The course will study a wide range of developments in European art from the second half of the 1800s, a fabled era of innovation in painting, sculpture, urban transformation, architecture, printmaking, photography, and World’s Fairs. We will analyze art in light of a constellation of explanatory factors (“causes”): personal, aesthetic, technical, gender, social, ethnic, political, economic, and institutional. The primary focus will be the foremost vanguards (avant-gardes) of the era, individuals and groups who contested norms and authorities, but we will also consider competing forms of visual culture. Because of the cultural authority of Paris in these years, French art and architecture will claim most of our time, but we will consider the entanglements of France with other cultures and nations. At the center of the course will be discussions of Realism (Gustave Courbet), Édouard Manet, Impressionism (Cassatt, Morisot, Manet, Renoir, Pissarro, Caillebotte and others), and “Post-Impressionism” (Van Gogh, Seurat, Gauguin, Cézanne). A central question will be: why is Impressionism so beloved today? Among other goals, the course will endeavor to make Impressionism weird again.

Image: Gustave Caillebotte, *Boulevard Haussmann, Snow*, 1879 or 1881, oil on canvas, private coll.