliable narrators, Emily introduced an unreliable narrator, Lockwood (a visiting gentleman to the moors), who constantly misinterprets the reactions and interactions of the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. More reliable is Nelly Dean, his housekeeper, who has lived for two generations with the novel’s two principal families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons.

Emily Brontë died of tuberculosis in the late 1848. She had caught cold at her brother Branwell’s funeral in September. After the appearance of *Wuthering Heights*, some skeptics maintained that Branwell had written the book, on the grounds that no woman from such circumscribed life, could have written such passionate life. In 1848 Charlotte and Anne visited George Smith to reveal their identity and to help quell rumors that a single author lay behind the pseudonyms. After her sisters’ deaths, Charlotte edited a second edition of their novels, with prefatory commentary aimed at correcting what she saw as the reviewers’ misunderstanding of *Wuthering Heights*.

Sleep not, dream not; this bright day
Will not, cannot last for aye;
Bliss like thine is bought by years
Dark with torment and with tears.

(Emily Bronte, 1846)
III. Study Questions:
Chapters 1-9
MUST DO 1: As you read cite 3 quotes that best explicate character, setting, tone OR theme.
MUST DO 2: As you read cite individual one example for each Romanticism and Gothicism (cite page#)
1. In what year does the narrative present open? Who is the narrator?
2. Read carefully Lockwood’s description of Wuthering Heights and its master that begins “Wuthering Heights is the name...” and ends with the paragraph “I took my seat...” (Chapter 1). Describe (cite text) and analyze the interior of both home and its inhabitants.
3. How is Lockwood characterized in the opening chapters of the novel? Is there anything symbolic about his name?
4. How does Wuthering Heights, its inhabitants, and Lockwood’s dream at the Heights fit into the pattern of the Gothic Genre? Cite text.
5. What is Nellie Dean’s dual function? What is problematic about her role as narrator?
6. How does Heathcliff come to live with the Earnshaws? Describe the young Heathcliff’s appearance and behavior. What are the various receptions to Heathcliff’s arrival and presence?
7. Describe Miss Cathy in appearance and behavior.
8. Read carefully Heathcliff’s description of Thrushcross Grange that begins “Cathy and I escaped...” and ends with “She ate quietly on the sofa...” (Chapter 6). Describe (cite text) and analyze the interior of both home and its inhabitants.
9. What are the ramifications of Cathy stay at Thrushcross Grange? What was she like before she went in? What was she like after she came out? What happens to Heathcliff in the period after Cathy returns from the Grange?
10. What is the nature of Cathy’s conflict over Edgar and Heathcliff, revealed in the conversation with Nelly in Chapter 9? What is Cathy’s “obstacle”? What does she mean when she says, “I am Heathcliff”?
11. What parallels exist in Cathy’s dream in this episode and Lockwood’s dream at the beginning of the novel? Why?
12. How do external natural conditions (weather and illness) echo internal turmoil?

Chapters 10-17
MUST DO 1: As you read cite 3 quotes that best explicate character, setting, tone OR theme.
MUST DO 2: As you read cite individual one example for each Romanticism and Gothicism (cite page#)
1. After a three-year absence, how has Heathcliff changed? What are Edgar and Cathy’s reactions to Heathcliff’s return? What forces are still at work?
2. What is the real nature of the relationship between Heathcliff and Isabella?
3. What does the violent confrontation between Edgar Heathcliff (Chapter 11) reveal about Edgar, Heathcliff and Cathy?
4. What does Cathy mean when she says, “I’ll try to break their hearts by breaking my own”? What is Cathy’s condition after the confrontation? What are the implications of this? What are we to make of Cathy’s ramblings on childhood (Chapter 12)?
5. During Cathy’s illness Edgar spends his time in the library, and throughout the novel books are used in a symbolic manner. What is the symbolic meaning of the books here?
6. What important news does Isabella’s “epistle” (letter) reveal?
7. Analyze the last encounter between Catherine and Heathcliff (Chapter 15). Explain what is, was, and always will be between Heathcliff and Cathy and why.
8. What symbolism surfaces in this episode? In the next chapter?
9. How does Heathcliff react to Cathy’s death? What definition of love is implicit in Heathcliff’s reaction to Nelly when he is told of Catherine’s death?

Chapters 18-24
MUST DO 1: As you read cite 3 quotes that best explicate character, setting, tone OR theme.
MUST DO 2: As you read cite individual one example for each Romanticism and Gothicism (cite page#)
1. How is Cathy 2 different from her mother? Who is the father, Edgar of Heathcliff (prove your theory)?
2. How does Edgar “parent” Cathy for the first 13 years? How does Heathcliff “parent’ Hareton?
3. Analyze Cathy’s first encounter with the Heights. What are her impressions, reactions?
4. How is Linton Heathcliff characterized (Chapters 19 & 20)? How does the 2nd generation of children differ from the first?
5. What is the nature of Heathcliff’s encounter with Catherine on her 16th birthday? What are his intentions? Why?
6. What does Bronte attempt to show in the encounters between Linton Heathcliff and Hareton?
7. How does Cathy maintain contact with Linton Heathcliff despite her father’s objections?
8. What enables Cathy to see Linton again? When does this happen? How do external natural conditions (seasons) parallel echo internal forces?
9. What is the nature of the relationship between Cathy, Linton, and Hareton in Chapter 24?
10. Analyze Cathy and Linton’s view of “Heaven”? How do they differ? What is the meaning of the difference?
10. How do Nelly, Edgar, and Heathcliff differ in the ways in which they deal with the relationships of the three adolescents?

Chapters 25-34
MUST DO 1: As you read cite 3 quotes that best explicate character, setting, tone OR theme.
MUST DO 2: As you read cite individual one example for each Romanticism and Gothicism (cite page#)

1. From a legal point of view, how is Heathcliff able to gain control of the Grange?
2. How is Heathcliff fit the definition of a Byronic hero (romantic hero)?
3. What are Edgar’s primary characteristics. How does his love differ from Heathcliff’s? How does Edgar reflect the characteristics of Neo-Classicism (emphasis on order, proportion, restraint, logic, accuracy, and decorum)?
5. When Heathcliff comes to take Cathy to the Heights, what does he reveal about the torture he has suffered?
6. What are the various characters reactions to the death of Linton Heathcliff (Chapter 30)?
7. What are the things that Lockwood notices at the Heights before he departs? How do they reveal the changes taking place in the human relationships in the Heights?
8. What is the process that leads to the friendship and love of Cathy and Hareton? What is the primary symbol that brings them together?
9. Why does Heathcliff not destroy Cathy and Hareton when he has total power over them?
10. What is the process that leads to Heathcliff’s death? Why does he die how he does and where he does?
11. What is the significance of the concluding paragraphs of the novel?

IV. Discussion Questions (Due for final Wrap Up):

   “Wuthering Heights was hewn in a wild workshop, with simple tools, out of homely materials. The statuary found a granite block on a solitary moor; gazing thereon, he saw how from the crag might be elicited a head, savage, swart, sinister; a form moulded with at least one element of grandeur - power. He wrought with a rude chisel, and from no model but the vision of his meditations. With time and labour, the crag took human shape; and there it stands colossal, dark, and frowning, half statue, half rock: in the former sense, terrible and goblin-like; in the latter, almost beautiful, for its colouring is of mellow grey, and moorland moss clothes it; and heath, with its blooming bells and balmy fragrance, grows faithfully close to the giant's foot.”

   CURRER BELL.

2. In your opinion what are the critical psychological flaws of the first generation children (Cathy, Heathcliff, Hindley, Edgar, Isabella)? How does the 2nd generation (Cathy, Linton, Hareton) right the wrongs of the 1st generation (or do they)?
3. What does Bronte suggest about the role of the “outsider” in society?
4. What does Bronte suggest about the nature of love and its many definitions?
5. What does Bronte suggest about family and its influence on one’s psychological development? What does Bronte suggest about physical environment and its influence on one’s psychological development?